



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Kemp Helps Phoebe Unveil New Mobile Wellness Clinics

Albany, Ga. – This week, Phoebe unveiled two new mobile wellness clinics that will hit the roads throughout southwest Georgia, bringing healthcare services directly to people in rural communities and underserved neighborhoods across the region. As a part of the program launch, Gov. Brian Kemp helped cut the ribbon on the units Wednesday, praising the new effort to expand access to care in southwest Georgia.

“Phoebe has been a critical partner in our fight against COVID-19 in southwest Georgia, and I’m honored to join them to cut the ribbon for these mobile wellness clinics,” said Governor Kemp. “As we continue our efforts to expand access to quality healthcare in rural Georgia, these clinics will be a game-changing resource to ensure Georgians in every zip code have the care they need. My thanks to Scott Steiner and the team at Phoebe for all they continue to do for Albany and the surrounding region.”

Initially, the units will primarily be used to help protect communities from COVID-19 through vaccinations, testing and education. Phoebe has already used the units as mobile vaccination sites in a south Albany neighborhood and in the small Webster County community of Preston. Next week, the units will be stationed in four locations around Baker County to provide vaccinations. “We are eager to get more shots in arms, and we know these new mobile wellness clinics will help us accelerate the end of the battle against COVID-19 in our area by increasing the number of vaccinated southwest Georgians,” said Scott Steiner, Phoebe Putney Health System President & CEO. “We are dedicated and determined to create easy access to the vaccine for everyone in our part of the state.”

In the months to come, Phoebe will leverage the mobile clinics to improve access to primary care, specialty care and chronic care management for people who may have difficulty traveling

to physician offices and hospitals. The mobile clinics will offer a wide range of services, with a particular focus on major health challenges outlined in Phoebe's community health needs assessments. The ultimate goal of the program will be to connect patients with medical providers before an emergency room visit or hospitalization is necessary.

"We'll be able to reach diabetics to make sure they're managing their condition properly, maybe even using mobile unit visits to deliver fresh produce and provide education on how to cook healthy meals," said Dianna Grant, MD, Phoebe Putney Health System Chief Medical Officer. "We'll be able to provide behavioral health teleservices, childhood vaccinations and pre-natal care to expectant mothers, so their babies are born healthy. Basically, our goal is to remove barriers to care, to create health resiliency and make real improvements to the health and wellness of our communities."

The custom-built units are full-service clinics on wheels, each is equipped with two exam rooms, a waiting area, a bathroom, lab equipment and telehealth capabilities. The Phoebe Foundation provided a \$1 million grant to purchase the units and get them ready for the road.

"When Phoebe leadership approached the Foundation board with the idea to buy these two mobile clinics, they didn't have to work hard to convince us. We were on board right away," said Rick Doherty, Phoebe Foundation Board Chair. "This is a perfect way to use the funds generous donors have contributed to the Phoebe Foundation COVID-19 Relief Fund, as the units will help us defeat COVID-19 and improve the overall health of vulnerable populations, putting our communities in a better position to fend off or deal with a future health crisis."

With the closures of small hospitals across Georgia in recent years, rural healthcare access has become a crisis. Southwest Georgia in particular deals with much higher than average rates of many diseases and health challenges such as diabetes, hypertension, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer, low birthweight babies and obesity. Those issues are compounded by endemic structural and societal problems such as high poverty rates, food insecurity and lower than average rates of education attainment.

"No one is pretending these are easy problems to solve or that Phoebe alone can solve them," Steiner said. "We know we have a steep mountain to climb, but we are prepared. We're determined to get to the mountaintop, and we're committed to using these mobile wellness clinics and working with partners throughout the state to get us to that summit."

Groups interested in working with Phoebe to coordinate a mobile wellness clinic visit to administer COVID-19 vaccines should contact Phoebe Vice President of Operations Will Peterson at 229-347-6289 or wpeterson@phoebehealth.com.

Next week's mobile wellness clinic schedule in Baker County is as follows:

- Tuesday, March 30
 - 9:00 am – noon
Patmos Freewill Baptist Church
1249 Patmos Milford Highway
 - 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Mt. Airy Baptist Church
5652 Colquitt Ford Road

- Thursday, April 1
 - 9:00 am – noon
Nothchaway Baptist Church
6388 Newton Highway
 - 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Hawkinson Volunteer Fire Department
3092 Johnny Long Road

Walk-ins are welcome. Those seeking COVID-19 vaccines can also call the Phoebe COVID-19 vaccine hotline at 229-312-1919 to schedule an appointment during one of the mobile clinic stops.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Attached photo of the ribbon cutting features (L-R) Dr. Dianna Grant, Phoebe Putney Health System Chief Medical Officer; Carolyn Higgins, Phoebe Foundation President; Scott Steiner, Phoebe Putney Health System President & CEO; Rick Doherty, Phoebe Foundation Board Chair; Dr. Derek Heard, Phoebe Physicians Medical Director for Primary Care; Gov. Brian Kemp; Bruce Melton, Phoebe Putney Health System Board Chair; and Will Peterson, Phoebe Physicians Vice President of Operations. Other photos show the ribbon cutting ceremony and Gov. Kemp touring one of the mobile wellness units.





