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**MARIA COLLEGE PARTNERS WITH 24 HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS TO
EXPAND EDUCATION ACCESS FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

ALBANY, N.Y. (October 3, 2025) — Maria College today announced a partnership with 24 Capital Region human service organizations to create pathways for healthcare employees to pursue education opportunities.

The partnership was formalized with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at Maria College.

“At Maria College, we are dedicated to creating clear, affordable academic pathways,” said Maria College President Dr. Lynn Ortale. “Students can begin as medical assistants or licensed practical nurses, advance through our associate degree in nursing program, become registered nurses, and complete their bachelor’s degree online — all while balancing work and family responsibilities.

“We believe in the ‘earn and learn’ model, which lets students work while earning degrees, transforming their lives and their families’ futures,” Ortale continued.

The demand for skilled healthcare workers goes beyond hospitals and nursing homes, impacting group homes and the communities they support. This partnership seeks to tackle these shortages by supporting workforce development across the region.

Ortale credited Gov. Kathy Hochul’s visionary leadership and the state’s \$646 million investment in the healthcare workforce for expanding access to healthcare training. The funding supports students in Career Pathways Training Programs by covering tuition, fees, textbooks, and supplies.

“We value our partnership with the Caring Gene® Career Pathways Training Program and appreciate its support for students pursuing career growth through education while addressing our community’s workforce development needs,” Ortale said.

Maria College offers flexible academic programs designed for working adults. Eligible students may apply to the following programs: licensed practical nurse (LPN) certificate, associate degree in nursing (ADN), bachelor of science in nursing (BSN, online), and medical assistant certificate. Students receive full academic support, including advising, tutoring, and success coaching, with a goal of completing their studies by May 2027.

Community Leaders Voice Support

Vanderheyden's President and CEO Karen Carpenter stated, "The Capital Region human service agencies in attendance today are proud to partner with Maria College to offer nursing education to countless employees who care for thousands of those in need throughout our community." Vanderheyden offers a wide range of programs and services to youth, adults and families through educational, residential and community-based programs throughout the Capital Region.

Organizations Participating in the Initiative

Leaders from the following Capital Region organizations signed MOUs for Maria College to be their academic partner to support their employees' career advancement: Addictions Care Center of Albany; The Arc Lexington; The Arc of Rensselaer County; Center for Disability Services; Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO); Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies; Hope House, Inc.; LaSalle School; Living Resources; Mental Health Association of Columbia-Greene; NY Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation; Northern Rivers; NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health; SEAT Center, Ronald McDonald House; St. Anne Institute; St. Catherine's Center for Children; Together for Youth; Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region; United Way of the Greater Capital Region; Unity House of Troy; Vanderheyden, Inc.; Warren, Washington, & Albany Counties ARC; and, Wildwood Programs.

"This partnership reflects our commitment to workforce development and community engagement," Ortale concluded. "Thanks to the collective efforts of these organizations, we've united a diverse group of human services providers to expand career pathways for dedicated workers."

For more information or to apply, visit mariacollege.edu/admissions.

About Maria College

Founded in 1958, Maria College is one of 17 colleges and universities in the United States sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. The private, co-educational, Catholic college in Albany serves more than 860 students in a variety of associate, bachelor's, and master's degree and certificate programs, including liberal arts, healthcare management, nursing, psychology, occupational therapy, public health, and health and occupational sciences. Learn more at MariaCollege.edu.