



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, May 6, 2024

For more information contact:

Ben Roberts
Director, PR & Communications
Phoebe Putney Health System
O: 229-312-5180
C: 229-343-7499
benroberts@phoebhealth.com

Myra Whitley
Chief Executive Officer
Southwest Georgia Specialty Hospital
O: 706-494-4060

myra.whitley@columbuspecialtyhospital.net

South Georgia Specialty Hospital to Open on Phoebe's North Campus, Filling Critical Healthcare Need

Albany, Ga. – Southwest Georgians who require specialized treatment during a prolonged hospital stay now have a convenient, close-to-home option where they can receive that expert care. Phoebe partnered with Affabilis, a Columbus-based healthcare company that operates Columbus Specialty Hospital, to transform part of Phoebe's north campus into a long-term acute care hospital (LTACH).

"We want to replicate the success we have had in Columbus and provide this vital service to a part of the state where this care is desperately needed," said Rodney Franklin, MD, Affabilis CEO. "Phoebe's north campus is a great location for our new facility, South Georgia Specialty Hospital, and we look forward to a long and productive partnership with Phoebe."

South Georgia Specialty Hospital will provide specialized treatment for medically complex patients who require hospitalization for extended periods of time – usually 20 to 30 days, but sometimes longer. Typically, these patients no longer require surgical or diagnostic procedures offered by a traditional facility, but they need more individualized and resource-intensive care than a skilled nursing facility, nursing home or acute rehabilitation facility may provide.

"Our patients are usually transferred from an intensive care unit. They may be recovering from trauma, require complex wound care or need to be weaned off a ventilator. Our team works with our patients and their families to establish clear goals,

treatment plans and discharge arrangements to help ensure the best outcomes for our patients,” said Myra Whitley, South Georgia Specialty Hospital CEO.

Currently, the closest LTACHs to Albany are in Columbus and Macon. Often, patients who would benefit from the care of a long-term acute care hospital end up staying for extended periods at Phoebe because no LTACH beds are available or it is too inconvenient for them to be transferred to a facility that can accept them.

“There simply aren’t enough long-term care hospital beds in the state of Georgia, and there certainly is a critical need for this kind of care in our region,” said Scott Steiner, Phoebe Putney Health System President & CEO. “When we unveiled our Phoebe Focus 5-year strategic plan in 2019, expanding our post-acute care services at Phoebe North was one of our main goals. I am grateful that we have been able to accomplish that goal,” he added.

Affabilis is leasing space on the third floor of Phoebe’s north campus hospital and will operate South Georgia Specialty Hospital with its own employees independently from Phoebe. The hospital should begin accepting patients in mid-May. Initially, it will have six beds, but within six months, it should reach full capacity with 23 beds.

“I am excited about the benefits this new hospital will bring to so many patients and their families in our area. It will also help Phoebe improve our service and operate more efficiently. We’ve had patients in our main hospital for months at a time because LTACH beds were not available for them. Having a more appropriate level of care for those patients right up the street from our largest hospital will free up bedspace and resources that will help us elevate our care,” Steiner said.

###

EDITOR’S NOTE: Attached photos show Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital board members and leaders on a recent tour of South Georgia Specialty Hospital.





