FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LIGONIER, PA, June 30, 2017 … Excela Health concludes a yearlong exploration of options for ongoing emergency medical services to the Ligonier Valley with the transition of Ligonier Valley Ambulance Service (LVAS) to Mutual Aid Ambulance Service (MAAS).

Effective July 1, Mutual Aid assumes responsibility for all emergency medical services previously provided by LVAS as well as the company’s current subscriber base. With the transition, Scot Graham, a Ligonier native and Mutual Aid senior supervisor, becomes interim station manager. His familiarity with the Ligonier Valley coupled with his 32 years of paramedic experience with Mutual Aid will prove beneficial during the integration of services.

Like Ligonier Valley Ambulance Service, Mutual Aid has a long and storied history of providing emergency medical services across eastern and central Westmoreland County through its 11 community-based ambulance stations. In all case, Mutual Aid has maintained or enhanced the emergency response to the more than 220,000 residents touched, preserving the community investment in these essential health care services.

“We are pleased Mutual Aid Ambulance Service will be continuing the well-established and highly regarded emergency response in the Ligonier Valley,” said Maryann Singley, Vice President of Patient Care Services, Excela Health Latrobe Hospital, under whose auspices Ligonier Valley Ambulance Service functioned since its establishment in 1967. “Transitioning the service to a provider that has been recognized within the state and across the country for its quality benchmarks was important to Excela Health and Latrobe Hospital, thus ensuring that the highest standards for emergency response will be maintained.”

For many years Ligonier Valley Ambulance Service has functioned more as a department of the hospital and less as an emergency medical response operation. This transition will allow for the refocus of the service to its original intent.
A past Pennsylvania Ambulance Service of the Year, Mutual Aid Ambulance Service was incorporated in 1968, and was among the first ambulance services to earn national accreditation and use and certify Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). The first provider in Western Pennsylvania to use an Advanced Life Support ambulance, Mutual Aid also was influential in having a medical helicopter based in the rural and urban areas, another first in the Nation.

Among other citations and certifications, Mutual Aid is recognized as a Pediatric ALS Provider; an American Heart Association Silver and Gold Mission Life Line awardee, and a Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission responder. Licensed by both the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Public Utility Commission, Mutual Aid is able to provide medical and non-medical transportation services. Mutual Aid is a preferred contract provider of most insurers including Medicare/Medicaid.

Mutual Aid will be providing 24-hour, 7-day-a-week service from the Ligonier station along North Market Street, with Advanced Life Support crews that include paramedics and EMTs. Veteran staff previously employed with LVAS will be working alongside an equally experienced MAAS crew. This is possible because many paramedics and emergency medical technicians from MAAS have been members of the part-time or casual pool of employees with LVAS over the years. All staff from LVAS were offered employment opportunities with either Excela Health or Mutual Aid as part of the service conversion, further promoting a smooth migration from one provider to another. The MAAS employee base of 220 with be enhanced by the addition of 11 staff coming on board directly from LVAS.

Mutual Aid will continue operations at the same site and use the same vehicles already dispatched from that site. Which include three ambulances, wheelchair van and supervisor response vehicle. The transition to the Mutual Aid color scheme will occur over time.

In addition, current LVAS subscribers will find their annual membership extended for an additional four months, ending April 1, 2018. This extension is being communicated in a welcome letter from Graham.

All questions regarding current and future ambulance service should be directed to the Mutual Aid Business Office, 724-837-6134.