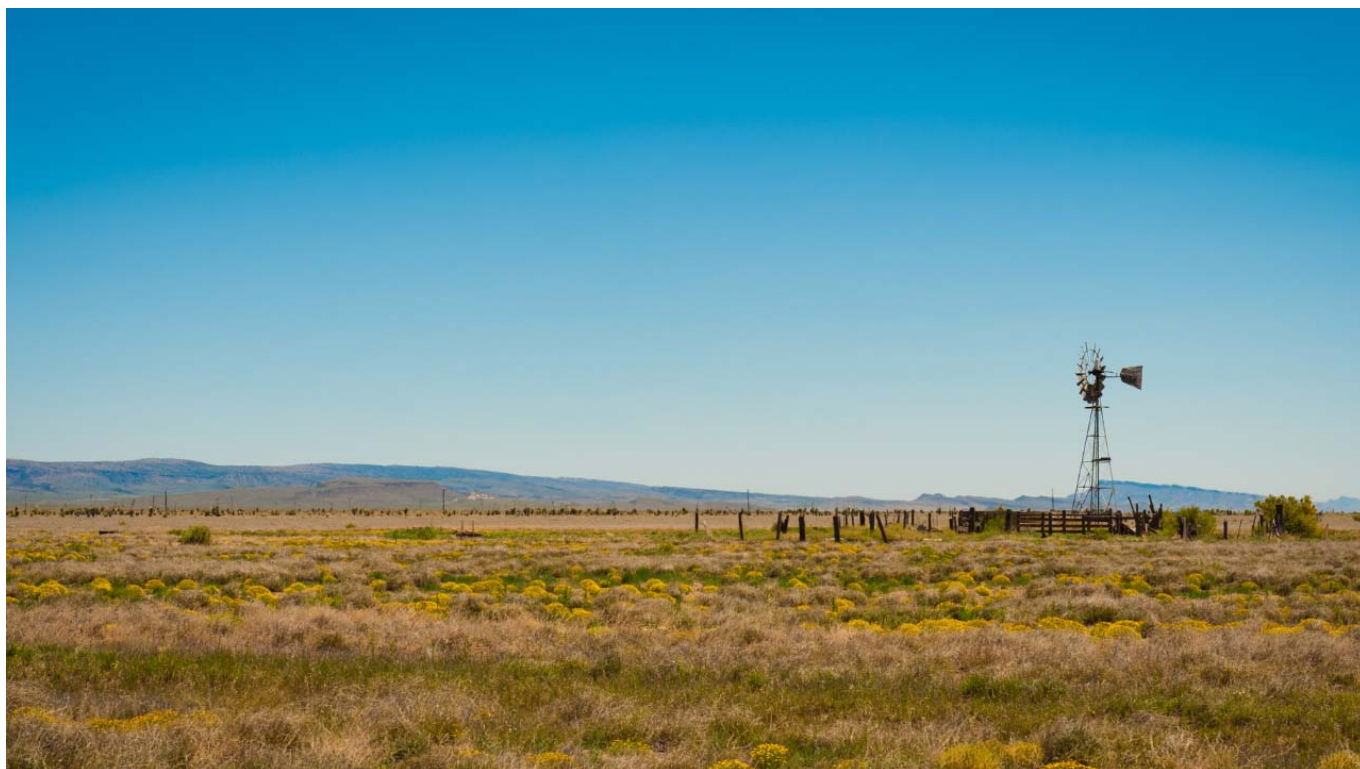




Expanding Access to Radiology Care

RP brings innovative virtual mammography program to rural Texas

Radiology Partners (RP) serves diverse communities across the U.S., with practices in urban and rural locations and everywhere in between. In Texas, RP offers a unique virtual mammography program for rural hospitals like Memorial Medical Center in Port Lavaca. The town is 130 miles southeast of Houston with a population of 12,000. The hospital and its patients rely on RP to provide virtual diagnostic care from fellowship-trained breast imaging radiologists for patients and families—all in the comfort of their local hospital setting.

“Geography should not be a barrier for patients who need access to high-quality radiology services,” said Jody Graham, Senior Vice President of Operations for RP’s southwest practices, which includes New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. “Through our innovative program at Memorial Medical Center, we are able to offer patients the care they need when they need it and in a familiar setting.”

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A differentiator for patients

Kim Low, a patient at Memorial Medical Center, does not skip her annual mammogram. After her 2022 appointment, she received a letter indicating follow-up was needed. It wasn't the first time she needed a follow-up exam, so she scheduled the exam thinking it was somewhat routine given her history.

"I was told I would know something definitive before I left that day," Kim said, remembering the day she was diagnosed with breast cancer. "When my technician said the doctor wanted to talk to me, I knew it wasn't normal. That's when I was able to speak to a doctor over a video conference."

Dr. Raynal Hamilton, a RP radiologist based in Dallas—350 miles from Port Lavaca—spoke with Kim and her technician through RP's teleconferencing platform. "I am worried about what I saw on your mammogram," Dr. Hamilton explained, sharing each ultrasound image and explaining her findings in detail. The technology allowed Kim to speak directly with Dr. Hamilton and ask questions in real-time on the day of diagnosis.

Dr. Hamilton and Dr. Zeeshan Shah are fellowship-trained breast imaging radiologists with Radiology Partners. Together, they created and implemented RP's virtual mammography program to serve patients like Kim Low and hospitals like Memorial Medical Center.

"The essence of breast imaging is to provide care, establish rapport with patients and let patients know we are there to guide them through a journey that could be one of the most difficult journeys of their life," Dr. Shah explained. "We want to be there to hold our patients' hands through their journey, and now there is a way to do that virtually. We are leveraging a very sophisticated teleconferencing solution that allows us to establish a face-to-face patient interaction, communicate directly with patients and give them their results—wherever they are located."

A differentiator for hospital partners

RP's virtual mammography program has been in place at Memorial Medical Center since October 2021.

Roshanda Thomas, Interim CEO for Memorial Medical Center, emphasizes the importance the hospital places on treating every patient with dignity, respect and compassion while offering cost-effective services. "Having this virtual mammography technology available in our community is really a godsend," Thomas said. "It is one of a kind, and we're very excited about it. It allows patients to receive real-time service and not have to leave the facility with a lot of unknowns or a lot of questions they can't have answered."

Farah Janak, Director of Diagnostic Imaging at Memorial Medical Center, sees the positive impact of

RP's telemammography program firsthand. "Through this program, the patient has somebody they rely on, somebody who is specialized in this area, somebody who can lead them to their next step," Janak said. "Our patients get the best radiologists to read their mammograms at a facility they call home. I think that's the best you can get."

Quality care for every patient in every community

RP continues to expand the telemammography program to clients throughout Texas and other states, in both rural and metropolitan communities. Dr. Shah looks forward to a day when every patient in every community has access to lifesaving radiology services.

"You have to make sure patients get taken care of regardless of where they're going for their care," Shah emphasized. "What we consider bread and butter imaging in in a metropolitan area like Dallas or Houston or New York—that's not bread and butter imaging in more rural communities, and something needs to get fixed."

Dr. Shah and Dr. Hamilton believe radiologists have an opportunity to serve *all* patient populations by leveraging technology that already exists, allowing radiology teams to expand access to care for patients like Kim.

"Having Memorial Medical Center here in Port Lavaca is great. My mother received care here for many years before she passed away," Kim said. "It was a comfort to me knowing that I could also come here and see those same nurses and technicians who took care of her for so many years and video conference with my radiologist. For people here in Port Lavaca to have access to that kind of care without having to travel to a big city, I think that's very important."

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