



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 25, 2020

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Phoebe Becomes the First in the Region To Offer Advanced Cardiac MRI

Albany, Ga. – Phoebe now offers advanced cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) services at its Diagnostic Imaging Center at Meredyth Place in Albany. Cardiac MRI is a non-invasive way for physicians to look closely at the structure and function of the heart and major vessels quickly and thoroughly. Cardiac MRI uses a powerful magnetic field, radiofrequency waves and a computer to create detailed, three-dimensional, cross-sectional images.

“More than 30 years in the making, our well-established heart and vascular program provides some of the finest medical talent in the Southeast. We have always been committed to ensuring our heart experts have access to technologies that equip their efforts, and we are delighted to be the first in the region to offer this non-invasive imaging technique that provides both diagnostic and management information for a variety of cardiovascular diseases,” stated Joe Austin, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital CEO.

In addition to being the first provider in southwest Georgia to offer this cutting-edge technology, another significant distinction is that these images are read by cardiologist, Rachel Harris, MD, who received advanced fellowship training for cardiac MRI. Dr. Harris earned her medical degree at Morehouse School of Medicine. She completed an internal medicine residency at Duke University Hospital in Durham, NC, a cardiovascular disease fellowship at University of Alabama at Birmingham Hospital and a cardiac CT practicum at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. In addition, she completed an advanced cardiovascular cardiac imaging fellowship at the University of South Florida in Tampa, FL and holds board certification in nuclear cardiology, echocardiography, cardiac CT and cardiac MRI. Her extensive training in reading advanced images allows her to detect and analyze many cardiac abnormalities.

This non-invasive test captures both still and moving images of the heart and major blood vessels, providing views of the beating heart for more precise analysis of structure and function. “Cardiac MRI technology not only offers a higher resolution than a PET scan for the presence of scarring in the heart, but also provides multiple sectioned views of the heart without the use of potentially harmful ionizing radiation,” Dr. Harris said. “We are delighted patients of this region will not have to travel long distances to take advantage of this technology.”

The new service began benefitting Phoebe patients immediately. “In our initial start-up testing before launching this service, we were able to determine one volunteer patient did not have heart failure, one was referred for surgery and another was relieved to learn his recent COVID battle did not leave him with myocarditis – an inflammation of the heart muscle that can affect your heart’s electrical system. These are just a few examples of what cardiac MRI allows us to evaluate,” Dr. Harris explained.

The use of cardiac MRI continues to expand but is commonly used to diagnose a broad array of conditions, including:

- Coronary heart disease
- Damage caused by a heart attack
- Cause of heart failure
- Heart valve problems
- Inflammation
- Cardiac tumors
- Congenital heart defects

Patients are typically referred for a cardiac MRI by their cardiologist or primary care physician. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Harris, call Phoebe Cardiology of Albany at 229-312-1022.

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EDITOR’S NOTE: First attached photo shows Phoebe cardiac MRI team members (L-R) Cassandra Willis, RT(R)(MR), a registered technologist in radiography and MRI with 35 years of imaging experience; Rachel Harris, MD; Monika Beckum RT(R)(MR), a registered technologist in radiography and MRI with 33 years of imaging experience. Additional photos show Dr. Harris analyzing cardiac MRI images and Phoebe Imaging’s General Electric SIGNA Artist 1.5 Tesla wide-bore MRI machine.



