

Op-ed for Hornell *Evening Tribune*

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St. James Mercy Hospital (SJMH) announced last month that several UR Medicine clinical leaders have begun working with Hornell-area physicians, nurses and hospital administrators. We are delighted to represent this new and important partnership.

Our shared objective is to reaffirm the hospital's commitment to high quality, safe care, now that it is operating as an independent entity. From the beginning, we have been impressed with the compassion each provider has for helping the members of the community heal and thrive.

Over the past few weeks, we have met with physicians from across the region to find out how St. James Mercy Hospital can itself grow and thrive. We'd like to share some of their key recommendations and how we are helping the hospital continue to improve:

- To ensure the hospital has 24/7 respiratory therapy, SJMH is recruiting a new respiratory therapist. This enhanced staffing will help patients with respiratory problems such as pneumonia, asthma, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease receive around-the-clock care.
- Surgeons perform a range of surgical procedures at SJMH during daytime hours, and together with local physicians have expressed an interest in seeing surgical coverage expanded to include nights and weekends. We are working with SJMH leadership and with our colleagues at UR Medicine to identify surgeons who can assist our existing surgeons to provide 24/7 on call coverage and to recruit additional nurses so that the hospital can provide full surgical services going forward.
- We have re-established 24/7 on call availability for anesthesia.
- We know St. James Mercy Hospital has a bright future ahead of it, and we are committed to ensuring that the hospital has a dedicated and well-trained nursing staff, including senior-level nurses with experience managing patients who have complex conditions. We are working aggressively to identify and recruit Advanced Practice Providers with the necessary experience to work in inpatient settings. The University of Rochester's School of Nursing has one of the leading nurse practitioner training programs in the nation, and gives us access to a remarkable pool of talent right here in our area.

Our goal in supporting St. James Mercy Hospital is to create an environment where you, our patients, know you can receive safe, high-quality care in Hornell.

In addition to addressing these specific needs at the hospital, we recognize that Hornell and other communities across the Southern Tier are experiencing a shortage of physicians in a range of specialties including internal medicine, pediatrics, cardiology, and obstetrics and gynecology. UR Medicine neurologists, neurosurgeons, general surgeons, and oncologists currently see patients in Hornell. Earlier this spring, we welcomed Dr. Tamera Paczos, Pathologist and Lab Director, and Maureen Graham, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, to SJMH. Starting this fall, UR Medicine cardiologists and a

vascular surgeon will join the team. UR Medicine has hired a physician recruiter who is charged with bringing more physicians to the area in order to meet the region's healthcare needs for the long term.

We are continually impressed with the dedication and commitment of the outstanding staff across St. James Mercy Hospital. The community is fortunate to have such a committed and talented group of professionals, and together we are working to ensure the continuity of inpatient and outpatient services in Hornell. There will be more to report, and will keep you updated as our work proceeds.