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THREE NORTHERN NEW YORK HOSPITALS ENTER INTO CLINICAL AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS WITH CROUSE HEALTH

***Agreements between Carthage Area Hospital, Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center,
River Hospital and Crouse Health Enhance Community Health Care Quality and Access
While Maintaining Local Governance***

North Country, N.Y. – Today, the boards of directors of Carthage Area Hospital, Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center, River Hospital and Crouse Health announced clinical affiliations to enhance health care quality and access in Central and Northern New York. The agreement allows the three Northern New York hospitals to develop strong professional and clinical relationships between one another and Crouse Health in Syracuse. The affiliations do not represent a merger or acquisition, but instead will allow each institution to strengthen patient services and share best practices and expertise.

Under the affiliations, each institution will continue to operate as an independent, separately licensed community-based hospital and maintain its existing board governance structure. Additionally, each partner will continue singular responsibility for assets, operations, liabilities and budget. Labor agreements between each institution and its professional unions are unaffected.

“During the past three years, our team has worked hard to strengthen Carthage Area Hospital and cement a sustainable future,” **said Richard A. Duvall, chief executive officer, Carthage Area Hospital.** “From realigning the organization to serve its communities more efficiently and effectively to improving staff and finances, the board and leadership are confident that a clinical affiliation with Crouse Health, Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center and River Hospital will strategically position us for years to come.”

“Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center is committed to sustaining and enhancing the services we provide to our community,” **said Nate Howell, president and chief executive officer, Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center.** “An affiliation with Crouse Health, further backed by Northwell Health, will provide the tools we will need to successfully navigate upcoming health care challenges. Furthermore, I am excited that this partnership will further align CHMC with Carthage and River Hospitals, as it will enable us to tailor efforts for the North Country as a region.”

“The river communities we serve are deeply aware of the need for, and value of, a strong local Critical Access Hospital. The affiliation strengthens River Hospital by providing our patients access to a whole new level of specialized care,” **said Ben Moore, chief executive officer, River Hospital.** “With the ability to access physicians at partner institutions and the availability of advanced telemedicine supported through Crouse Health’s affiliation with Northwell Health, our patients and neighbors will receive an unprecedented level of comprehensive and compassionate care through a trusted local institution.”

“Crouse Health is proud to be affiliating with Carthage Area Hospital, Claxton-Hepburn Hospital and River Hospital to enhance access to health care services in the North Country. Crouse shares many of the same attributes as these hospitals, including similar missions, open and transparent cultures and a focus on physician and employee engagement,” **said Kimberly Boynton, Crouse Health president and CEO.**

“Our focus will be on keeping health care local, where it belongs, but also offering the three hospitals the ability to develop relationships with Crouse for clinical programs or services that may not be available in the North Country, improve coordination of care, and take advantage of our partnership with Northwell Health,” **said Seth Kronenberg, MD, Crouse Health Chief Medical Officer.** “The hospitals will also be able to collaborate to share best practices, both clinical and operational, and benefit from other economies of scale to ensure long-term financial, quality and operational sustainability.”

Through the affiliations, patients will gain access to specialized care and physicians throughout Central and Northern New York. They will be able to see specialists from the hospitals participating in the agreement when needed, either in the hospital, in physicians’ offices or through advanced telemedicine, which will be supported through Crouse Health’s affiliation with Northwell Health. This will enable quality diagnosis and treatment while eliminating unnecessary travel time or delays for patients in the North Country.

Crouse Health is a leading regional health care provider and a top 10 employer in Central New York, with 3,300 employees between two hospitals, Crouse and Community Memorial in Hamilton, N.Y., a combined medical staff of more than 900 physicians and multiple primary care sites.

The four institutions involved in the affiliations have a history of collaboration with each other and across the region. Such approaches are considered an important part of the future of health care.

In 2015, River Hospital and Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center entered into a cooperative agreement to affiliate. Like the agreement announced today, the arrangement protects and enhances each organization's respective mission, enhances the quality of services, increases efficiencies and lowers the cost of health care delivery in the St. Lawrence River region.

Carthage and Claxton-Hepburn obstetrics departments already partner with Crouse Health to ensure Northern New York patients receive the best possible perinatal and neonatal intensive care through Crouse's state-designated regional Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and status as a Regional Perinatal Center. Because of this partnership, many Carthage and Claxton-Hepburn infants are treated in Crouse's NICU every year.

River Hospital currently operates the country's only civilian hospital-based outpatient PTS treatment program for active-duty military. Launched in February of 2013, the program initially served 10 soldiers a day from Fort Drum. Over the past three years the program has increased significantly. In 2016, River Hospital opened this program to veterans suffering from PTS.

In May, Crouse Health signed a similar clinical affiliation agreement with New Hyde Park, N.Y.-based Northwell Health. Northwell Health is New York State's largest health care provider and private employer, with 22 hospitals, more than 550 outpatient practices and 62,000 employees. Northwell is also the nation's 14th largest health system.

Northwell has significant experience and expertise in areas such as care management, quality improvement, population health, data analytics and other key areas that will be of significant benefit to both Crouse and the three partner hospitals as health care transitions from a fee-for-service to a value-based model of care delivery.

About Carthage Area Hospital

Carthage Area Hospital was established as a not-for-profit rural community hospital in 1965. It operates today as a fully accredited 25-bed Critical Access Hospital, serving approximately 83,000 residents in Jefferson, northern Lewis and southern St. Lawrence counties and employing more than 450 physicians, nurses and support staff. It is a top employer in Jefferson County with an annual payroll of roughly \$26 million. The hospital also operates a network of community-based clinics, including its Family Health Center, Pediatric Clinic and Women's Way to Wellness and provides a range of specialty care, including general surgery, orthopedics, urology, physical therapy and behavioral health. Visit carthagehospital.com to learn more.

About Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center

Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit, 115-bed community hospital. Claxton-Hepburn includes 67 acute-care beds, a 10-bed intensive care unit, a 10-bed birthing center, and a 28-bed mental health center. The Medical Center provides primary care to nearly 40,000 residents of Ogdensburg and surrounding communities and regional services to the 110,000 people of St. Lawrence County. It is the largest employer in Ogdensburg and in the top five employers in St. Lawrence County with nearly 800 employees. Claxton-Hepburn Medical Center has an active medical staff of more than 50 physicians representing most specialties. Regional and countywide services include radiation and medical oncology provided by the Richard E. Winter Cancer Center, dialysis treatment provided by the Dr. Ravinder N. Agarwal Renal Center, the Rev. Thomas T. Patterson Wound Healing Center, and a robotics surgery program.

About River Hospital

River Hospital was designated as a Critical Access Hospital in 2003. Licensed for 15 acute care and nine swing beds, River Hospital also operates an active Emergency Room. Primary Family Health Care; Behavioral Health Services including Child and Adolescent, Adult, Intensive Outpatient Program for Veterans and a Partial Hospitalization Program for Active-Duty Military; Laboratory; Physical Therapy; Respiratory Therapy; Ambulatory Surgery and Radiology services are available. In addition, River Hospital offers a variety of on-site specialty services, improving access to care and reducing the need to travel outside of this area for such quality care. For additional information, visit our website at www.riverhospital.org or call (315) 482-2511.

About Crouse Health

Crouse Health is a leading regional health care provider and a top 10 employer in Central New York, with 3,300 employees between two hospitals (Crouse and Community Memorial), a combined medical staff of more than 900 physicians and multiple primary care sites. Crouse is Central New York's largest provider of maternity care services, delivering 4,000 babies annually, and is the designated regional referral center for high-risk neonatal intensive care services. Other areas of specialty include comprehensive diagnostic and interventional cardiac care (Crouse is home to CNY's only pediatric cardiac catheterization program); internal medicine; surgical services (including the latest advancements in bariatric, GYN oncology and robotic surgery); orthopedics; neurosciences/stroke care; oncology; and the region's only hospital-based chemical dependency treatment services for adolescents, adults and seniors. Crouse also operates the Pomeroy College of Nursing, providing nursing education to more than 300 students annually.

About Northwell Health

Northwell Health is New York State's largest health care provider and private employer and the 14th largest in the country, with 22 hospitals and more than 550 outpatient facilities. Its team cares for more than two million people annually in the metro New York area and beyond, thanks to philanthropic support from our communities. Some 62,000 employees—15,000-plus nurses and nearly 3,400 physicians, including nearly 2,700 members of Northwell Health Physician Partners—are working to change health care for the better. Staff is making breakthroughs in medicine at the Feinstein Institute and training the next generation of medical professionals at the visionary Hofstra Northwell School of Medicine and the School of Graduate Nursing and Physician Assistant Studies.

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