



WETZEL COUNTY HOSPITAL

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW DIMENSION IN OPEN MRI AND PATIENT COMFORT

Wetzel County Hospital Offers Siemens 1.5T MAGNETOM Espree

New Martinsville, W. Va. — Wetzel County Hospital, has become one of the first small rural hospitals in West Virginia to offer Open Bore, 1.5 Tesla, magnetic resonance imaging (Open MRI) system. This MRI system combines a larger bore, or opening, for obese and claustrophobic patients with the ability to capture high-field quality diagnostic images. The West Virginia Health Care Authority issued a Certificate of Need to Wetzel County Hospital on December 28, 2009 to offer open M.R.I. services.

“This is going to increase our efficiency and patient convenience,” says Pam Deel, Wetzel County Hospital Radiology Director. “The patient-friendly design of this magnet will make it easier for large patients and those with claustrophobia to have a MRI examination which produces higher quality images. This will potentially reduce the need to repeat and interrupt exams.”

“Certainly, all patients deserve the same access to innovative medical imaging technology used for visualization, diagnosis and treatment planning of cancer, diabetes, heart and vascular disorders and other diseases associated with obesity,” says Nancy Gillen, president of the MR Division of Siemens Medical Solutions.

Since two-thirds of American adults are overweight, the health-care industry is challenged to accommodate these larger patients with imaging systems that were designed for people who weigh much less. Currently, patients too large to fit inside the bore of a high-

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field MRI magnet have image studies done in open MRI systems with low-field magnets. This limits the diagnostic usefulness of the images obtained. The field strength of a magnet is measured in units of Tesla – the higher the number, the higher the field strength. The higher the field strength, the better the quality of images produced.

Claustrophobic patients present another challenge for MRI systems. They can be sedated, adding to their inconvenience and the time it takes to schedule and perform an exam.

The Siemens Medical Solutions MAGNETOM Espree installed at Wetzel County Hospital features a bore opening of nearly 2.3 feet in diameter and almost one foot of free space between a patient's head and the magnet. The Espree also features the shortest 1.5 Tesla magnet available. Approximately four feet long, the magnet allows more than 60 percent of exams to be completed with the patient's head outside the bore, helping to ease claustrophobia.

The new system provides up to four times more signal-to-noise ratio over traditional open MR designs, which is desirable in imaging larger patients. In addition, the Espree can perform advanced clinical applications in less time, because it combines strong gradient performance with Siemens' Total imaging matrix (Tim™) technology. Tim is the first whole body surface coil design that enables the highest resolution images in a shorter acquisition time. Tim coils are very light, making them both easy to position and tolerate when scanning larger patients, improving cooperation.

The MAGNETOM Espree provides best patient comfort and high-quality images and diagnostic confidence for all types of patients.

In addition to fast and better MRI scans, Wetzel County Hospital expects to significantly increase its exam capacity – which means more patients can receive the treatment they need faster and be referred to surgery or discharged from the hospital on a more timely basis.

“Wetzel, Tyler and Monroe County residents now have immediate access to the some of the best MRI technology available today,” said George Couch, C.E.O. of Wetzel County Hospital. “For many patients this may prove to be lifesaving technology due to the system's ability to deliver precise images, which may result in a much earlier diagnosis and faster treatment while saving the cost and inconvenience of leaving the area for this service.”

In addition to open M.R.I. Wetzel County Hospital is nearing completion of its new and expanded emergency department; work is nearly finished on expanding the hospital's helipad that will

offer full-time emergency helicopter service and a new state-of-the-art patient monitoring system has been installed throughout the hospital. "When it comes to quality emergency, radiology, lab, inpatient and outpatient services Wetzel County Hospital is ready to deliver care superior or comparable to any small rural hospital in the region," said George Couch, Chief Executive Officer of Wetzel County Hospital.

Wetzel County Hospital is a licensed and accredited, 58-bed facility, offering comprehensive acute care inpatient, outpatient services, emergency department and transitional care unit. The hospital is located 35 miles south of Wheeling and 60 miles north of Parkersburg, West Virginia.

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