

The Philips logo is displayed in a white rounded rectangle on a dark blue background.

Refurbished systems

Customer story

A photograph showing a man in an orange shirt sitting on the table of a Philips MRI machine. A technician in white scrubs stands next to the machine, holding a cable. The machine is white and has the Philips logo on it. The background is a bright, clean clinical setting.

Bringing MRI access to a rural community hospital

ETMC Quitman



Who?

Chris Norwood RT (R)
Radiology Director
Eric Cargel BS, RT (R)(MR)
MRI Coordinator

Where?

ETMC Quitman
Quitman, Texas, USA

Amid the land of many lakes in quiet East Texas, you'll find the well-appointed East Texas Medical Center (ETMC) at Quitman. Built in 2013 to replace an old facility, ETMC Quitman provides the people of Wood County with advanced care, ranking high in patient satisfaction.

The busy radiology department offers a full range of imaging services. However, justification for a permanent MRI system required careful consideration. Fortunately, a Philips Diamond Select Achieva 1.5T MR fit the bill perfectly.



Reliable quality and a comfortable cost-of-ownership

“For the past 10 years, we’ve had a mobile MRI come to our hospital two days a week,” says Chris Norwood, Radiology Director at ETMC Quitman. “With it, I was able to build the service up to a solid 60 procedures per month.”



Chris Norwood RT (R)
Radiology Director

The challenge facing Chris and his team was to establish a balance between regular access to MRI and the expense of bringing it to the hospital. That was not always possible. “Our full-time hospitalist would come to me once or twice a week and say, ‘we don’t have MRI here today, right?’ For emergency room situations, we were shipping two to three patients a week over to Tyler [Quitman’s larger sister hospital] just to have an MRI exam – that’s 50 miles one way and you’ve got transportation and EMS costs associated with it.”

When does this model of a mobile MRI become untenable? When do you advocate for a permanent system? These are questions Chris knew he would soon have to answer.

Defining the breakeven point

Certified a critical access hospital, ETMC Quitman features 25 private inpatient rooms, 24/7 emergency care and a range of medical services. It supports a population of approximately 200,000 Wood County residents, many of whom are retirees. One of eight ETMC affiliate hospitals, the new Quitman facility has been designed to provide the local community with quality healthcare close to home.

“When we built this hospital, we built a room dedicated to MR,” says Norwood. “But it would have been impossible for me to justify a new system at that time. So, we continued with the mobile alternative.”

However, ETMC Quitman’s success has been reflected in growing imaging volume. As Norwood describes it, “In our radiology department, we now handle nearly 2200 patients per month with five people (six counting me) who conduct everything from CT to MR to Ultrasound exams.” The requests for MRI have also grown.

In early 2016, Norwood decided the time had come for serious consideration of a purchase. “We were doing 60 MRI procedures a month and that was a little over the breaking point. I knew we could do more. So, I talked to my administrator and gave him the numbers. We did the math and it just made sense.”

Finding the right system

Identifying an economical solution properly suited for the community hospital environment led ETMC Quitman to choose a Philips Diamond Select Achieva 1.5T. They did their due diligence and received bids from several sources, including a mobile provider who offered a leasing structure. But an existing relationship with Philips and familiarity with service support helped sway the decision in favor of a quality refurbished system.

“We were buying this ‘out of budget’, so we decided to go with the Diamond Select unit,” recalls Norwood. “Sure, we wanted the newest Ingenia, however that would have been a reach. We were pretty focused on Philips because of the great service for our other modalities. I’m on a first name basis with all of the Philips service guys and they jump through hoops to quickly address any equipment issues. It’s almost like they’re our extended employee family. It was a huge factor in our decision making.”

By June 2016, the Diamond Select Achieva 1.5T was installed and performing beyond expectations.

A rigorous refurbishment process

Only used medical systems with proven and documented service histories are considered by Philips as Diamond Select. The standards of quality that Philips delivers throughout the refurbishment process pays off in outstanding performance over many years. All components, including the magnet, undergo a rigorous OEM factory testing process and are replaced by new OEM parts when necessary. The latest software releases and field updates are installed and the system is configured to customer specifications.

Philips initiates a comprehensive five step refurbishment process to ensure quality:

-  **Step 1**
Stringent selection
-  **Step 2**
Skilled de-installation and transport
-  **Step 3**
Expert refurbishing
-  **Step 4**
Effective installation
-  **Step 5**
Full warranty and support



“Philips takes it to the factory and completely rebuilds it, tests it, and then ships it,” says Norwood. “When you get it, it’s a brand new used piece of equipment. I know that’s kind of an oxymoron, but I feel very comfortable with it.”



Eric Cargel BS, RT (R)(MR)
MRI Coordinator

“ We’re already growing fast. In the past year, we’ve added another MR technologist, expanded our hours – and potentially may expand even more.”

Eric Cargel, MRI Coordinator

A positive, local MRI experience

Eric Cargel, ETMC Quitman’s MRI Coordinator is performing exams with the Achieva 1.5T on a daily basis. Along with a recently hired technologist, they’re averaging 100 exams a month.

“Image quality is very good,” says Cargel. “ETMC Tyler, a 500-bed level one trauma center, has this exact model. So, we’re able to provide the same image quality here at Quitman as our parent hospital, without patients having to drive an hour away. In fact, this machine is the only permanent in-house MRI in Wood County.”

The advantage for local patients is that they are treated to a more personal, more attentive experience than they might find in a bigger city. Eric is able to devote a full hour to each patient, easing their fears by explaining all aspects of the procedure. “The great thing about imaging here at Quitman,” he says, “is I can take my time to get patients through the test versus moving them in and out as quickly as possible. The people out here really appreciate that, because they’re all from quiet rural communities and they enjoy the personal touch. Many of them say, if I have to come back, I’m only coming back here.”



The perfect fit

“I think we made a good choice,” concludes Norwood. “I don’t for a moment regret buying the Diamond Select system. Yes, the Ingenia would have been great, but that would have put tremendous pressure on us to achieve at least 70 exams a month. Our breakeven number was a lot lower with the Diamond Select system, so that kind of pressure was off.”

Eric Cargel agrees, “To be able to purchase this unit and not have that pressure to produce higher numbers was really a nice benefit. Even though we have the numbers today, it was absolutely the right decision at the time.”

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