



Case Statement

[Phoebe Worth Medical Center - Sylvester, Georgia](#)

Phoebe Worth Medical Center (PWMC) in Sylvester, Georgia, is a designated Critical Access Hospital whose mission is to deliver the best possible care and exceed the expectations of all served. The 25-bed facility provides emergency, inpatient medical care, and primary health care in the service area of Worth County, a rural community of approximately 21,600 residents. Sylvester is known as the “Peanut Capital” because of its massive peanut industry and agriculture is an economic mainstay of the region. Still, despite its impressive agricultural reputation, the household median income in Worth County of \$38,000 is a third less than the Georgia state average.

Phoebe Worth provided over \$8 million in uncompensated care to patients during its Fiscal Year 2016.

Phoebe Worth’s mission and future efforts are threatened not only by an economically disparate community and increases in uncompensated care each year. Due to changes in reimbursement and the pressure of an increasing cost structure, operational cash is unavailable for necessary investments needed to keep operations relevant and thriving. These financial outlook pressures cause the facility infrastructure to suffer as any available cash has been directed to investing in technology required through government mandates. And the ability to grow the operations and recruit/retain necessary care providers, including both qualified staff and physicians, has been a challenge due to our inability to generate positive cash flow.

Donations received will enhance the operational stability and will be used to remodel and renovate the main hospital which was built in 1973, invest in equipment upgrades, such as telemedicine to address access to specialty care issues, and to recruit and retain qualified staff and physicians.

Who we are:

Phoebe Worth provides progressive, personalized healthcare in a small town setting through a 24/7 Emergency Department, laboratory and radiology diagnostic services, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation departments, and a rural health care clinic. In the last year, the hospital provided access to care to more than 10,000 emergency department visitors and over 400 admitted patients, which included post-acute care patients requiring additional IV, physical, or occupational therapy. Nearly 10,000 individuals were seen at the Phoebe Worth Family Medicine Clinic.

In 2016, Phoebe Worth Family Medicine Clinic increased staff by one physician and one mid-level provider, bringing the total to three primary care physicians caring for patients. Access to care was also improved by adding to the number of hours the clinic is open to better accommodate patients needing to be seen after 5 p.m. Rehabilitation services at Phoebe Worth are growing and renovation began to increase the size of the

rehabilitation department in early 2017. In 2016, Telestroke services were added to the PWMC Emergency Department, providing valuable 24 hour access to neurology services not currently offered on staff and allowing patients presenting with stroke symptoms to be evaluated on site, faster, and with measurably better outcomes. It is a goal of the organization to increase telehealth services throughout other healthcare specialties to bridge access to care utilization issues and better serve their rural population close to home. Other goals include recruitment of more primary care physicians to Worth County, provision of mental health services, and prevention and control of high blood pressure and diabetes.

Phoebe Worth also maintains strong community collaboration ties. For example, PWMC makes annual contributions to the Worth County Health Department for operation of their Stroke and Heart Attack Prevention and their Diabetes programs. And PWMC annually collaborates with Worth County Emergency Medical Services to host Safety Awareness Day, which includes drug and alcohol awareness education for youth. Phoebe Worth will continue to strengthen its partnerships in the community to help overcome barriers to health care, and to prevent and address health concerns of the people it serves.

