



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Phoebe and ABAC Sign Agreement To Increase Nursing Graduates**

**Albany, Ga.** – A partnership between Phoebe and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) will increase the number of nursing students at ABAC and help address the growing nursing shortage in southwest Georgia. “We would like to hire 250 nurses today to alleviate our reliance on contract labor, but a labor pool that large does not exist in our area. Across the country, the number of nursing school graduates simply isn’t keeping up the number of nurses hospitals need, and we are eager to work closely with educational partners in our region to help them increase enrollment and help us develop a larger group of potential new members of the Phoebe Family,” said Evelyn Olenick, DNP, RN, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital Chief Nursing Officer.

Under a new agreement recently signed by Phoebe and ABAC, Phoebe will fund a new nursing faculty position at the college and provide ABAC nursing students access to clinical rotations at Phoebe facilities and training opportunities at the Phoebe Simulation and Innovation Center. For its part, ABAC agreed to fund an additional nursing faculty position, admit an additional 40 nursing students and take steps to recruit more nursing students who live within 100 miles of its campuses in Tifton and Bainbridge.

“It truly takes a collaborative approach to come up with solutions to combat the nursing shortage. We are proud to open our doors to ABAC students and are excited about this partnership as we work together to increase the number of registered nurses entering the workforce in southwest Georgia,” said Tracy Suber, EdD, MSN, Phoebe Assistant Vice President of Simulation Center and Nursing Education.

On a recent tour of Phoebe’s simulation center, ABAC President Dr. David Bridges touted the high-tech center’s importance as a recruitment tool that could attract more young nurses to

Phoebe. “Having students here and having them go through this sim center is a huge value to Phoebe,” Dr. Bridges said.

Dr. Bridges said the reputation of any nursing program is based on how well it prepares students to go to work as soon as they graduate, its academic quality and the relationship educators build with clinical providers. “This agreement addresses all three,” Dr. Bridges said. “It adds a much-enhanced dimension of hands-on learning, so the students learn to do it, not just learn about it. It will increase the board exam passage rate of our graduates, and it will build a strong relationship between our two organizations.”

The agreement will be in place for the next two years, with the option to extend the partnership if both Phoebe and ABAC are pleased with the results.

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**EDITOR’S NOTE: Attached photos are from ABAC President Dr. David Bridges’ tour of the Phoebe Simulation & Innovation Center. The first photo includes (L-R): Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital Chief Nursing Officer Dr. Evelyn Olenick, Dr. Bridges, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital CEO Joe Austin, and Phoebe Assistant Vice President for Nursing Education Dr. Tracy Suber.**





