

For Immediate Release



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**MASONIC MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MMRI), KELBERMAN CENTER RESOURCE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (RCIL), ADHD & AUTISM ADVOCACY PLLC (AAPSA), and UPSTATE CEREBRAL PALSY (UCP) SIGN PARTNERSHIP.**

*Five Organizations from the Mohawk Valley Partner Together to understand the causes of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).*

(UTICA, NY) Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI), the Kelberman Center, Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL), ADHD & Autism Psychological Services and Advocacy PLLC (AAPSA), and Upstate Cerebral Palsy (UCP) signed an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) research partnership. The purpose of the agreement is to understand the mechanisms that cause ASD.

“The support of these organizations, working together, all for the common goal of developing an Autism research program here at MMRI will allow us to better understand this disorder, will help us resolve the cause, and will help us find ways to better treat, and hopefully cure, patients affected by Autism,” Maria Kontaridis, Ph.D., Gordon K. More Professor and Chair of Biomedical Research and Translational Medicine said. “We thank these organizations for their generosity and eagerness to help in the fight against ASD.”

On Thursday, October 17th, these five organizations from the Mohawk Valley signed agreements to support Autism Research at the MMRI. The organizations met in the Bond-Trosin Auditorium at MMRI to officially sign-off on their partnership.

“It is an honor for us to support research that will help our patients and numerous others throughout the world. This collaboration speaks volumes to the extraordinary research atmosphere created here at the Masonic Medical Research Institute, partnered with local Autism services and talent that is widely praised and respected. This is yet another feather in the cap for the renaissance of the Mohawk Valley.” Michael Kelberman MD, FACC, Founder, and President Board of Directors at the Kelberman Center.

The partnership will provide MMRI tissue samples from patients with ASD enabling MMRI faculty the ability to generate inducible pluripotent stem cells to understand the mechanisms of ASD, as well as genetically sequence patient DNA to identify novel mutations that cause Autism, all in an effort to combat this disorder and find ways to treat Autism.

“We are confident that through our support, MMRI will effectively make breakthroughs in the field of Autism research,” Andy Lopez-Williams, Ph.D., ABPP, Clinical & Forensic Neuropsychologist, President and Clinical Director, ADHD & Autism Psychological Services and Advocacy said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Autism affects nearly 1 in 59 children within the United States alone. While the disease is incurable, MMRI is trying to identify the possible causes of Autism. The support of these organizations will further these research efforts and will hopefully lead to better treatments of ASD.

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“We believe this research reflects our mission of providing the necessary opportunities to individuals every day to fulfill life choices. We are proud to stand in support of MMRI and Autism research and awareness, Louis B. Tehan, President & CEO, Upstate Caring Partners, Inc. said.

The partnership between these five prominent organizations will not only benefit Autism research but the entire community. By collaborating, the organizations showcase the innovative leadership within the Mohawk Valley.

“We are excited to reveal to the community our efforts of helping to advance Autism research and stand with these four organizations in making our community and the world a better place. As an organization that advocates for individuals with disabilities, RCIL is excited to partner with the Masonic Medical Research Institute and fellow non-profits on this important initiative. Collaborations are a key component in fulfilling our mission which is to positively impact the lives of individuals with disabilities. I thank Maria Kontaridis for her vision and to the community leaders who are supporting this worthy effort. Together, there are no limits on what we can achieve.” Zvia McCormick, CEO Resource Center for Independent Living said.

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MMRI is dedicated to scientific research that improves the health and quality of life for all. They strive to conduct high-quality research aimed at developing a deep understanding of diseases and generating innovative cures and treatments. For more information about MMRI, please visit [www.mmri.edu](http://www.mmri.edu)