



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, September 11, 2023

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Phoebe Expands Its Surgical Robotics Program

Albany, Ga. – Phoebe Putney Health System recently expanded its surgical robotics program with the purchase of two additional da Vinci XI systems, the latest and most advanced system available. One of the new robots is in use in the operating rooms at Phoebe’s flagship hospital in Albany where surgeons have performed robotic surgery for 13 years. The other is now the first robotic surgical system at Phoebe Sumter Medical Center in Americus.

“My goal is safe, efficient care for my patients with the best outcomes, so I’m a proponent of anything that can help provide that. That’s why I’m such a big fan of robotic surgery for my patients,” said Jason Langer, DO, a Phoebe general surgeon in Albany. Langer performs more robotic surgeries than any other physician in this part of the state. He has completed approximately 600 robotic surgeries since 2016 and now uses the da Vinci system to perform around 20 different types of surgery such as gall bladder removals, hernia repairs and procedures involving the colon.

“Anything I could do laparoscopically, I can do better and with more fine technique robotically,” Dr. Langer said. “There’s less need to handle tissue and dissect as much. That can translate into less blood loss, less pain, less chance for infections and quicker recovery times. In the long run, when there are fewer complications, it can decrease the cost of care and increase the quality of care for the patient,” he added.

The da Vinci XI allows surgeons to perform minimally-invasive procedures, operating through one or a few small incisions. The instruments, which physicians guide in real-time through a console, provide a greater range of motion than the human hand and deliver highly-magnified, 3-D, high-definition views of the surgical area.

“Expanding our robotics program means we can do more robotic surgeries and get patients in quicker. We’re striving to offer the best patient care for our community. Having a multi-specialty robotics program helps us do that,” Dr. Langer said.

In Albany general surgeons, surgical oncologists, gynecologists and urologists use the robotic systems. In Americus, where contributions through the Georgia HEART rural hospital tax credit

program funded the system's purchase, Phoebe's bariatrics surgeons began using the new system for weight loss patients in June. Physicians have also begun using it for other general and specialty surgeries at Phoebe Sumter.

"Previously, we needed two surgeons in the operating room for our bariatric surgeries. The robotic system allows just one surgeon to safely perform the procedure, so we've been able to expand our program and serve more patients, and we're seeing great outcomes," said Jeremy Joyner, MD, a bariatrics and general surgeon at Phoebe Sumter.

Dyshika Jackson, a 32-year-old mother of two from Sylvester, underwent robotic bariatrics surgery at Phoebe Sumter performed by Dr. Sean Sheff on August 30. She was noticing benefits within a week. "My five-year-old has a lot of energy, so I have to keep up with her," Jackson said. "I can already tell a difference. I don't get as tired on our walks as I did before."

She has lost 20 pounds since she started the Phoebe Bariatrics program six months ago, and she is confident she will achieve her 100-pound weight-loss goal within the next year. "Surgery is scary, but nothing else was working for me. I knew the robot surgery wouldn't be very invasive, and I was comfortable with it," Jackson said. "I'm happy with the choice I made and glad I finally decided to do it."

The Phoebe Sumter team showed off the da Vinci robot's capabilities to community leaders at a public event at the hospital Monday afternoon. Students and teachers from several of Phoebe's education partners will get to see the system in action in the Phoebe Simulation & Innovation Center in Albany on Tuesday and Wednesday.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Attached photos show Dr. Jeremy Joyner speaking at this afternoon's event at Phoebe Sumter, the da Vinci XI set up in the lobby of Phoebe Sumter for today's demonstration and Dr. Jason Langer performing a procedure with the da Vinci XI in Albany.



