

## Parkway installs digital mammogram machine

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After almost a year of planning, Parkway Medical Center has installed the first digital mammography machine in Morgan County.

The technology, nurses and physicians at the hospital say, is the best on the market and will significantly aid in the fight against breast cancer.

“We’re going to be able to get the most accurate image possible,” said Dr. Ann Bignault, a radiologist. “We’ll be able to detect more abnormal tissue in the breast than with analog mammography.”

The hospital will start digital mammograms Dec. 1.

By switching to digital, physicians at Parkway will transfer breast images to a computer.

The technology allows doctors to electronically enhance images and magnify and optimize different parts of the breast tissue.

“We’ve had patients to cancel appointments because we didn’t have this technology,” Stacey Miller said.

Miller is director of radiology.

“Now we’re going to stop losing those patients to Huntsville and other hospitals outside the county,” she said.

Digital mammography was one of the first things Tim McGill planned for Parkway when he took over as chief executive officer a little more than a year ago.

“This was something he wanted for the community almost the minute he started,” Miller said.



Daily photo by John Godbey

Photo of a digital mammography machine at Parkway Medical Center.

McGill said he wanted the digital mammography because it's a tremendous tool in the fight against breast cancer.

"Our mission is to make a difference in the lives of our community by providing quality, compassionate healthcare," he said.

Bignault said Parkway will keep patients' analog images for comparison.

But the ultimate goal, she said, is to have comparison digital images, which may take at least a year.

The technology Parkway unveiled Wednesday also has computer detection software that reads images behind the doctor.

### **'Second set of eyes'**

"It's like a second set of eyes look at the images," Bignault said.

It also comes with a stereo tactical unit that will allow physicians to do a biopsy of suspicious spots without intrusive surgery.

If a digital image shows abnormal tissue in the breast, Bignault said, surgeons can insert a needle and get a "pinch sample" of the tissue.

According to the National Cancer Institute, one in eight women will develop breast cancer, which is the second leading cause of death among women.

If detected early, however, the five-year survivor rate is 97 percent.

### **Clearer images**

Miller said digital mammography will allow Parkway to get clearer and easier to read images.

"Better images allow us to intervene sooner than later," she said.

"Anytime we can treat something sooner, it is a better outcome for the patient."