



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Phoebe Welcomes New Class of Residents**

**Albany, Ga.** – At an annual welcome ceremony Wednesday, Phoebe introduced and honored the Phoebe Family Medicine Residency (PFMR) Class of 2025. Over the next three years, the eight new physician residents will train under a highly-skilled team of faculty members, complete various specialty rotations and care for patients in Phoebe hospitals and at Phoebe Primary Care at Northwest.

“We are excited to welcome this outstanding new class of residents who come from diverse backgrounds and locations. Several of them have Georgia connections, including one Albany native,” said William Fricks, MD, PFMR Program Director. “Our program includes a challenging and comprehensive curriculum that will prepare these physicians for successful careers, providing quality and compassionate care to their patients. We know they are ready to get work here at Phoebe,” Dr. Fricks added.

The members of the PFMR Class of 2025 are:

- Kimberly Carrette, MD – Howard University College of Medicine
- Kirti Chakote, MD – Albany Medical College
- Soraya Djadjo, MD – Ross University School of Medicine
- Joseph Elphinstone, MD – Medical College of Georgia
- Edwina Henry, MD – American University of Antigua College of Medicine
- Thanh Huynh, MD – Ross University School of Medicine
- Brian Ritcher, MD – St. George’s University School of Medicine
- Brittney Thomas, DO – Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine

Phoebe Putney Health System (PPHS) President & CEO Scott Steiner said the residency program is a vital element of Phoebe’s commitment to healthcare education and workforce

development. “We are proud to invest in many innovative partnerships with schools and colleges throughout our region to increase the pipeline of new health professionals in our area. Our main campus is also home to the Southwest Campus of the Medical College of Georgia and the UGA College of Pharmacy Southwest Georgia Clinical Campus. But our residency program really ignited our commitment to health education and workforce development. For nearly 30 years, it has been training young physicians to serve in communities throughout southwest Georgia and beyond,” Steiner said.

Saturday night, the PFMR Class of 2022 will graduate, bringing the total number of graduates in the history of the program to 148.

US Senator Raphael Warnock sent a video for the new class of residents that was played during the welcome ceremony. “Rural Georgia needs more family physicians, and I am so glad that you have answered the call.” Sen. Warnock said in the recorded message. “On behalf of a grateful state, thank you for your service, and know that you have partner in me working on the federal level to do all I can to support our rural healthcare systems and our professionals.”

As keynote speaker at the event, Dougherty County Commission Chairman Chris Cohilas welcomed the residents on behalf of the community and shared advice with them as someone who came to Albany as a young attorney fresh out of law school. “As you experience the challenges ahead and the opportunities to help and touch people, remember why you became a doctor and remember you are incredibly appreciated in this community,” Cohilas told the residents.

PPHS Chief Medical Officer Dr. Dianna Grant and Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital Interim Chief Medical Officer Dr. James Black presented the residents with their white coats, symbolizing the beginning of their professional practice as physicians. Albany Area Chamber of Commerce Board Chairman Don Gray also spoke and presented the residents with welcome wagons filled with gifts from various chamber members and other organizations throughout the community.

The residents said they truly appreciated the warm welcome they received from the community. “It was great, very welcoming and very moving,” said Tommy Huynh, MD, member of the PFMR Class of 2025.

Dr. Huynh is an Atlanta native who chose to do his residency in Albany because he was already familiar with Phoebe and the quality of its residency program. “I was here as a medical student, and from the top down, everyone was very inviting and supportive. I know the teaching environment is great and will prepare us to be better physicians,” Dr. Huynh said.

The eight new residents were chosen from among nearly 1,400 applicants, around 120 of whom were invited for interviews. PFMR graduates have maintained a 100% board pass rate every year since 2014.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Attached group photo shows new residents (L-R) Kirti Chakote, MD; Edwina Henry, MD; Joseph Elphingstone, MD; Brittney Thomas, DO; Brian Ritcher, MD; Kimberly Carrette, MD; Tommy Huynh, MD; and Soraya Djado, MD. Other photos include Dr. Huynh receiving his white coat, as well as Scott Steiner, Chris Cohilas and Dr. Bill Fricks speaking at the event.





