

Valley's first 'open air' MRI machine comes to Gypsum

Weiss Medical Associates opening a new clinic downvalley this week

Daily staff report

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VAIL — Weiss Medical Associates announced the opening of its new Gypsum clinic, offering an AIRIS II magnetic resonance imaging system. Designed for maximum patient comfort, the AIRIS II system features a unique, award-winning, open-air design that provides complete access from all sides. The open design combines powerful digital electronics, advanced permanent magnet technology and a state-of-the-art workstation computer for exceptional image quality. The clinic, located at 485 Lindbergh Drive on the Eagle/Gypsum border, opened this week.

The AIRIS II MRI system was acquired from Hitachi Medical Systems American Inc. in Twinsburg, Ohio. Hitachi is the leader in open MRI, using permanent magnet technology, with more than 700 systems installed in the United States and 1,800 worldwide.

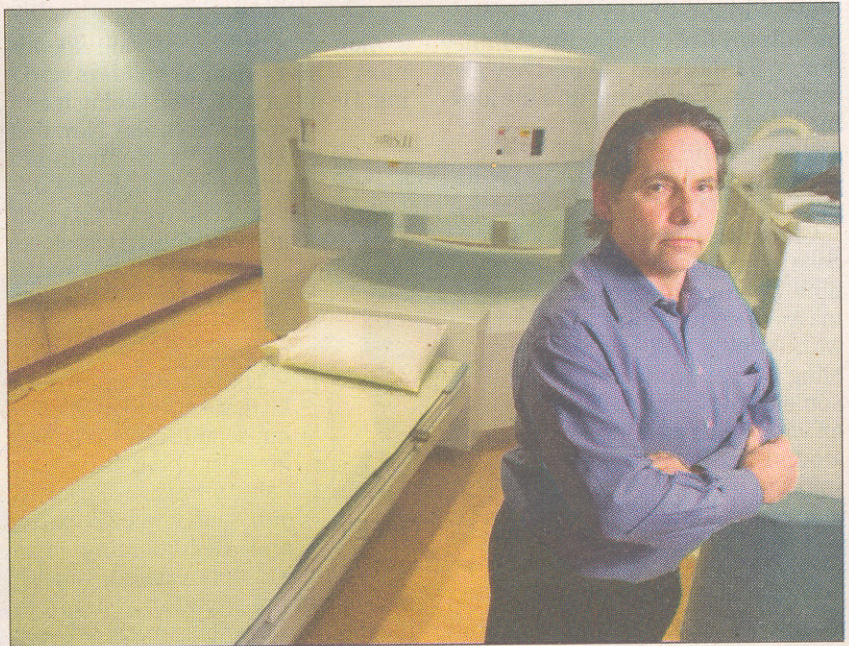
"The major benefit of this MRI over others is definitely the open-air design," said imaging technician Michelle Wolffe, who will be working at the clinic.

Unlike traditional MRIs, which require patients to lie down in a confining, enclosed "tube," the AIRIS II is open on all four sides, providing children, seniors, larger or disabled individuals, as well as those who suffer from claustrophobia, a comfortable environment during MRI examinations.

"The design is a lot less claustrophobic. Parents, spouses or friends can sit beside or the hold the hand of a patient being examined," Wolffe said.

The impetus behind the new office is a focus on patient care, said Vicki Hernandez, Weiss Medical Associates office manager.

"From the imaging system and



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Dr. Gary Weiss recently opened a branch of his practice, Weiss Medical Associates, in Gypsum. His new office space houses an open-air magnetic resonance imaging machine, which can be used with patients who experience claustrophobia.

facility to our hours of operation and affordability, we've really tried to take patient care to a new level," she said.

Weiss Medical Associates open MRI offers a calm, welcoming environment for MRI and neurologic exams, lacking the chaos and confusion that can sometimes accompany MRI and hospital facilities. The AIRIS II machine itself is extremely quiet relative to other systems and features an extra-wide, padded patient table to ensure patient comfort.

"My patients really prefer the AIRIS II's quietness and open design compared to traditional MRI systems," said Wolffe, who brings six years of experience as an MRI technician to the facility.

She even encourages patients to bring their own CDs or books on tape to enjoy during the 30- to 60-minute exams.

Weiss Medical Associates open MRI will also present a very affordable option to community members, with much more flexible scheduling. The clinic accepts most insurances and workers' compensation, with financing options available. Flexible scheduling allows patients to coordinate examinations seven days a week, with early-morning and evening times

available to accommodate work schedules.

MRI is a method of obtaining detailed pictures of the inner body using magnetic fields and radio waves. The process is painless, involves no exposure to radiation and has no known side effects.

Recommended to detect abnormalities that CT scanning and X-rays cannot, MRI can be effective in clinical evaluation of brain disorders, traumatic injuries, eye abnormalities, spine diseases, tumor detection, liver and other abdominal diseases, knee and shoulder injuries, musculoskeletal disorders, facial or neck abnormalities, infections, cardiac malformations, blood-flow and vessel disorders and more. MRI is thought to be the best of all imaging modalities because of the degree to which it can differentiate among muscle, fat, vessels, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, cortical bone and marrow bone space. In revealing different characteristics within the tissues of the body through contrast, MRI can yield quick and accurate diagnoses that may reduce the need for biopsies, exploratory surgery or other risky or

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MRI

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invasive diagnostic procedures.

"High-resolution images are critical for accurate diagnoses," said Weiss Medical Associates' Dr. Gary M Weiss. "The better the image, the earlier a disorder can be identified and evaluated, enabling doctors to treat with greater success. It is for this reason, coupled with our focus on ensuring patient comfort, that we

acquired the AIRIS II."

A board-certified neurologist treating diseases and illnesses of the brain, spine and nervous system, Weiss has been using MRI scans as a primary diagnostic tool for his more than 25 years in the medical field. A graduate of Northwestern University's honors program in medical education and trained at the renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., Weiss has been named one of "America's Top Physicians" by the Ameri-

can Consumer's Research Council two years in a row.

In addition to the new Gypsum office, Weiss Medical Associates has an office in East Vail and sees patients in Leadville, Frisco, Aspen, Basalt and Glenwood Springs. For more information on the AIRIS II MRI system's capabilities or to schedule an appointment for an MRI or neurologic evaluation, call Weiss Medical Associates at 970-477-0700.

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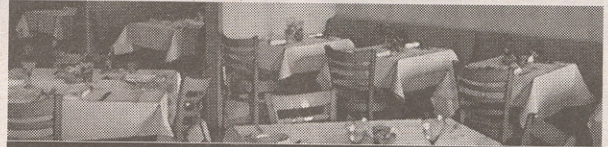
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