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NEWS RELEASE

FOX VALLEY SURGICAL ASSOCIATES CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Multi-Specialty Clinic Continues to Expand to Best Serve Community

(Appleton, Wis.) – As one of the first multi-specialty surgery clinics to open in the Fox Cities area, Appleton-based Fox Valley Surgical Associates (FVSA) is celebrating its 50th anniversary as it continues to expand.

The practice got its start after Dr. William (Bill) Chandler graduated from Marquette University with his medical degree and felt there was a great need to bring more surgical expertise to the community. Fulfilling this mission, he and Dr. Gilbert (Ace) Mueller officially co-founded FVSA in 1970 after merging their local practices. The two were joined by Drs. Hal Harding and Phil Pier as the team began to take shape.

Initially focused on heart and general surgery in a small office space on the north side of Appleton, FVSA soon began to expand its services and staff, offering care in specialty areas like oncologic, vascular and thoracic surgery. It moved to a larger main office within Appleton Medical Center, now ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Appleton, and continues to serve patients here and at six additional locations across Northeast Wisconsin. These include two more Appleton locations, as well as offices in New London, Oshkosh, Waupaca and Shawano.

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FVSA has been highly selective in provider recruitment over the years to keep with its long-time reputation for offering exceptional care. In the last five decades, the vast majority of FVSA physicians hired are fellowship trained. Fellowship training represents the highest level of education available in a medical specialty and has contributed to – in combination with the providers' other high-caliber instruction and credentials – FVSA's ability to be at the forefront of innovations and "firsts" in the Fox Cities medical community.

Among this list of innovators, Dr. Robert Ballard, a double fellowship recipient with FVSA, was one of the first providers in Wisconsin to perform abdominal aortic aneurysm repair – a vascular procedure using minimally invasive techniques and x-ray support. In addition, fellowship trained in surgical oncology, Dr. Charles Cheng was among the initial group of area physicians who routinely performed the Whipple procedure to remove cancer in the pancreas.

As Dr. Pier explained, this tradition of pioneering leadership dates all the way back to FVSA's beginning. "The founding principals of FVSA were leaders in the medical community," he said. "They served as medical staff leaders, surgical department chairmen and as part of many committees. They helped set the standard for the way medicine was practiced in Appleton."

Today, FVSA continues to add to its surgical and care services to meet the ever-evolving needs of the community. Specialty areas now include breast, colorectal, endocrine, general, oncologic, thoracic and vascular/endovascular surgery. They also extend to endocrinology, laparoscopy, gastrointestinal endoscopy and interventional endoscopy, as well as hepatobiliary, liver and pancreas surgery. Most recently, acute care and heartburn/reflux treatment have been added to the wide range of offerings.

In terms of breast care services, FVSA operates the area's only High-Risk Breast Clinic for patients who have an elevated risk of developing breast cancer. The care team is headed up by Honnie Bermas, MD, FACS, and provides personalized risk assessments, clinical breast exams and the most state-of-the-art breast ultrasound/imaging. FVSA also performs breast surgery for benign and malignant conditions and specializes in procedures like nipple sparing mastectomy and partial breast irradiation catheters. Additionally, FVSA's Patricia Martins, APNP, is among just a select number of practitioners worldwide to receive advanced training in genetic cancer risk counseling through City of Hope in California.

Endocrine care is one of FVSA's latest expansions. Janeil Mitchell, MD, joined the team as the first endocrine surgeon in the Fox Cities with specialty training. She is fellowship trained in endocrine surgery from the University of Pittsburgh and surgery research from Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School. Also fellowship trained, Dr. Iftikhar Malik came on board shortly after as an endocrinologist, and together, the two are able to treat FVSA patients with conditions like diabetes and even the most complex thyroid issues.

Two more key staff additions include Peter Janu, MD, FACS, in late 2019, and Christopher Smith, MD, FACS, FASCRS, earlier this year. Dr. Janu furthers FVSA's capabilities to provide specialty treatment for reflux/heartburn sufferers and Dr. Smith treats patients with acute care needs ranging from laparoscopy scopes to port placements.

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In looking back, Dr. Pier explained some common characteristics FVSA has sought out in its providers since 1970. “As new associates joined the practice, they all exhibited the qualities that identified FVSA – honesty, integrity, a strong work ethic, willingness to work together, and most importantly, a genuine concern for the welfare of their patients.” He shared that of all physicians who have been part of FVSA, only one has left to practice elsewhere, and that was driven by the desire to live in a warmer climate.

FVSA continues to incorporate the latest advances in medicine and technology into its practice with providers trained to perform the most minimally invasive procedures available, including robotic-assisted surgeries.

“Technological advances have been monumental over the last several decades at FVSA,” explained Dr. Thomas Winek, president of FVSA and a fellowship-trained surgeon with the practice since 1989. He credits FVSA with being consistently innovative in bringing new, cutting-edge procedures to the Fox Valley. “I’ve told many of my colleagues that there is nothing I did 31 years ago in training that I am still doing today.”

Some of the more advanced procedures offered today range from endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) for bile duct and pancreas imaging to endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) for digestive assessment and VenaSeal™ for the treatment of varicose veins.

As FVSA looks to the future, the team has plans to keep pace with the community’s health needs. This includes introducing two new gastroenterologists in early 2021 – Dr. Abdullah Fayyad and Dr. Timothy Roarty – to offer comprehensive services related to gastrointestinal issues like liver disease, Crohn’s disease and irritable bowel syndrome. FVSA will also continue to focus on growing sub-specialty needs like those of the renal failure and dialysis population as the number of patients requiring related services increases.

“Reaching the 50-year mark is a significant milestone for FVSA, and our team is excited to continue to build on the founders’ legacy by serving the community around us,” Dr. Winek said. “We’ve made it our mission to provide the most exceptional care since 1970 and that goal will carry forward for the next 50 years.”

About FVSA

Fox Valley Surgical Associates (FVSA) has been serving patients in Northeast Wisconsin since 1970. The multi-specialty clinic offers surgical and care services ranging from breast, colorectal and vascular to endocrinology and reflux treatment. FVSA has a main location in Appleton, and many of the team’s providers also see patients at six other locations throughout the Fox Cities and Northeast Wisconsin. For more information, visit www.fvsawi.com.

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