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Media Contact: Joshua Poupore
Corning Place Communications on behalf of
Masonic Medical Research Laboratory
518.330.2250
jpoupore@corningplace.com

Masonic Medical Research Laboratory to Invest \$2.75 Million to Upgrade Research Facilities

New York State providing \$550,000 to support renovation

UTICA, NY – For the first time in over a decade, construction hammers will be flying and new high tech lab equipment will be moving in at the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory (MMRL). Representatives from the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York, MMRL, the New York State Regional Economic Development Council, Mohawk Valley Health System and elected officials joined today to announce the kickoff of a major renovation of the Utica-based Laboratory.

The kickoff coincides with the announcement from the New York State Regional Economic Development Council that the Laboratory will be receiving \$550,000 in economic development funds to help offset the cost of the \$2.75 million renovation. Dr. Erasmus Schneider, Associate Director for Research and Technology and Faculty Member, Wadsworth School of Laboratory Sciences, was on hand representing Governor Cuomo to highlight the value of enhanced research facilities in the Mohawk Valley.

“This expansion and modernization is a vital advancement in the lab's life-saving research. As you begin construction today, you are fulfilling strategic goals in the area of health care and wellness and keeping up with cutting-edge medical technology. On behalf of all New Yorkers, I gratefully acknowledge the leadership and commitment of those involved with this renovation of the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory,” said a letter from Governor Cuomo read by Dr. Schneider.

The renovation of the second and third floors of MMRL is a long overdue project. MMRL has expanded its footprint several times during its 60-year history, including a major addition in 1988 when a second floor was added to the Royal Arch Masons Wing. In 2002, a \$400,000 renovation project brought the facility up to date with handicapped accessibility and other aesthetic improvements to the building's facade. The last major addition occurred in 2004, when the \$2 million molecular genetics and molecular biology wing opened.

“We often say that money spent on treatment benefits the patient, money spent on research benefits humanity. I believe that this investment has the potential to save lives and help people in the region, across the country and around the world,” said David F. Schneeweiss, President of the MMRL Board of Directors. “We want to thank Governor Cuomo and his staff as well as our Utica area legislators for supporting this project which is vital to helping us recruit and retain the scientists who will use these new facilities to make cutting-edge discoveries with the potential to save lives.”

The renovation at MMRL is the latest in a series of announcements about the expansion of laboratory, medical and research facilities in the Mohawk Valley. In April, the state budget included \$300 million for the construction of a new state-of-the-art hospital in downtown Utica.

“The partnership between MMRL and the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) continues to strengthen as both entities make significant investments in the Mohawk Valley – MMRL through this exciting new expansion and MVHS through the new hospital,” said Scott H. Perra, FACHE, President/CEO of MVHS. “There is incredible work being done at MMRL and we are looking forward to the opportunity to integrate that work with the clinical work at MVHS. This partnership means great things for the people of our community and throughout the country.”

The details of the 6,800 ft² renovation are still being finalized with the engineering firm. Both the second and third floors will be entirely reconfigured, with the second floor having an updated, open concept laboratory space, fit with modern laboratory modules similar to the genetics wing. There will be general high technology advances throughout the third floor. Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems will be updated as necessary to support the renovations and new equipment being installed. The renovated space will help transition traditional electrophysiology to more innovative research that both combines and coordinates electrophysiology with molecular biology and genetics technology.

New York State is contributing \$550,000 of the \$2.75 million project, with the rest of the funds coming from a mix of the laboratory’s resources, which include both current funds and future fundraising efforts.

“As an exceptional center for research, MMRL’s mission and goals are to conduct high-quality research aimed at generating the knowledge and information necessary to develop the medical cures and treatments of the 21st century that will help improve the well-being of so many people. This public-private partnership will allow one of world’s great cardiac research centers to continue their work for the benefit of the residents of the Mohawk Valley,” said New York State Senator Joseph A. Griffo.

“These are exactly the sorts of projects that the state should be funding,” said New York State Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi. “Science is constantly evolving and the need for new facilities to keep up with those changes is real. This project has the potential to yield tremendous results and exciting new discoveries.”

“The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory is truly one of the hidden gems of our area,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. “This is not just an investment in the future of

this facility, but one in the future of the entire region. I look forward to the completion of this project and to the far-reaching impact it will have on our community.”

“I commend and thank the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory for their continued investment in world class cardiac research,” said Utica Mayor Robert Palmieri. “The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory is a gem and community asset all Utican’s can be proud of, and this investment is another positive step in ensuring the facility and researchers will be here for many years to come.”

As the project moves forward, MMRL will be posting to its website and social media channels with photos and updates.

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About the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory

The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory is a not-for-profit institute founded by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York in 1958 and is dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for all. The Laboratory is also committed to providing education and training to basic scientists, clinical researchers and students who will perpetuate and extend the fight against disease. Please visit www.mmrl.edu to learn more.