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Columbia Memorial, Albany Medical Center Take First Steps Toward Strategic Affiliation

Building on Shared Goal of Better Coordinated, More Efficient Patient Care

(Note: Media are welcome to join a telephonic availability at 2:00 p.m. by calling 866-415-4341, access code: 7205876078)

Columbia Memorial and Albany Medical Center today announced that they have begun a process designed to lead to better coordination of care for residents of Columbia and Greene counties and greater operational efficiency for both organizations.

Representing the interests of patients of Columbia Memorial, the leading local health care provider, and Albany Medical Center, the regional tertiary care center, the respective boards of each entity have agreed to move toward a strategic alliance that would allow the institutions to better coordinate clinical services, develop care integration practices and find operational efficiencies. The governing boards, medical staffs, employees and fundraising arms from both institutions would remain separate under the envisioned structure.

The leaders of each organization will be exploring opportunities to increase clinical integration, enhance efficiency, and expand evidence-based clinical care protocols and population health management practices on a region-wide basis. The goal of this potential strategic affiliation is to ensure that the residents of Columbia and Greene counties continue to have optimum access to the highest quality care for preventative and primary care needs, and expanded access to specialty care services. In addition, the anticipated operational efficiencies envisioned under such a potential affiliation would strengthen both organizations.

Hospital leaders from both organizations cited the changing requirements of health care reform as an impetus for affiliation discussions, and said the collaboration will be working to enhance patients' experience, provide the best care in the most appropriate setting, improve outcomes, and measurably improve the health of communities they serve.

Columbia Memorial President and CEO Jay P. Cahalan said this is a logical next step for Columbia Memorial, which has been expanding its own health care delivery network, both from a services and geographic perspective.

"This move allows us to explore how we can work together with Albany Med to deliver better coordinated patient care and improved access to specialty services," Cahalan said. "As the health care landscape changes, virtually all providers will need to build stronger alliances with industry partners to meet community health care needs and to achieve operational efficiencies. These formal discussions demonstrate our proactive approach to addressing the changes ahead."

 "We're proud to be working with the leadership of Columbia Memorial to develop a health system that will build on our respective strengths and enhance the access to high quality care for patients throughout the region," said Steven Frisch, MD, Albany Medical Center Executive Vice President and hospital systems general director. "In building its local health care system, Columbia Memorial, like Albany Med, has taken important steps to succeed in a world where reimbursement models are beginning to reward and emphasize clinical effectiveness and

positive outcomes. Working together will help enable both institutions to move further in this direction under regionally based governance."

Columbia Memorial is a regional health system that emphasizes an integrated delivery of primary, specialty and hospital care. It includes a 192-bed hospital, a 120-bed nursing home and a network of 110 providers at 26 primary and specialty care practices throughout Columbia and Greene counties. Albany Medical Center is the region's tertiary care center, meaning it provides advanced medical treatment in addition to routine care, and serves as the trauma center for a 25-county region. Albany Medical Center, which is a teaching facility for Albany Medical College, is a 734-bed facility, with physicians who see patients at nearly 30 locations from Kingston to Glens Falls.

The health care industry has evolved rapidly in recent years, due in large part to the Affordable Care Act and the increasing responsibility placed on providers to proactively improve the health status of the communities they serve, a concept referred to as "Population Health Management." Nationally and regionally, hospitals and health systems have pursued numerous and greatly varied alliances, affiliations and partnerships to prepare to achieve that goal, and each approach has been unique to itself.

"We already work very closely with Albany Medical Center on specific service lines. These discussions will allow us to explore how we might build on that relationship," Mr. Cahalan said. "We are confident that, together, we will find new ways to continue the very best patient care possible for the communities we serve."

The action taken by the respective hospital governing boards initiates a mutual due diligence process to fully assess an affiliation and identify matters that require outside approvals. The process is expected to take several months.

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Columbia Memorial is an advanced multi-specialty health care system serving more than 100,000 residents in Columbia and Greene counties at 26 primary and specialty care centers located throughout the region, including a 120-bed long-term care facility, Kaaterskill Care in Catskill. In addition, Columbia Memorial's inpatient hospital, located near downtown Hudson, has served our region since 1893 and is today one of the most innovative and technically advanced facilities in the region. The hospital focuses on advanced surgery, primary care and patient education. The mission of [Columbia Memorial](#) is to provide our communities with safe, high quality, comprehensive health care services in a dignified and compassionate environment. You can find more information at www.columbiamemorial.com or at www.facebook.com/columbiamemorial.

Albany Medical Center, northeastern New York's only academic health sciences center, is one of the largest private employers in the Capital Region. It incorporates the 734-bed Albany Medical Center Hospital, which offers the widest range of medical and surgical services in the region, and the Albany Medical College, which trains the next generation of doctors, scientists and other healthcare professionals, and also includes a biomedical research enterprise and the region's largest physicians practice with more than 400 doctors at more than 20 locations. Albany Medical Center works with dozens of community partners to improve the region's health and quality of life. For more information:www.amc.edu or www.facebook.com/albanymedicalcenter.