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**Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI)
to Hold Utica’s First Lupus Walk to Support Lupus Research**

UTICA, NY – MMRI announces the first annual Lupus Walk, co-sponsored by the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc. (LADA), on Saturday, May 18, 2024, to support lupus research at MMRI.

The walk will be hosted at the Masonic Care Community Campus, located at 2150 Bleecker Street, Utica, New York. Registration begins at 10 a.m. with a barbeque lunch to follow the walk. Participants can choose to walk a guided one mile or 5k. The walk is donation based and the commemorative 2024 Lupus Walk T-shirt is \$10. Tickets for the barbeque lunch are \$20 and are sold separately. All proceeds from the event will support lupus research at MMRI.

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a devastating autoimmune disease that causes the immune system to attack one’s own tissue, causing inflammation in the skin, joints, blood, heart, lungs, brain and kidneys. SLE can also lead to extreme exhaustion, fevers, skin rashes, hair loss and anemia. It is estimated that 322,000 to 1.5 million people have some form of lupus. Importantly, ninety percent of people living with SLE are female and it disproportionately affects minority populations.

“We are delighted to hold Utica’s first Lupus Walk to support our growing lupus research endeavors,” said Maria Kontaridis, Ph.D., executive director and Gordon K. Moe professor and chair of biomedical research and translational medicine at MMRI. “My mother’s 26-year-long battle with lupus motivated me to make lupus research a priority at MMRI. Our findings give great hope that one day soon there will be newer and better treatment options available for the millions of patients that suffer with this disease.”

LADA has been a proud supporter of MMRI research since 1990 and currently supports four major research SLE projects, including identifying how increased activity of specific biological enzymes in the body can affect progression and pathogenesis of SLE; identifying new ways to

target and treat lupus nephritis; developing novel therapeutic agents for the treatment of SLE; and studying how immune cell activity in SLE can lead to the development of venous thromboembolisms.

“LADA is a national non-profit organization led by individuals who are directly impacted by lupus,” said Kathleen A. Arntsen, president & CEO at LADA. “The Lupus walk is the perfect opportunity to come together for the lupus community and raise support for MMRI’s research into the prevention and treatment of lupus. We are thrilled to be the co-sponsor of this inaugural event.”

MMRI looks forward to welcoming individuals and teams to participate in this important event.

Visit mmri.edu/lupuswalk to register and for more information.

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About LADA: The Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc., was founded in 1978 and is a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for those impacted by lupus and allied diseases and other conditions of unmet need by fostering collaboration among stakeholders, promoting unity in the community, and supporting innovative advocacy, education, awareness and biomedical research program initiatives.

About MMRI: MMRI is a non-profit dedicated to scientific research that improves the health and quality of life for all humankind. We conduct high quality research aimed at developing a deeper understanding of the causes of cardiovascular, neurocognitive and autoimmune diseases, in the hopes of identifying innovative treatments and cures for these devastating ailments.

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