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Cortland Dialysis Center Set to Open

St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center (SJHHC) and Cortland Regional Medical Center (CRMC) are pleased to announce the opening of the new Cortland dialysis center later this month. On March 8, a ribbon cutting ceremony and community open house officially unveiled the new facility. Located on the CRMC West Road campus, the new dialysis center represents a collaborative effort between the two hospitals to bring much-needed dialysis services to Cortland and the surrounding communities.

"CRMC and the residents of the greater Cortland community have long recognized the need for dialysis services locally," said Brian Mitteer, President/CEO of Cortland Regional Medical Center. "The more we looked at meeting this need, the more it made sense to undertake a joint venture with St. Joseph's. For over 25 years, St. Joseph's has been providing dialysis services, and has a proven track record for providing excellent care to its dialysis patients."

At present St. Joseph's operates four dialysis centers in the Syracuse area. "They have the expertise and the resources," continued Mitteer, "And we were unable to fill the gap in services on our own. We look upon the partnership as an opportunity for two not-for-profit organizations with a similar mission to work together in the best interest of the greater Cortland community."

Theodore Pasinski, President/CEO of St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center, echoed Mitteer's sentiments. "We are sincerely interested in working with other hospitals, with other communities, where we can work together to improve healthcare. Our long experience with dialysis, and the growing need here in Cortland, made for a logical partnership."

Based on information from the End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network, it is estimated that 57 people residing in Cortland County are receiving outpatient dialysis services. Of that number, 38 are now registered to receive their treatments at the Cortland dialysis center. Many of these patients previously had to drive to Syracuse, some as often as three times a week for a four-hour treatment each day. Travel during the harsh winter months made this a particularly difficult experience for patients and their families.

The process for establishing the new center began in March 2005 when SJHHC submitted a Certificate of Need (CON) to the New York State Department of Health requesting approval of a dialysis extension clinic in Cortland. Following approval, CRMC purchased property and a building adjacent to its Outpatient Service Center on West Road. Renovations on the 2,000 square foot building, to accommodate physician offices and examination rooms, began in the summer of 2006. Soon 4,000 square feet was also added to the building to house a modern, comfortable treatment facility with 10 fully equipped dialysis stations.

Under the present arrangement, CRMC will lease space to SJHHC, as well as Nephrology Hypertension Associates of CNY. SJHHC staff will provide daily patient treatments and comprehensive nursing services. CRMC will assist in a support role by providing social work services. Nephrologists Salil Gupta, Pawan Rao, and B. Murthy will provide physician coverage at the new center. Many Cortland area dialysis patients were under the care of these

physicians at a SJHHC-Syracuse dialysis center. Now they have access to the same high quality care, but close to home.

“We live in an exciting healthcare environment”, noted Pasinski. “Based on our experience with CRMC and dialysis, I believe there could be more opportunities for more partnerships in the future.”

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