FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southwell continues to take precautions to prepare for COVID-19 coronavirus

The health system is restricting visitors, urges community to utilize 24-hour hotline, and limits access to patient financial/business office and medical records

(March 16, 2020, Tifton, Ga.) – While Southwell’s facilities have not had any confirmed COVID-19 cases, the health system continues to take precautions to prevent the spread of the virus.

In an effort to ensure patients have the safest and most efficient care, we encourage any person who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to call Southwell’s COVID-19 hotline and speak to the clinical staff before they visit any Southwell facility. The toll-free hotline is 877-719-5787. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Symptoms for COVID-19 include fever, shortness of breath, and dry cough. During the phone call, a clinical staff member will work with the individual to assess the need for a potential visit to any of our facilities and give further instruction.

Also effective immediately, Southwell is restricting visitors from entering facilities, including outpatient clinics to prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Exceptions do apply in the case of pediatric patients, obstetric patients, and others as listed in the updated guidelines. In an effort to protect our most vulnerable population, no visitors will be allowed in Southwell Health and Rehabilitation, the 95-bed skilled nursing facility located in Adel. We are making use of web based communication platforms to ensure our residents have access to their families and friends. An exception may be made for compassionate care situations; such as end of life.

“In light of the continued cases of COVID-19 now reported in Georgia and several cases linked to Southwest Georgia in particular, Southwell is taking this additional measure to protect the health of our patients, their loved ones, and our staff. We made the decision to suspend visitation in Southwell Facilities until the transmission of COVID-19 is no longer a threat to our patients, staff and community,” said Dr. David McEachin, Southwell Chief Medical Officer.

Non-essential vendors, including manufacturers’/pharmaceutical representatives, are not allowed in Southwell Facilities. Flowers, gifts, and food deliveries are also suspended.

Entrances at Tift Regional Medical Center remain limited to the main 20th Street entrance and the Emergency Department entrance on the corner of 20th Street and Lee Avenue.

“Southwell recognizes that support from friends and family can play a positive role in the healing process. We encourage all friends and family to utilize other forms of communication including phone and video calls on cell phones and mobile devices,” said Dr. McEachin.
The health system is also limiting access to the Patient Financial Services/Business Office and Medical Records. Those departments will operate primarily by phone and via online services.

For a detailed list of visitation guidelines and information regarding paying a bill or obtaining medical records, visit www.tiftregional.com/COVID-19.


### About Southwell

Southwell is a leading health care provider serving 12 counties in South Central Georgia. Tift Regional Medical Center (TRMC), the flagship hospital, is a 181-bed regional referral center offering signature services in surgery, oncology, cardiovascular care, women's health and more. Southwell comprises of TRMC and the TRMC West Campus in Tifton, Southwell Medical Hospital and Southwell Health and Rehabilitation in Adel and over 30 primary care and specialty clinics located throughout the region. Please visit www.tiftregional.com for more information.