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SMH Announces Digital Mammography is Here

PLYMOUTH, N.H. --- Speare Memorial Hospital is pleased to announce the arrival of digital mammography. Considered the gold standard in the detection of breast cancer, the arrival of this new technology has been a highly anticipated event since being identified as a strategic goal nearly four years ago.

On Wednesday, May 20 at 5 p.m., the Women's Imaging Center at SMH Radiological (X-ray) Services will host a community open house to provide information about the benefits of digital mammography, tour the facility and get a first look at the new state-of-the-art mammography and bone density diagnostic equipment.

As Director of Radiology Linda Nestor explains, "Today we are truly a completely digital operation. Digital mammography is the final step in a series that began with the hospital renovations back in 2005, resulting in redesigned space for Radiology, and followed by the installation of our Picture Archiving Communications System. Our new Hologic Selenia full-field direct digital mammography equipment is the best available at this time, and allows for system enhancements as technology continues to evolve."

"The technology has been there and now we have it," states Dr. William Trought, SMH radiologist. "It offers more detail, finer resolution and improved image clarification. Central New Hampshire residents no longer have to travel to access the best there is relative to mammography."

SMH's Lead Mammographer Mary Sampson agrees, "With the new equipment we have direct capture of the images recorded on a computer making the quality far better than the film-screen type which takes photographic films. For the patient the overall process is the same, but we can see a whole lot more with digital."

Nestor assures that film-based images were fine and worked well, but a digital image has the capability to bring out more detail thanks to computer aided detection software, and the mammography workstation. The other advantage of digital imaging is that it permits immediate, secure online transmission and interpretation, enabling more timely consultation between providers.

Early detection of breast cancer is the key to survival and the use of mammography has dramatically helped to increase survival rates. Digital mammography has been shown to improve earlier detection, particularly in younger women who often have denser breast tissue. Radiologists can alter the orientation, magnification, brightness and contrast of images for more accurate detection of possible breast cancer compared to film x-ray technology.

Director of Development Susan Durgy reinforces the importance of digital mammography saying, “Everybody knows somebody who has been impacted by breast cancer. Keeping up with technology is costly, but it was time for Speare Memorial to take the next step and bring digital mammography to our region. Significant patient and community support has helped offset those capital costs and accounted for \$184,000 to date.”

The American Cancer Society recommends women age 40 and over have an annual mammogram: sooner for women who are high risk due to a family history. Talk to your provider about having a mammogram, or call Speare Memorial Hospital’s Radiology Services for more information at (603) 238-2232.

Speare Memorial Hospital is a 24-hour, acute care, non-profit community hospital and health care provider serving Plymouth and the communities of central New Hampshire for more than a century. Visit online at www.spearehospital.com

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