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Media Contact:

Kate Kreger, Director Marketing & Communications
607.324.8233

kkreger@sjmh.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SJMH Proactively Prepares for Ebola

HORNELL, NY (October 21, 2014) -- Under the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), St. James Mercy Hospital (SJMH) is proactively preparing for Ebola risk.

"We understand the fear and concern that result from reports of the Ebola virus and wish to assure everyone in the Hornell area that St. James Mercy Hospital is committed to the health and safety of our communities," said Kathy Brodbeck, chief nursing officer. "Although the risk of contracting Ebola is extremely low, we are prepared to respond to the Ebola virus with the highest standards of care, safety, compassion and professionalism. Our commitment is to provide our patients with excellent care and keep our employees safe while delivering care."

As part of the national CHE Trinity Health system, SJMH has established specific protocols to detect, prevent, and contain potential Ebola infection.

"Our clinicians and staff in many departments are being trained to identify, care for, and monitor potentially high-risk patients and provide treatment in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's rigorous infectious disease procedures," said Brodbeck. "This includes staff education, isolation supplies and practices, drills, and regular participation in CDC and DOH conference calls. Our priorities are to detect the symptoms, prevent contamination to other persons, and transfer potentially infected persons to a state-designated Ebola treatment facility (Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester)."

People who may have traveled to a high-risk areas for Ebola, or been exposed to someone who has Ebola and who are demonstrating symptoms, should first contact their physician or the Emergency Room and notify them of their possible high-risk exposure, before coming to the office or emergency room.

"As a further precaution, patients who come to SJMH's emergency department, clinics, Express Care and registration will be asked about their recent international travel history," said Brodbeck. "Additionally, this week SJMH is conducting an Ebola preparedness drill collaboratively with county emergency management, public health and emergency responder agencies to establish a well-coordinated response."

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SJMH officials will continue to diligently monitor the situation and work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Steuben County public health, and other health systems to share information. “We are committed to rapidly implement evolving treatments and guidelines to protect the people we serve as well as our staff,” said Brodbeck.

More information is available at
<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/faq.htm>.

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