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**Spectrum Health Opens Cutting Edge Urgent Care Service:
*Behavioral Health, Addictions Care Facility is the First in the Region***

Spectrum Health and Human Services commemorated the opening of its innovative Urgent Mental Health Addictions Care Clinic (U-MHACC) with a ribbon cutting on Thursday, September 17 at 1280 Main Street in Buffalo.

The first facility of its kind in Western New York, the U-MHACC provides immediate mental health and substance abuse services to individuals with immediate concerns.

Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, and New York State Senator Tim Kennedy were on hand to help cut the ribbon, with Spectrum Health Chief Executive Office Bruce Nisbet, Associate Director Cindy Voelker, the site's Clinical Director Christine Marie Ziemba, and Chair of the Board of Directors Robert O'Leary.

Adding the U-MHACC to Spectrum Health's scope of service fills an unmet need in our region. Voelker said, "We have seen the need for this service for quite a while. It took the right combination of resources and leadership from our staff to make it happen."

"During this difficult and unprecedented time with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important now more than ever to help ensure individuals get the care and services they need to be healthy and safe," **said** Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul. "Spectrum Health and Human Services' new mental health and addiction clinic – the first of its kind in Western New York – will provide immediate mental health and substance abuse services that are critical for individuals and families who are struggling. Together we are committed to enhancing health services across the state and focused on ways to improve the health care system for all New Yorkers."

Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said, "The struggle with addiction and/or mental health issues can leave affected individuals lost and feeling as if they have nowhere to turn. The new Urgent Mental Health Addictions Care Clinic will provide an immediate lifeline and services for these individuals and is a welcome addition to the health care community here in Erie County."

The calm, welcoming atmosphere of the U-MHACC sets the tone for the experience. “U-MHACC is a safe, warm environment to receive immediate care for mental health concerns,” said Ziembra. The anticipated audience is anyone who is at least 18 years or age, with Medicaid or Medicaid managed care who may or may not be linked to other supportive services.

The heart of the program is the additional layer of crisis intervention and counseling to divert the need for an emergency room visit or hospital stay. A U-

MHACC visit is a quickly triaged intervention and can provide an individual with immediate referral and access services to support recovering and improve quality of life.

Ziembra said, “U-MACC is the place for someone who needs to be cared for that day and have access to the right treatment and wrap around services to keep them out of the hospital.”

U-MHACC is open Monday through Friday for now and may be reached at 716-539-6743

Spectrum Health and Human Services is a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) providing mental health, addiction, and crisis services. Spectrum Health promotes hope, empowerment and self-defined improvements to adults, children, and families as they recover from behavioral and/or substance use-related disorders. Visit www.shswny.org for more information.