NOTE TO MEDIA: A press conference will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, February 2, in the Cattails Ballroom at MeadowView Conference Resort and Convention Center in Kingsport, Tennessee. Ballad Health leaders will be available for interviews at that time. A live stream of the press event will be available at www.facebook.com/BalladHealth.

Mountain States Health Alliance, Wellmont Health System boards authorize final approval of merger, Ballad Health to celebrate launch Friday

~ Leaders named for top positions in new health system ~

TENNESSEE and VIRGINIA – The boards of directors of Mountain States Health Alliance and Wellmont Health System have voted unanimously to approve the final terms that will govern their merger, forming a new health system to serve the 1.2 million residents of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. The transaction creating the new organization, named Ballad Health, officially became effective at 12:01 a.m. February 1, 2018. A formal launch will be held on Friday, February 2.

The final vote marks the end of a nearly four-year merger process that began when Mountain States Health Alliance responded to a request for proposals from Wellmont Health System inviting health systems to outline potential partnerships. The Wellmont board selected the proposal from Mountain States because of its unique vision to create a health improvement organization, limit health care pricing growth, maintain local governance, and invest in the region. Alternatives to the Mountain States proposal would have led to higher pricing, loss of local governance, and nearly 1,000 lost jobs. The proposed merger of Wellmont and Mountain States drew broad support from employers and business leaders, the region’s chambers of commerce, local governments and the legislative delegation.

The merger was made possible through the passage of legislation in Tennessee and Virginia, which was supported by the governors of both states due to the unique nature of the region. The legislation authorized the issuance of a certificate of public advantage (COPA) in Tennessee and a cooperative agreement in Virginia, and represents the first transaction of its kind to involve approval and supervision from two states. It is the largest COPA-governed merger in the country to date.

“This merger would not have been possible without tremendous support from our local business community, physicians, team members and community leaders who are passionate about preserving local healthcare during a time when community hospitals are being absorbed by large national health systems,” said Alan Levine, executive chairman, president and chief executive officer of Ballad Health. “This merger, which is happening with the support of the leaders of Tennessee and Virginia, represents an acknowledgement that there is a different model that can be better than the creation of a few national health care systems. This is new, and we respect the challenge before us. We are all in this together.”

Ballad Health leaders and team members will mark the system’s official launch on Friday with celebrations for team members at locations throughout the region. Team members will receive new badges bearing the Ballad Health logo on Friday, but few other changes will be visible to patients.
immediately. Patient care in all sites will proceed as normal. Signage and printed materials will change gradually over the next several months.

The top leadership team for Ballad Health has also been selected, including leaders from both the former Wellmont and Mountain States teams.

“Wellmont and Mountain States had great leaders, and we have spent nearly one year evaluating them to make sure we selected the team that would be the best fit, create the best culture, and be capable of executing on the very significant plans before us,” said Levine. “As we spent the last year evaluating the team, it became clear that we have some of the most talented people you can find in any health system. I believe we have selected the people who can execute on the promise of this merger.”

Biographical information for the Ballad Health leadership team follows:

**Alan Levine** will serve as executive chairman, president and chief executive officer of Ballad Health. With more than 25 years of hospital operations experience, Levine has served as chief executive officer of hospitals and health systems ranging from a small rural hospital to one of the largest public systems in America. Prior to his role at Ballad Health, Levine was the president and chief executive officer of Mountain States Health Alliance. Levine served on Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal’s cabinet as secretary of Louisiana’s Department of Health and Hospitals and as Governor Jindal's senior health policy advisor. He also served as deputy chief of staff and senior health policy advisor to Florida governor Jeb Bush prior to his appointment by Governor Bush to serve as secretary of Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration, an agency responsible for administering a $17 billion budget. In these roles, Levine oversaw the health care response to 12 major hurricanes making landfall in Florida and Louisiana, managed Louisiana’s response to the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic, led Louisiana’s effort to improve child immunization rates from ranking 48th in the nation to 2nd, successfully advocated the passage of major and historic health care reforms in both states and was recognized for his efforts in combating fraud and abuse in public health care programs. Levine currently serves on the board of governors of the State University System of Florida, the governing body of Florida’s 12 state universities. He serves as chair of research and academic excellence and has served as chair Audit and Compliance. He also serves as the Chair of the Florida Higher Education Coordinating Council, a policy-setting body for public and private education in Florida. Levine has been recognized by Modern Healthcare magazine as one of the 30 Americans likely to have a powerful impact on health care in the next 30 years, and as an up-and-comer in the health care industry. He received a bachelor’s degree in health sciences, a master’s degree in business administration and a master’s degree in health sciences from the University of Florida, where he is recognized as a member of the University of Florida Hall of Fame. [Download a photo of Alan Levine here.](#)

**Marvin Eichorn** will serve as chief operating officer of Ballad Health. Eichorn previously served as executive vice president and chief operating officer of Mountain States Health Alliance, with oversight of all 14 Mountain States hospitals and the retail and ambulatory divisions. Prior to joining Mountain States, he was employed by Covenant Health/Fort Sanders Health System in Knoxville, Tennessee, for 14 years, holding various positions including executive vice president/non-hospital operations and executive vice president/chief financial officer. He also previously served as chief financial officer of a private development company in Pensacola, Florida, and as a certified public accountant with Ernst and Young.
Currently, Eichorn serves as the board chair of the Tennessee Hospital Association, and is on the board of directors for the Northeast State Foundation, the Girl Scouts of the Southern Appalachians, and AEIX. In 2000, he received the Meritorious Service Award for an Executive Staff member from the Tennessee Hospital Association, and also is a recipient of the Health Care Heroes Award. Eichorn is a certified public accountant and a member of various health care and finance organizations, including the American College of Healthcare Executives. He holds a bachelor’s degree in finance from the University of West Florida and a master’s degree in finance from Milligan College. Download a photo of Marvin Eichorn here.

Lynn Krutak will serve as chief financial officer of Ballad Health. Prior to her role at Ballad Health, Krutak served as the executive vice president and chief financial officer for Mountain States Health Alliance, with responsibility for the direction and oversight of the health system’s financial operations. She joined Mountain States in 1998 when Johnson City Medical Center purchased six facilities from Columbia/HCA. At the time of the acquisition, she was chief financial officer at Johnson City Specialty Hospital. Before her role as chief financial officer for the health system, Krutak was serving as both the corporate CFO for Mountain States and CFO for the system’s wholly owned for-profit subsidiary, Blue Ridge Medical Management. She also served in numerous financial roles at the hospital facilities. Before her career in healthcare, Krutak served in a lead finance position for a top 50 privately held company in Atlanta. Krutak graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she received a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a concentration in accounting. She earned a master’s degree in business administration from East Tennessee State University. Krutak is a current member of various health care and finance organizations and recognized as a certified healthcare finance professional by the Healthcare Financial Management Association. Download a photo of Lynn Krutak here.

Dr. Jerry Blackwell will serve as chief clinical officer of Ballad Health. Prior to his current role, Dr. Blackwell served as president of the Wellmont CVA Heart Institute, which was repeatedly ranked among the elite in the nation for its delivery of superior, expert care. Blackwell joined the medical staff of Holston Valley Medical Center in the mid-1990s, bringing expertise in magnetic resonance imaging of the cardiovascular system. He quickly developed national prominence in computerized tomography (CT) angiography of the heart. He has helped pioneer the clinical use of cardiac CT, cardiac MRI and cardiac positron emission topography (PET) in the Tri-Cities area and in addition has a busy clinical practice. Blackwell is involved at a national level in multiple capacities. He served for three years on the board of governors of the American College of Cardiology and as president of the of the Tennessee chapter of the ACC. He is currently the chair-elect of the ACC’s Health Affairs Committee. He is board-certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular diseases by the American Board of Medical Examiners. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and graduated from the Marshall University School of Medicine. Blackwell completed his residency and cardiology fellowship at The Ohio State University and his cardiovascular MRI fellowship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He also graduated from the physician’s executive MBA program at the University of Tennessee. Download a photo of Dr. Jerry Blackwell here.

Anthony Keck will serve as system innovation and chief population health officer of Ballad Health. Keck is the former senior vice president and chief development officer for Mountain States Health Alliance. In that role, he was responsible for marketing and sales, strategic planning, government affairs, and the
system's accountable care organization (ACO). Keck was also president of the Mountain States Foundation.

Before joining Mountain States, Keck served as the director of Health and Human Services for South Carolina during the first term of Governor Nikki R. Haley and also served three years in the administration of Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal. Prior to his government service, he worked for organizations such as Johnson & Johnson, Ochsner Clinic New Orleans and St. Thomas Health Services, a community clinic also located in New Orleans.

Keck was active in establishing the Louisiana Health Care Quality Forum after Hurricane Katrina, served on the Board of the National Association of Medicaid Directors, the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Governance and Financing of Graduate Medical Education and the Executive Committee of the National Academy for State Health Policy. He is currently vice-chair of the board for the Virginia Center for Health Innovation, a board member of the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, and chair of the Government Relations committee of the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce board of directors. Keck lives in Bristol, Tennessee, and is married with two children. Download a photo of Anthony Keck here.

**Tim Belisle** will serve as general counsel of Ballad Health. Prior to this role, Belisle served as the executive vice president of corporate compliance and general counsel for Mountain States Health Alliance. He oversaw the provision of legal services, audit and compliance services, risk management, corporate contracting and insurance services to all of Mountain States.

Belisle was also a partner in private practice with the Johnson City law firm of Anderson, Fugate, Givens & Belisle, specializing in health law, corporate and commercial matters, and general litigation. In addition to his work with Ballad Health, Belisle sits on the Johnson City Board of Education and the Johnson City Public Building Authority.

He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from East Tennessee State University, and Juris Doctor and Master of Business Administration degrees from Wake Forest University. In 2017, he earned admittance to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar. Download a photo of Tim Belisle here.

**Lisa Smithgall** will serve as chief nursing officer of Ballad Health. Prior to this role, Smithgall was the vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer of Holston Valley Medical Center. She also served as associate vice president of nursing at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pennsylvania, and vice president of women’s and children’s strategic service unit at Mountain States Health Alliance.

Smithgall has more than 30 years of nursing leadership experience. She is a member of professional nursing organizations, including the American Organization of Nurse Executives, the National Association of Neonatal Nurses, and Sigma Theta Tau International. She maintains certifications in nursing practice and nursing leadership as a certified neonatal intensive care nurse, a certified pediatric nurse practitioner, and certified nurse executive.

Smithgall was recipient of the Tennessee Hospital Association’s Meritorious Service Award for Executive Staff in 2010, The Women’s Economic Council Foundation “E” Award for Economic Excellence and Equality in 2009, The Business Journal Health Care Hero Award in 2009, and the YWCA Tribute to Women Award in 2009. She actively participates in regional community boards and advisory panels. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the Southern Appalachian Ronald McDonald House Charities in Johnson City, Tennessee, Community Advisory Board Member for the Northeast Tennessee Nurse-Family Partnership Program, Community Advisory Board Member for the East Tennessee State University College of
Nursing, and a Nursing Advisory Committee Member for the Walters State Community College Nursing program.

In addition to her role at Ballad Health, Smithgall serves as the adjunct faculty at ETSU and co-director of the ETSU/Wellmont Holston Valley Medical Center Accelerated BSN Nursing Program at Kingsport, initiated in 2016. She received her Bachelor of Science in nursing degree at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, her Master of Science in nursing degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and her Philosophy of Science in nursing degree from ETSU. Download a photo of Lisa Smithgall here.

**Martha Chill** will serve as chief information officer of Ballad Health. Prior to her role at Ballad Health, Chill served as chief information officer for Wellmont Health System, with oversight for the system’s knowledge and technology services, including all software, hardware, data management and electronic medical record.

Chill joined Wellmont in 2007 as executive vice president of operations at Holston Valley Medical Center, later becoming chief operating officer for the hospital. Following her promotion to system vice president, Chill oversaw the implementation of Wellmont’s EPIC electronic medical record. Prior to joining Wellmont, Chill worked for Baptist Hospital West/Baptist Hospital for Women in Knoxville. She has also served at Covenant Health and at Humana Hospitals in Louisville, Kentucky.

Chill has a bachelor’s degree in medical technology from Spalding University and master’s degree in management of healthcare facilities from Central Michigan University. Throughout her leadership career, Chill has been recognized for quality improvement, customer and employee satisfaction, physician recruitment and integration, strong fiscal management, productivity enhancement and revenue growth. She is involved with several professional and community groups, including the American College of Healthcare Executives and Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Download a photo of Martha Chill here.

**Gary Miller** will serve as COPA compliance officer of Ballad Health. Prior to his role at Ballad Health, Miller was executive vice president and general counsel for Wellmont Health System. He has served as adjunct professor of Hospital and Health Law at Appalachian State University and has written articles published in the Labor Law Journal, the Journal of Hospital & Health Services Administration, the Tennessee Bar Journal and the Tennessee Medicine Journal. He is a member of the Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina bar associations, and the American Health Lawyers Association.

Before joining Wellmont, Miller was in private practice in the Tri-Cities area of Tennessee. He served as president of the Alliance of Tennessee Hospital Attorneys from 2005 through 2008. He has also been on the Tennessee Hospital Association task forces on HIPAA compliance and unusual events reporting. He chaired a task force for the Tennessee Department of Health, which prepared the draft legislation that was promulgated as the Tennessee Health Care Decisions Act.

Miller has been a board member of Ashley Academy, board member and secretary of the National Storytelling Association, member of the Executive Committee of the board of directors of the National Center for Quality, an ACE consultant to the Senior Corps of Retired Executives, member of the Executive Council of the Radford University Alumni Association and member of the board of directors of the New River Valley Legal Aid Corp.
He earned a bachelor’s degree from Radford College, a master’s degree in English from the University of Tennessee and a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law. Download a photo of Gary Miller here.

**David Sensibaugh** will serve as *interim vice president of human resources* for Ballad Health. Sensibaugh currently serves as chief executive officer of Integrated Solutions Health Network (ISHN), a regional health solutions company based in Johnson City, Tennessee, including approximately 2,000 physicians in northeast Tennessee, southwest Virginia and northwest North Carolina. He will return to his role as CEO of ISHN after his interim position in Ballad Health human resources is complete. Prior to joining ISHN, Sensibaugh was the director of integrated health at Eastman Chemical Company. He served Eastman in the human resources department from 1981 to 2011 and has held managerial positions in the areas of compensation, payroll, HR information technology, employee service center and global benefits.

Sensibaugh holds a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and sciences and a master’s degree in business administration from Virginia Tech. He has served as an adjunct faculty member at Milligan College, teaching human resources management. Other past community leadership positions include the Mountain States Washington County community board, the board of advisors for ETSU’s Bill Gatton College of Pharmacy, the advisory board of HEAL Appalachia, the board of directors for Integrated Benefits Institute, the CareSpark board of directors, Pioneering Healthy Communities, the Tennessee e-Health Council, the board of directors for Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO), and the Tennessee Health Quality Initiative. He also currently serves as an elder at Colonial Heights Christian Church. Download a photo of David Sensibaugh here.

**Steve Kilgore** will serve as *vice president of Ballad Health Medical Services*. Prior to this role, Kilgore served as senior vice president of retail, outpatient and ambulatory services for Mountain States Health Alliance. He was also president and chief executive officer of Blue Ridge Medical Management Corporation, a for-profit, wholly-owned subsidiary of Mountain States Health Alliance. Kilgore was also director of development for a national publicly held physician practice management company and as executive director of a large, regional multi-specialty practice.

Kilgore has more than 30 years of health care experience in the areas of hospital/physician relations, development, physician practice acquisition, physician practice management, physician compensation and integrated delivery systems. He currently serves on a number of healthcare-related boards, including the board of the Hospital-Owned Physician Practice Executives of Tennessee and the Friends in Need Health Center, Inc. of Kingsport, Tennessee. Kilgore is a fellow in the American College of Medical Practice Executives. He received his master’s degree from Milligan College and his a bachelor’s degree in business administration/economics from King College. Kilgore and his wife, Cathy, live in Kingsport, Tennessee, with their daughters, Alison and Claire. They also have two adult children, Brantley and Clayton. Download a photo of Steve Kilgore here.

**Eric Deaton** will serve as *vice president of market operations* for Ballad Health. Deaton has served in leadership roles in Tennessee, Virginia and South Carolina for about two decades, providing vision and strategic thinking to help take organizations to the next level.

Previously, Deaton was Wellmont Health System’s executive vice president and chief operating officer. He has also held the title of market president for LifePoint Hospitals, where he directed the collective
operations of Danville Regional Medical Center and Memorial Hospital of Martinsville, both in South Central Virginia. He also served as president and chief executive officer of Danville Regional from 2010 until 2013. During his tenure, Danville Regional opened seven new clinics, recruited 50 physicians to the community and increased primary care opportunities, which reduced non-acute emergency department visits. Earlier in his career, Deaton was market chief executive officer for North Side Hospital, Johnson City Specialty Hospital and Northeast Tennessee Rehabilitation Hospital. Deaton was on the boards of directors for the Virginia Board of Health, Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association and Federation of American Hospitals. He has also sat on the boards of many community organizations in South Central Virginia. Deaton earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Milligan College and a master's degree in business administration from Bristol College. He is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. Download a photo of Eric Deaton here.

Stan Hickson will serve as president of Ballad Health’s southwest market, with oversight of Johnson City Medical Center, Franklin Woods Community Hospital, Woodridge Psychiatric Hospital, and Niswonger Children’s Hospital. Hickson has served since 2016 as chief executive officer of the Mountain States northeast operating division and as the chief executive officer of Johnston Memorial Hospital in Abingdon, Virginia. The northeast operating division includes all operations in Abingdon, Marion and Lebanon Virginia, including Smyth County Community Hospital and Russell County Medical Center. With nearly twenty years of healthcare experience, Hickson has served in various executive roles, including serving as executive partner for The Advisory Board, a leading national health care operations consulting firm. Hickson also served as executive vice president and chief operating officer for Palmetto Health Richland in Columbia, SC, a 649-bed teaching hospital and trauma center operating under a Certificate of Public Advantage. He also served as chief operating officer of Montgomery Regional Hospital in Blacksburg, Virginia.; associate administrator of Trident Medical Center in Charleston, SC; and as a strategic planner for HCA. Hickson began his career as an administrative resident at Novant Health in Charlotte, NC. During Hickson’s tenure at Johnston Memorial Hospital, the hospital received recognition from independent national organizations, including Healthgrades and Consumer Reports, for patient safety and infection prevention. Download a photo of Stan Hickson here.

Monty McLaurin will serve as president of Ballad Health’s northwest market, with oversight of Holston Valley Medical Center, Hawkins County Memorial Hospital, Hancock County Hospital, Indian Path Medical Center, Lonesome Pine Hospital, Mountain View Regional Medical Center, Norton Community Hospital, and Dickenson Community Hospital. McLaurin was previously the chief executive officer and vice president of Indian Path Medical Center in Kingsport, Tennessee. During his 14 year tenure at the hospital, McLaurin was instrumental in a $28 million dollar physical expansion of the Indian Path Medical Center and campus, and has played a vital role in development of many new programs. In the past 35 years, McLaurin has held executive positions in hospitals in Alabama, Arkansas, Texas and Tennessee. He holds a nursing home administrator license and is a member and fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives as well as a member of the Tennessee Health Care Association (THCA). McLaurin currently serves the community as chairman-elect of the 2018 Kingsport Chamber of Commerce board of directors, is a member of the Kingsport Rotary Club, the PEAK Advisory Board and...
McLaurin and his wife, Debi, are members of the Kingsport Christ Fellowship Church. They have four children now living in Mississippi, Texas, New York City and Johnson City, Tennessee. Download a photo of Monty McLaurin here.

**Greg Neal** will serve as **president of Ballad Health’s northeast market**, with oversight of Bristol Regional Medical Center, Johnston Memorial Hospital, Russell County Medical Center and Smyth County Community Hospital.

Prior to his role in Ballad Health, Neal served as president of Bristol Regional Medical Center, a role he filled since 2013. He has served in a number of executive posts throughout Wellmont Health System since 1991 when he began his career in strategic planning and business development. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he earned master’s degrees in both healthcare administration and business administration. His undergraduate degree in sociology/philosophy was earned at Tennessee Technological University. He has previously served in multiple executive-level positions, including president of the Wellmont Community Division composed of the system’s five community hospitals in Tennessee and Virginia, chief operating officer roles at Bristol Regional and Holston Valley Medical Center, as well as leading the supply chain and support service functions from the Wellmont corporate office. Greg is board certified in healthcare administration, a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and a past recipient of the American College of Healthcare Executives’ Tennessee Regent’s Award for Young Executive of the Year. The Bristol Chamber of Commerce in 2017 presented him with its Distinguished Leadership Award. He is active in civic affairs through service on the boards of multiple community service organizations. Download a photo of Greg Neal here.

**Dwayne Taylor** will serve as **president of Ballad Health’s southeast market**, with oversight of Sycamore Shoals Hospital, Johnson County Community Hospital, and Unicoi County Memorial Hospital.

Prior to this role, Taylor served as vice president and chief executive officer for Mountain States Health Alliance’s Southeast Market, comprising Sycamore Shoals, Johnson County and Unicoi County hospitals. Taylor joined Mountain States in 1990, first serving the system as a staff accountant. He then spent 10 years as the chief financial officer for Sycamore Shoals Hospital before becoming chief executive officer in 2006. During this time, Taylor led several key projects, including the planning and development of a new 35,000-square-foot medical office building, expansion of the emergency department, implementation of MRI services and the addition of geropsych services.

As a lifelong member of the Elizabethton community, Taylor is passionate about the region and about working with other community leaders on ways to grow and improve the community. He has served as a board member for the Hospital Alliance of Tennessee, the Elizabethton and Carter County Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the local Rotary Club and is a strong supporter of the United Way. He and his wife Marsha are proud former members of the band boosters at Elizabethton High School. They have two adult children: Their son, Weston, is a sophomore at East Tennessee State University majoring in sports management and their daughter, Kirsten, is in graduate school at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville working on a degree in speech pathology. Download a photo of Dwayne Taylor here.
Other leaders within Ballad Health will be:

Tammy Albright – Takoma Regional Hospital
Tim Attebery – Holston Valley Medical Center
Trish Baise – Franklin Woods Community Hospital and Woodridge Psychiatric Hospital
Rebecca Beck – Hawkins County Memorial Hospital and Hancock County Hospital
Eric Carroll – Unicoi County Memorial Hospital
Lisa Carter – Niswonger Children’s Hospital
Dale Clark – Lonesome Pine Hospital and Mountain View Regional Medical Center
Stephen Givens – Russell County Medical Center
John Jeter – Johnston Memorial Hospital
Mark Leonard – Norton Community Hospital
Chastity Trivette – Johnson County Community Hospital
James Tyler – Smyth County Community Hospital
Mark Vanover – Dickenson Community Hospital
Chuck Whitfield – Laughlin Memorial Hospital