

Redefining MRI access: The MAGNETOM Free.Max at Northside Hospital Atlanta

Expanding MRI availability for patients

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A cornerstone of healthcare in Georgia, the Northside Hospital system sees more than 5 million patient encounters annually across five acute-care hospitals, including its flagship—Northside Hospital Atlanta.



Here, the radiology team faced a persistent challenge: providing MRI access to patients who struggled with traditional scanners. “Radiology and imaging are the heart of diagnosis and treatment for patient care,” says Teresa Walker, Director of Radiology Services. Expanding MRI access for these patients became a priority.

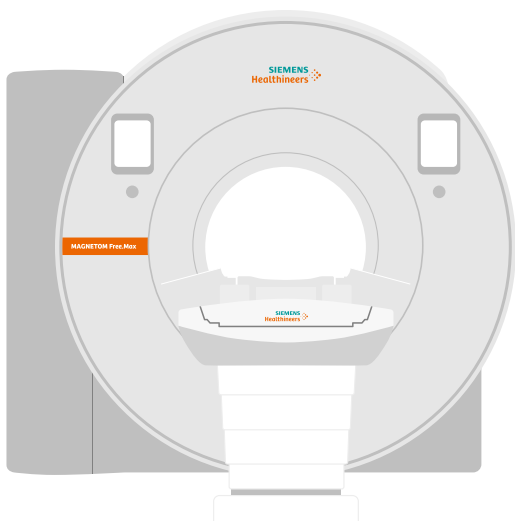
“There was definitely a subset of patients who couldn’t get the MRI either because they couldn’t tolerate being in the scanner or they couldn’t fit in,” adds Steven Moss, MD, President of Northside Radiology Associates. “Unfortunately, many of those patients were never able to get an MRI before.”



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Steven Moss, MD, President of Northside Radiology Associates





Supporting underserved patients

The installation of the MAGNETOM Free.Max marked a turning point for Northside's imaging services. With its 80-cm bore, 705-lb weight capacity, and advanced features like metal artifact reduction, the MAGNETOM Free.Max can now support better experiences for the entire patient population—especially those previously underserved.

"The Free.Max is a game changer," says Diedra Newton, Lead MRI Technologist. "We're able to move from patient to patient with less stress on the technologists, scan faster, and provide a more comfortable, patient-friendly environment." MRI Technologist Heiddy Veloz agrees: "The 705-lb weight capacity is amazing. And the system has contour coils we didn't normally see on our other equipment."

Metal artifact reduction has also proven valuable. "Having that software is extremely helpful to our geriatric population," Newton notes. "In those patients, you see quite a bit of joint replacement."



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Heiddy Veloz, MRI Technologist



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Diedra Newton, Lead MRI technologist



Removing exam barriers

Claustrophobia and discomfort are common barriers to MRI. The MAGNETOM Free.Max addresses these with thoughtful design elements like LED lighting, a wider bore, and entertainment options. "I'm very claustrophobic myself," says Veloz. "The lighting inside the gantry is bright, and it's a lot wider. You don't feel like you're going into a tunnel. You can see and feel the difference."

To further enhance the patient experience, an additional video projection system was purchased to integrate with the audio system – allowing patients to choose their own music or watch videos. "That is huge," says Sandi Edwards, RT, Radiology Supervisor. "It gives them something else to focus on, and I think that's made a big difference in patient satisfaction and confidence."



Advanced imaging for clinical confidence

To support clinical decision-making, the MAGNETOM Free.Max can incorporate Deep Resolve, an advanced image processing technology that enhances image sharpness via AI and enables accelerated image acquisition with high signal-to-noise (SNR) scans. "We've used various open MRI scanners over the years. This is really the first time where I feel like the quality of the images we can produce on these more challenging patients is much more comparable to conventional systems," says Dr. Moss.

"Ultimately, I think this system opens up new doors for patients to get the care they need," Dr. Moss continues. "It's great to work with a clinical partner that values that and makes it easier for us to deliver high-quality care."



A partnership that drives progress

Northside Hospital Atlanta credits their partnership with Siemens Healthineers for helping them drive meaningful progress in their MRI service. By removing physical and psychological barriers, enhancing image quality, and improving workflow, the MAGNETOM Free.Max helps empower clinicians and comfort patients. Most importantly, it ensures that more individuals—regardless of size, mobility, or anxiety—can receive the care they need. For Northside, this isn't just a technological upgrade; it's a meaningful step toward more inclusive, compassionate healthcare.

"I think I get more hugs at work because of the Free.Max than I do when I walk through my own door at home," says Newton. "That means we're doing something right—thanks to Siemens."



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Diedra Newton, Lead MRI technologist

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