United States Army Reserve and Hackensack Meridian Health Hackensack University Medical Center Join Forces to Form First-of-its-Kind Partnership Operation Hackensack S.M.A.R.T.

Innovative partnership provides high-quality, individualized specialty medical training to United States Army Reserve soldiers and Air Force personnel

June 5, 2017 – Hackensack Meridian Health Hackensack University Medical Center, the flagship hospital of New Jersey’s most comprehensive and integrated health network, and the United States Army Reserve today announced the formation of Operation Hackensack S.M.A.R.T. (Strategic Medical Asset Readiness Training), an innovative, first-of-its-kind partnership which focuses on high-quality, individualized specialty medical training for service members to improve their knowledge, skillsets and increase soldier readiness.

Operation Hackensack S.M.A.R.T. integrates interactive observation training that will be specific to the jobs soldiers perform in their military capacity. These soldiers will partner with their civilian counterparts at Hackensack University Medical Center for 14 days of immersion training utilizing cutting-edge technology, at no additional cost to the government. This innovative relationship will contribute to superior readiness and in-depth training within the medical ranks. It will also provide critical knowledge sharing between military and civilian medical professionals about best practices, techniques and procedures to ensure military service members are trained to use the most current technology in today’s rapidly changing health care landscape.

“This innovative partnership will provide our soldiers patient-centered medical training with the world-class physicians and team members at Hackensack University Medical Center,” said Maj. Gen. Mary E. Link, commanding general for Army Reserve Medical Command. “Many of our Army Reserve enlisted medical personnel do not work in the medical field in their civilian capacity. Thanks to Hackensack Meridian Health’s diverse patient population, unparalleled laboratory facilities and state-of-the-art Diagnostic Imaging Technology, soldiers will gain real-time access to cutting-edge technology and training. Our soldiers will greatly benefit from this unique experience and unrivaled expertise in order to advance their medical knowledge, successfully meeting our Army Reserve’s demand for a constant state of readiness.”

This new partnership is a cost effective and efficient way for the Army Reserve to train soldiers through an interactive, observation training experience with their civilian counterparts, explained Link.
“We are excited to announce this first-of-its-kind partnership with the United States Army Reserve,” said Ihor Sawczuk, M.D., president of Hackensack University Medical Center. “We are honored and privileged to support our military by providing high-quality, one-on-one medical training to our soldiers, ensuring they have the critical skillsets they need to maintain readiness. We look forward to welcoming soldiers from across the country to Hackensack University Medical Center for this extraordinary program.”

What makes this program even more unique for the Army Reserve is that the training targets highly specialized, high demand clinical occupational specialties focused predominantly on the enlisted soldier, like laboratory specialists, radiology specialists and operating room technicians. These soldiers will shadow their civilian counterparts and rotate through the hospital continuum, gaining exposure to the Emergency Department, Operating Rooms, Inpatient and Outpatient areas as well as specialized Clinical Laboratories. Previous military partnerships with the medical community have focused on team training, while this training focuses on individual clinical skills.

“Hackensack Meridian Health is honored to support our military personnel through this groundbreaking partnership with the U.S. Army Reserve,” said Robert C. Garrett, FACHE, co-CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health. “Hackensack Meridian Health is always looking for opportunities to support our service members and military veterans, and this unique partnership will enable us to support our servicemen and women who are on the frontlines defending our country in a new and meaningful way, giving them the skills and training they need to effectively fulfill their duty when they are called to serve.”

Operation Hackensack S.M.A.R.T. is inclusive to all Army Reserve medical commands which include the Army Reserve Medical Command, the 807th Medical Command (Deployment Support) and the 3rd Medical Command (Deployment Support), which together contribute approximately 67 percent of the medical capabilities to the Army for global requirements. The Army Reserve Medical Command provides trained, equipped, medically proficient units and Citizen-Soldiers to meet global requirements across unified land operations.

“Hackensack Meridian Health continues to seek ways to be innovative and set the standard in our industry, and our partnership with the U.S. Army Reserve is truly a first of its kind for the hospital and the Army Reserve medical community,” said John K. Lloyd, FACHE, co-CEO of Hackensack Meridian Health. “As a Marine Corps veteran, I am so proud to partner with the U.S. military to support our soldiers, giving them the training, skills and knowledge sharing they need to successfully serve our country.”

The founding class of Operation Hackensack S.M.A.R.T. will begin its first rotation on June 5, 2017, with radiologic and laboratory medical technologists. Twelve U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from across the country and two active duty Air Force personnel from the 87th Medical Group stationed at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst will be part of this inaugural rotation. The rotations are expected to continue throughout this year and next. The United States Army Reserve medical providers play a vital role in providing world-class health care to numerous installations across the country. In New Jersey, the North East Medical Area Readiness Support Group (NE-MARSG) is an invaluable partner to civil authorities during an emergency or disaster.

In addition to the announcement of Operation Hackensack S.M.A.R.T., Dr. Sawczuk signed a statement of support on behalf of Hackensack University Medical Center with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an office within the Department of Defense that develops and maintains employer
support for Guard and Reserve services. “We are proud to sign this Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve, continuing Hackensack University Medical Center’s longstanding commitment to support our U.S. service members and veterans,” Sawczuk added.

Hackensack University Medical Center has a long history of supporting U.S. military veterans. The Hackensack Veterans Network, founded in the fall of 2013, is comprised of Hackensack University Medical Center employees who are serving, or who have served, in all branches of the U.S. military. The Hackensack Veterans Network provides Hackensack University Medical Center veterans with information, education, and resources, as well as offers its members an opportunity to continue to give back to their community. In addition, Hackensack University Medical Center joined the Hiring our Heroes Program, sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in 2014, aimed at helping U.S. Military Veterans and their spouses find employment. Hackensack University Medical Center is also part of the VetFriendly 50,000 Jobs Challenge, sponsored by Veteran Recruiting, which has the goal of helping 50,000 veterans find employment by 2018.

About Hackensack Meridian Health Hackensack University Medical Center
Hackensack Meridian Health Hackensack University Medical Center, a 775-bed nonprofit teaching and research hospital located in Bergen County, NJ, is the largest provider of inpatient and outpatient services in the state. Founded in 1888 as the county’s first hospital, it is now part of one of the largest networks in the state comprised of 28,000 team members and more than 6,000 physicians. Hackensack University Medical Center was listed as the number one hospital in New Jersey in U.S. News & World Report’s 2016-17 Best Hospital rankings - maintaining its place atop the NJ rankings since the rating system was introduced. It was also named one of the top four New York Metro Area hospitals. Hackensack University Medical Center is one of only five major academic medical centers in the nation to receive Healthgrades America’s 50 Best Hospitals Award for five or more years in a row. Becker’s Hospital Review recognized Hackensack University Medical Center as one of the 100 Great Hospitals in America 2017. The medical center is one of the top 25 green hospitals in the country according to Practice Greenhealth, and received 25 Gold Seals of Approval™ by The Joint Commission – more than any other hospital in the country. It was the first hospital in New Jersey and second in the nation to become a Magnet® recognized hospital for nursing excellence; receiving its fifth consecutive designation in 2014. Hackensack University Medical Center has created an entire campus of award-winning care, including: the John Theurer Cancer Center; the Heart & Vascular Hospital; and the Sarkis and Siran Gabrellian Women’s and Children’s Pavilion, which houses the Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital and Donna A. Sanzari Women’s Hospital, which was designed with The Deirdre Imus Environmental Health Center and listed on the Green Guide’s list of Top 10 Green Hospitals in the U.S. Hackensack University Medical Center is the Hometown Hospital of the New York Giants and the New York Red Bulls and is Official Medical Services Provider to The Northern Trust PGA Golf Tournament. It remains committed to its community through fundraising and community events especially the Tackle Kids Cancer Campaign providing much needed research at the Children’s Cancer Institute housed at the Joseph M. Sanzari Children’s Hospital. To learn more, visit www.HackensackUMC.org.

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