



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, December 17, 2020

For more information contact:

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

Phoebe Begins COVID-19 Vaccinations

Albany, Ga. – Phoebe administered its first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to frontline healthcare workers Thursday afternoon, just hours after the shipments arrived at two of its hospitals. “This is an exciting day, and one we have been looking forward to for quite a while. We hope this milestone represents the beginning of the end of our COVID-19 fight, but we know that fight is far from over as infections and hospitalizations are surging in our area right now,” said Scott Steiner, Phoebe Putney Health System President & CEO.

Phoebe received around 5,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine Thursday morning at its main campus and around 1,000 doses a few hours later at Phoebe Worth. Vaccinations began at both campuses Thursday afternoon. Phoebe Sumter has ordered vaccines and is waiting to find out when they will be delivered. Phoebe invested in ultra-cold freezer systems at all three hospitals to properly and safely store the vaccines.

Phoebe is providing vaccines in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. The Phoebe Vaccine Planning Team and the Community COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Task Force helped to develop a tiered approach to Phase 1 of the CDC’s plan. “Tier 1 includes healthcare workers at highest risk of COVID-1 exposure. We’re focusing on them right now, but we will move on to tiers two, three and four as quickly as possible. We will work hard to provide a vaccination to every healthcare worker in our community who falls into the first phase of the CDC vaccination plan and who requests a vaccine. We have set up a registration process and we are reaching out to the Phoebe Family, independent providers and first responders as their appropriate tier opens up,” said Dianna Grant, MD, Phoebe Putney Health System Chief Medical Officer.

Dr. James Black, Phoebe Medical Director of Emergency Services was the first to receive his vaccination. “The science shows this vaccine is safe and effective, and I have full confidence

that it will offer outstanding protection against the virus,” Dr. Black said. “Our team in the ER has worked incredibly hard throughout this entire pandemic, and now they’re facing another dangerous surge. For their sake, I’m glad the vaccine is here, and I’m proud to set an example and do my part by being the first person in our area to roll up my sleeve and get this shot.”

Phoebe set up six vaccination stations in the solarium adjacent to its main cafeteria with a goal of administering at least 100 vaccines Thursday afternoon. After Dr. Black received his shot, a steady stream of employees from Tier 1 departments filed through. Phoebe has already made plans to expand its vaccination capacity on Friday. “We will ensure this process is safe and equitable, but we also want to make sure it is efficient. We want to vaccinate as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, and we are already working to request more doses to ensure people in southwest Georgia can get vaccinated when we are approved to move on to the next phase,” Steiner said.

Even though vaccines have arrived, it will take months to provide immunity to most of the population, so everyone should continue to wear masks, wash their hands often and avoid close contact with others. Phoebe will continue to share vaccine updates with the public, and, as the vaccination process moves forward and opens to broader groups within the community, Phoebe will share details of where and when those outside of healthcare can be vaccinated.

###

EDITOR’S NOTE: Attached photos show James Black, MD, receiving the first vaccination at Phoebe’s main campus; Trish Mason, NP, receiving the first vaccination at Phoebe Worth; LaQuanda Hoskins, an RN currently working at Phoebe North receiving her vaccination; and the vaccination location at Phoebe’s main campus.





