FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Providence St. Joseph Health Announces New Name for University of Great Falls in Montana; Launches School of Health Professions

University of Great Falls in Montana will become University of Providence, to provide new educational and training programs for range of health care careers and a pipeline to jobs at Providence St. Joseph Health

(Renton, WA, June 13, 2017) – Providence St. Joseph Health (PSJH) announced today that effective July 1, 2017, the University of Great Falls in Montana will become the University of Providence, a name that recognizes the university’s founding by the Sisters of Providence, its dedication to its Catholic values and its commitment to developing health care professionals.

Responding to workforce challenges in the health care industry and beyond, PSJH will offer transformational education programs at the University of Providence, including a new and innovative School of Health Professions that will be a pipeline for graduates to work at PSJH hospitals and facilities and other health care organizations. The new school will be a resource for PSJH employees to advance their education and training and grow within the organization. In addition, students will benefit from an enhanced School of Liberal Arts and Sciences. This transformation is expected to be complete by 2022.

Health care is the nation’s top job creator, with nearly one in four U.S. jobs created last year in the sector, but the industry continues to see a significant shortage of candidates for nursing, clinical and other roles.

“As a Catholic university, we are committed to meeting the pressing needs in our communities and preparing future leaders to serve the common good with compassionate hearts,” says Tony Aretz, PhD, president of University of Providence. “Our new name, the new School of Health Professions and the expanded School of Liberal Arts and Sciences reflect our courageous vision and our commitment to providing transformational education programs and developing leadership talent for the 21st century.”

The partnership between the school and the health system has numerous advantages, Dr. Aretz says. He points out that because of changing demographics, admissions have decreased and a slow economic recovery has forced some families to reconsider the financial value of a college education. At the same time, the demand for more educated and trained health care workers has risen and the school’s current RN to BSN nursing training has become increasingly popular.

“This is an exciting and important time for health care. We have a responsibility to make sure the next generation of caregivers is the best educated and most qualified to meet the significant health and social challenges facing our country,” says Rod Hochman, MD, president and CEO of Providence St. Joseph Health. “As our founders the Sisters of Providence and the Sisters of St. Joseph did long ago, we must plan for the health needs of our communities. Bold and visionary changes are needed, and these
plans will position us to develop the next generation of exceptional health care professionals and become a national resource.”

The new School of Health Professions (SHP) is expected to reach as many as 10,000 students in 10 years, with courses available online and at satellite locations, with the first satellite location expected in the Puget Sound area. These courses will also include professional and certificate programs for PSJH’s 111,000 employees, who will receive discounted tuition on most programs.

The School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (SLAS) will remain on the Great Falls campus and is expected to grow enrollment to 1,400 students within the next decade, with some of the students recruited from within the PSJH network. Additionally, students will benefit from an enhanced academic program and a value proposition called the Argo Advantage, which offers a four-year graduation guarantee and a core curriculum rooted in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.

Both schools will focus on job placement within the Providence St. Joseph Health system, a clear advantage to students. Providence St. Joseph Health will be assured that its new employees have received an excellent education and that they are committed to the organization’s culture, mission and values. All these factors are expected to result in higher employee retention.

About Providence St. Joseph Health

Providence St. Joseph Health is committed to improving the health of the communities it serves, especially those who are poor and vulnerable. With 50 hospitals, 829 physician clinics, senior services, supportive housing and many other health and educational services, the health system and its partners employ more than 111,000 caregivers (employees) serving communities across seven states – Alaska, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington. With system offices based in Renton, Wash. and Irvine, Calif., the Providence St. Joseph Health family of organizations works together to meet the needs of its communities, both today and into the future.

About University of Providence

Located in Great Falls, Montana, the University of Providence is a Catholic university founded by the Sisters of Providence. With a current enrollment of under 1,000 students, the 44-acre campus offers 40 majors, five graduate programs and four distance education programs. There are also 16 sports programs and half of the student body are athletes. The university is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, a distinction signifying the university meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality evaluated through an exacting peer review process.

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