![Phoebe logo]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 16, 2022

For more information contact:
Ben Roberts
Director, Public Relations & Communications
O: 229-312-5180
C: 229-343-7499
benroberts@phoebehealth.com

Phoebe Loosens Mask Rules As COVID Cases Decline

Albany, Ga. – As of Friday morning, these were Phoebe's COVID-19 numbers:

- Total COVID-19 Patients in Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital – 8
- Total COVID-19 Patients in Phoebe Sumter Medical Center – 3
- Total COVID-19 Patients in Phoebe Worth Medical Center – 0
- Total Inpatients Recovered – 4,698
- Total Positive Deaths from Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital – 466
- Total Positive Deaths from Phoebe Sumter – 126
- Total Positive Deaths from Phoebe Worth – 1
- Total Vaccines Administered – 81,451

The number of COVID-19 inpatients at Phoebe hospitals dropped significantly in the last week – down 56% to just 11 patients. With virus transmission and hospitalizations at low levels, Phoebe has loosened its masking rules for visitors and employees.

"Based on CDC guidelines and our desire to continue to protect our patients, visitors and staff, we cannot discontinue the use of masks altogether, but we do believe a single surgical mask offers effective and adequate protection at this time," said James Black, MD, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital Interim Chief Medical Officer. "Obviously, our employees who may come in contact with COVID patients will be required to utilize higher levels of personal protective equipment, but visitors to any of our facilities only need to wear a single surgical mask, unless they choose to wear a stronger level of protection."

This week, Phoebe received shipments of the new COVID-19 vaccine boosters. They will be available at all Phoebe Primary Care and Urgent Care locations, and administration of the boosters will begin next week. Shots will not be given every day at every location, so anyone interested in receiving a booster shot at a Phoebe location should simply call 229-312-MYMD to schedule the earliest available appointment at the most convenient location for them.

"We certainly want to avoid another surge in cases, and these boosters will help us do that. They are specifically formulated to be effective against the virus variants that have been most common in recent months, and we encourage those who are eligible to get their booster shots," Dr. Black said.

Currently, the new Pfizer booster is authorized for anyone 12 and older. Moderna's booster is authorized for those 18 and older. You may receive one of the new booster shots at least two months after the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine or three months after an infection.

###