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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. James Mercy Hospital Announces Plan to Discontinue Inpatient Adult and Adolescent Behavioral Health Services

June 12, 2013...Hornell, NY...St. James Mercy Hospital (SJM) announced intent to apply to the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) to discontinue operation of inpatient adult and adolescent psychiatric services located at the hospital at 411 Canisteo St. in Hornell. Once submitted to OMH, the discontinuation process is expected to take several months, with a projected date of completion early in 2014. SJM is also seeking approval for the plan from the New York State Department of Health (DOH). The plan does not include the MATCH addiction treatment program.

According to Mary LaRowe, St. James Mercy Health System President and CEO, SJM's behavioral health employees were notified on June 12 of the intent to discontinue services. "The decision to pursue discontinuation of inpatient psychiatric care services was a very difficult one for SJM's administration and board of directors," she said. "We recognize the need for these services locally, but unfortunately cannot sustain them due to cuts in reimbursement brought on by health reform, Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) payment models, and shorter lengths of stays. To preserve other mission-critical healthcare services at SJM, we must take this difficult step to focus resources going forward on our core business, including acute care, continuing care, and outpatient services," she said.

SJM has consulted and worked closely with OMH and Steuben County Mental Health in this process, said LaRowe. "We also have actively sought out a behavioral health partner who can help support provision of services in the community, but have not been successful in doing so. We will continue to collaborate with county and regional providers to ensure transition and continuity of care for this vulnerable population."

Patients who need services after the discontinuation will be referred to other facilities in the region that provide inpatient psychiatric care. "Our Emergency Department staff will receive special training in that referral process for any patients who may come in to SJM once services have been discontinued," said LaRowe. "We remain committed to assisting local patients and will assist as much as possible in transfer to an appropriate facility for subsequent treatment."

SJM's inpatient adult and adolescent psychiatric services draw patients from a seven-county area. Approximately 48 clinical and non-clinical staff work in the units. "We have been very fortunate to provide this specialized care to upstate residents for many years," said LaRowe, "and we are grateful to our behavioral health physicians and staff for providing high-quality, compassionate care to patients and families in crisis."

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