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Seacoast Hospital Boards Reaffirm Commitment to Affiliation, Seek Dialogue with State Officials

**Exeter Health Resources, Wentworth-Douglass Hospital &
Massachusetts General Hospital launch public awareness effort**

(November 14, 2019 Exeter, NH) Exeter Health Resources and Wentworth-Douglass Hospital have announced the launch of a public engagement effort, seeking the public's support of their proposed affiliation with Massachusetts General Hospital and the benefits it would bring to their local communities.

The affiliation – to create a new, New Hampshire-based regional network to collaboratively deliver healthcare in the Seacoast Region – has been undergoing state and federal regulatory review for the past year. In September, despite the ongoing federal regulatory reviews, the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office filed an objection to the proposed affiliation citing potential future anti-trust concerns.

"It is critical that we have a dialogue about how we could address their concerns," said Mark Whitney, vice president for strategy at Exeter Health Resources. "There is too much at stake for future patients on the Seacoast of New Hampshire."

The three hospitals vow to move the affiliation forward to gain approval from the Federal Trade Commission, stressing the importance of long-term sustainability of not-for-profit healthcare in the Seacoast, a commitment to new clinical services, access to Mass General specialty care, and expanded services for mental health and substance use disorder treatments. They are now launching a public engagement effort – through print, radio and digital channels – to further

inform residents about the proposed affiliation and provide details about how they can contact elected officials to lend their support to the proposed affiliation and to encourage a solution.

“As a small independent community hospital, it is extremely difficult for us to achieve long-term sustainability and to add needed clinical resources to meet the needs of our patients,” said Kevin Callahan, CEO of Exeter Health Resources. “The affiliation with Wentworth-Douglass and Mass General would allow us to continue to meet community needs, sustain our charitable care mission and bring world-class specialty care to our communities for generations to come.”

Gregory Walker, president and CEO of Wentworth-Douglass – which officially joined the Mass General family in 2017 – said the hospital has reduced costs for supplies and pharmaceuticals, realized economies of scale with office functions, and re-aligned staff to areas of focused growth, adding more than 300 new positions. “We have added more highly specialized care in many clinical areas, including cardiology and neurology,” Walker said. “In addition to providing better care for our patients, this affiliation will create more jobs and economic opportunities for the entire Seacoast Region.”

Hospital leaders say they face growing fiscal challenges due to insufficient reimbursement from government payers and increased financial risk, and there are growing concerns that these will worsen as providers throughout the state seek partnerships and affiliation approval to ensure their survival.

For example, Frisbie Memorial Hospital filed plans with state regulators to be acquired by Tennessee-based Hospital Corporation of America, a for-profit company that also owns two other area hospitals-Portsmouth Regional Hospital and Parkland Medical Center. Additionally, Beth Israel Lahey Health recently opened a primary care facility in Seabrook.

Peter L. Slavin, MD, president of Mass General, said, “Our goal is to work to bring specialty care services to the people of New Hampshire, ensuring their access to enhanced, quality care close to home. We have a successful relationship with Wentworth-Douglass Hospital and we hope to continue our commitment to enhancing healthcare in the Seacoast Region through this affiliation with Exeter Health Resources.”

Over the past several weeks a growing number of Seacoast residents and local leaders have joined the call for a dialog aimed at finding a way to balance the concerns of the state with the long-term healthcare needs of the Seacoast. Last week State Senators David Watters and Jon Morgan submitted a letter to fellow Senators, and the Exeter Chamber of Commerce reached out to the Governor encouraging the state to answer the hospitals’ call to discuss any concerns. Whitney said there is a growing level of concern from Seacoast residents regarding the attempt to block the affiliation. “Collectively, Exeter Health Resources and Wentworth-Douglass

Hospitals have well over 100,000 patients and more than 6,000 employees who could be directly affected by the Office of the Attorney General's objection to the proposed affiliation. We invite and encourage community members to share their concerns with elected officials by joining us in an incredibly important discussion about the future of healthcare in the Seacoast."

For more information about the proposed affiliation, visit seacoasthealthcareinitiative.org.

Exeter Health Resources consists of three operating affiliates, Exeter Hospital, Core Physicians and Rockingham Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice that together employ more than 2,300 staff members. Exeter Hospital is a not-for-profit, charitable 100 bed, community-based acute care hospital, originally opened in 1897 with just a few beds, and now provides sophisticated services such as cardiac catheterization and extensive outpatient programs in surgery, and radiation and medical oncology. Exeter Hospital was awarded the highly coveted Magnet® designation in 2015 for its excellence in nursing practices and was re-designated in April 2018. The healthcare system has been recognized for ten years by the American Hospital Association's Health Forum as a "Most Wired" organization. Core Physicians is a community-based, multi-specialty group practice affiliated with Exeter Health Resources. Over 140 physicians and other clinicians in more than 25 locations within the service area offer services in primary care, pediatrics, orthopedics, gastroenterology and many other medical and surgical specialties. Rockingham Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice is a community based non-profit home health and hospice agency that provides services throughout Rockingham County and into Strafford County.

Wentworth-Douglass Hospital is a not-for-profit charitable health care organization located in Dover, New Hampshire with a 110-year history of compassionate care and innovation. Serving the Seacoast communities since 1906, it is a family of 3,000 employees including 500+ registered nurses and a medical staff of over 480 physicians and advanced practitioners dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of residents and visitors to the Seacoast area of New Hampshire and Southern Maine. Wentworth-Douglass Hospital was awarded Magnet® designation in 2016, joined the Massachusetts General Hospital family in 2017 and includes a 178-bed hospital, several urgent care and walk-in facilities, multiple testing centers, Wentworth Health Partners (primary and specialty provider practices), The Works Family Health and Fitness Center and the Wentworth-Douglass Foundation.

Massachusetts General Hospital, founded in 1811, is the third oldest hospital in the nation and the original and largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School. The 1,035-bed academic medical center each year admits more than 50,000 patients, records more than 1.7 million outpatient visits at its main campus and health centers, sees nearly 110,000 patients in its Emergency Department and delivers nearly 3,900 babies. The largest nongovernment employer in Boston, the MGH has more than 26,000 employees, including more than 5,000 nurses and



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nearly 3,000 physicians. For more than two centuries, the MGH has been a leader in bridging innovative science with advanced clinical care. MGH is home to the nation's largest hospital-based research program, the MGH Research Institute, with an annual budget of more than \$1 billion. For more information about the MGH visit www.massgeneral.org.