



HOLD FOR RELEASE AT 1:30 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

PARKERSBURG – Camden-Clark Memorial Hospital and St. Joseph’s Hospital announced today their intention to join the statewide West Virginia United Health System (WVUHS).

Tom Jones, CEO of West Virginia United Health System, said the health system envisions WVUHS purchasing St. Joseph’s as CCMH simultaneously affiliates with WVUHS. WVUHS was created by the Legislature in 1996 and includes hospitals in Morgantown, Clarksburg, Martinsburg and Ranson.

“The joining of these fine institutions into our statewide system with the specific mission of delivering high-quality healthcare throughout West Virginia will bring tremendous opportunities to residents of the Mid-Ohio Valley,” Jones said.

He was joined at a press conference this afternoon by Mike King, CEO of Camden-Clark; Jack Julius, CEO of St. Joseph’s Hospital; and Steve Peterson, CFO of Signature Hospital Corporation – the company that currently owns St. Joseph’s. Parkersburg Mayor Robert Newell and Christopher C. Colenda, MD, Chancellor for Health Sciences at West Virginia University were also among those attending, as was West Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources Patsy Hardy.

Jones noted that regional hospitals have been hit hard by reimbursement cuts and competition from doctors' offices and clinics. He said when the West Virginia Legislature created WVUHS, it specifically called for "creation of a coordinated, integrated, efficient and effective health science and delivery system in our state."

King said incorporating both hospitals into the statewide system anchored by WVU's teaching hospital "will improve the efficiency of our operations. And we will expand and enhance our services in ways many of us never dreamed possible under the existing arrangement." He predicted the affiliation could partially reverse spiraling health costs and the community may benefit from programs and specialties never before offered in the Mid-Ohio Valley.

Noting West Virginia's aging demographics, increased competition and reduced reimbursements, King added, "We can deal with these challenges. But we can't if we stand still . . . Both Camden-Clark and St. Joseph's are blessed with highly professional and competent boards, physicians and employees . . . I look forward to a healthy, robust, creative partnership."

Peterson, Signature's chief financial officer, said Signature acquired St. Joseph's three-and-one-half years ago to bring stability to the hospital. He said the efforts of dedicated employees, a committed medical staff and supportive board accomplished that.

"At Signature, we always want to do what's best for our hospitals in the communities we serve. Given this opportunity to combine St. Joseph's with WVUHS and Camden-Clark to create a stronger, better place to receive quality care, this partnership seems like best thing for everyone involved," he added.

Julius, St. Joseph's chief executive officer, said becoming part of the West Virginia United Health System makes tremendous sense, as St. Joseph's joins the ranks of other quality healthcare providers like Camden-Clark and WVUHS. "This historic affiliation will make Parkersburg a destination for healthcare services in this region," Julius said. "We believe the two hospitals already here, now strengthened by this affiliation, can serve the people of the Mid-Ohio Valley best."

Papers are being filed with the Federal Trade Commission this week regarding the proposed affiliation and purchase, and a letter of intent for a certificate of need will be filed with the State's Health Care Authority within days, Jones said.

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