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SAMARITAN MEDICAL CENTER AND SAINT AGATHA FOUNDATION CELEBRATE NEW BREAST CANCER SCREENING TECHNOLOGY WITH RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY

New Technology Expands Access to Advanced Breast Cancer Detection in Upstate New York

WATERTOWN, NY (October 15, 2026) – Samaritan Medical Center and Saint Agatha Foundation has unveiled a state-of-the art Contrast-Enhanced Mammography (CEM) diagnostic system for Samaritan's Women's Wellness and Breast Care Center (WWBC). The installation was commemorated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony this afternoon.

Photos and video of the ribbon cutting can be viewed [here](#).

The new CEM system, made possible by a \$575,000 grant from Saint Agatha Foundation in July, will considerably expand access to advanced breast cancer diagnostics for Northern New York patients. As a next-generation imaging tool, CEM machines can highlight areas of increased blood flow, a common characteristic of cancer. This allows physicians to more accurately detect early signs of the disease.

“At Saint Agatha Foundation, we believe that everyone deserves the right to advanced breast cancer care, no matter where they live,” said **Saint Agatha Foundation's Board President Kathleen Mezzalingua**. “Today, we helped further that cause by bringing CEM to Samaritan, giving patients in the North Country greater access to advanced breast cancer care closer to home.”

In addition to cancer detection, CEM can also help monitor tumor response to chemotherapy, tracking if a tumor shrinks, remains stable, or progresses. These readings provide critical information to help guide patient treatment decisions. While CEM provides a comparable sensitivity to MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), it also offers greater specificity, reducing the need for unnecessary biopsies.

“For people facing a potential breast cancer diagnosis, timely access to advanced imaging can make all the difference,” said **Dr. Kelly McAlarney, dedicated breast radiologist at Samaritan's Women's Wellness and Breast Care Center**. “This technology will allow us to detect breast cancer more accurately and make more informed treatment decisions. Thanks to Saint Agatha Foundation's generosity, we can now offer this level of care right here in Watertown, reducing the need for patients to travel long distances and ensuring more people across the region can access the care they need when they need it.”

The installation could not come at a more critical time for Northern New York. Although breast cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of the disease for women in the state, access to advanced imaging in the North County is limited. Travel to medical centers can create significant barriers to care, including transportation costs, weather-related challenges, and insurance limitations.

“Previously, the nearest CEM systems were located in major metropolitan areas like Syracuse, Rochester, and New York City,” shared **Dr. Stephen Montgomery, the Director Emeritus of Crouse Hospital's breast imaging program**, who attended today's ceremony. “Patients unable to undergo or tolerate a breast MRI can now access alternatives directly in their county, never too far from the places and people they love. Saint Agatha Foundation makes these changes possible, helping healthcare become more equitable for all.”

With the WWBC performing nearly 55 mammograms every day, the new CEM system will help meet the demand for advanced breast cancer imaging in an underserved region. This installation not only strengthens Samaritan's exceptional care options but advances equitable access to quality breast cancer care for rural communities across New York.

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About Saint Agatha Foundation

Saint Agatha Foundation was founded in 2004 to provide support, comfort and care to breast cancer patients. We help individuals, particularly the under-insured and uninsured, in the Central New York area by providing financial assistance to cover a range of costs for treatment and recovery. Learn more about Saint Agatha Foundation's resources for patients and funding opportunities for providers: www.saintagathafoundation.org

About Samaritan Medical Center

Samaritan Medical Center (Watertown, New York) is a 290-bed not-for-profit community medical center, offering a full spectrum of inpatient and outpatient healthcare services. From primary and emergency care to highly specialized medical and surgical services, such as cancer treatment, neonatal intensive care, behavioral health and addiction services, and imaging services, Samaritan Medical Center and its team of healthcare professionals proudly serves the medical needs of our civilian and military community. Quality, compassion, and safety are the basic principles by which exceptional care is delivered at Samaritan.