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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HAMILTON FORENSIC UNIT IS A GREAT ASSET TO LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Whitfield County, GA – Hamilton Medical Center held a ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate the Hamilton Forensic Unit on Tuesday. The unit is inside the main campus, adjacent to the Emergency Department.

The new unit improves an already award-winning medical facility within the community, but local law enforcement agencies and the District Attorney’s Office will experience the greatest benefit. With 12 fully-trained sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs), and operating 24/7, Detective Ronny Morris, is grateful for the new facility. “The on-call detective now has access to an on-call nurse and it streamlines the process a lot better for the detective, and primarily the victim,” said Morris. Morris has been employed with the Whitfield County Sheriff’s Office for fifteen years and has specialized in sex crimes for six. “With this new facility, the process will be faster and more efficient – all around better for everyone.”

Hospital staff will work closely with law enforcement and prosecutors to ensure that evidence is properly collected and preserved. The forensic unit is equipped with a state-of-the-art camera system to capture high quality forensic evidence, specialized lighting equipment to help detect hidden bruises, and examination rooms to provide a private and safe environment for the patient.

The District Attorney’s Office provides patients with an advocate, assigned by the Georgia Victim Witness Program. “Having this [forensic] unit is important for us because it provides us with the ability to make very early contact with the victims in the cases, and it’s also a lot more private,” said Danielle Kean, Victim Services Director. “Having that area that is solely dedicated to these exams is really good for them to give them some comfort.”

For more information or questions about the Hamilton Forensic Unit, please contact Ashley Cloer, Forensic Nurse Coordinator, at [acloer@hhcs.org](mailto:acloer@hhcs.org). For more information on the Victim/Witness Assistance Program please visit: <http://www.conasauga-da.org/vwap.htm>