



## Northeast Georgia Health System

# 2013 Community Benefit Report

*"Improving the health of our community in all we do"*

### Organization Overview:

Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) is a not-for-profit community health system dedicated to improving the health and quality of life of the people of Northeast Georgia. Through the services of a medical staff of more than 500 physicians, the residents of Northeast Georgia have access to comprehensive medical services. The Health System offers a full range of healthcare services through its hospital in Gainesville, **Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC)**, which for 2014, is rated Georgia's #1 Hospital (according to CareChex®) and among only 20 large community hospitals named to Truven Healthcare's list of the nation's 100 Top Hospitals.



CareChex also recognizes NGMC as:

- Georgia's #1 Surgery Hospital
- Georgia's #1 Heart Hospital
- Georgia's #1 Women's Hospital
- Georgia's #1 Pulmonary Hospital
- Georgia's #1 Neurology Hospital for Patient Safety
- #6 in the Nation for Medical Care

Other facilities throughout Northeast Georgia serve to extend NGHS' reach into the region including:

- Medical Plaza 400, a multispecialty medical office building in Dawsonville
- A mental health and substance abuse treatment center

- A satellite cancer treatment center
- In-home services such as hospice and Lifeline, a personal emergency response system
- Long-term care centers
- Outpatient imaging centers
- Outpatient rehabilitation centers offering physical, occupational and speech therapy
- Urgent Care centers

NGHS is building a new campus in the Greater Braselton area. This 119-acre healthcare village already includes a medical office building (Medical Plaza 1) that houses numerous physician specialties, an urgent care center and outpatient services including imaging, lab and physical and occupational therapy. A 100-bed hospital, Northeast Georgia Medical Center Braselton, is scheduled to open in Spring 2015.

Led by volunteer boards made up of community leaders, the **557-inpatient, 261-skilled nursing bed** Health System serves almost **800,000 people in more than 13 counties** across Northeast Georgia. As a not-for-profit health system, all revenue generated above operating expenses is returned to the community through improved services and innovative programs. Northeast Georgia Medical Center's Charity Care Policy supports the provision of care for indigent patients, regardless of their ability to pay.

### Economic Impact Surpasses \$1 Billion

In 2011, the latest information available, NGMC generated more than \$1 billion in revenue for the local and state economy according to the Georgia Hospital Asso-

ciation, the state's largest hospital trade association.

### Charity Care

NGMC's charity care policy removes barriers for low-income populations beginning with free care for patients up to 150% of the poverty level. Further, self-pay patients up to 300% of the poverty level qualify for an adjustment equivalent to the hospital's Medicare reimbursement rate plus an additional 40% discount.

**Total Charity Care Cost for FY13:**  
**\$27.6 million**

**\$16.9 million for Hall County;**  
**\$10.6 million for regional residents**

### Highlights of Community Benefit Programs and Activities:

NGMC values cooperative efforts with community services and other health-care providers to improve the health status of area citizens. NGMC demonstrates its value for collaborative efforts within the community through many partnerships ranging from serving as lead agency of the Safe Kids Coalition of Gainesville-Hall County, to partnering with community health organizations, to helping reach at-risk populations in need of health care.

**In FY13, more than \$4 million was provided in community benefit programs/outreach.** Community education was provided through free community lectures, various support groups and the health magazine, *Communicare*. Presentations were made through the Speaker's

Bureau, and NGMC also offered smoking cessation classes, as well as Living Lighter, a weight loss program. NGMC offered several community education seminars in 2013 on topics including prostate cancer, Parkinson's Disease, health tips for seniors, women's health education and more. These seminars generated more than 200 participants, and many different physicians from practices throughout the community participated in the seminars.

#### **Community Health Needs Assessment:**

NGMC, with input from the community, completed a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2013. NGMC's assessment includes a secondary data scan and a community health profile for Hall County. The assessment focuses mainly on the needs of the community's most vulnerable populations, particularly those with low-incomes who are uninsured. Six focus groups were held and nearly 25 one-on-one interviews were conducted with stakeholders. The study culminated in the identification of 10 priority health needs. Go to [www.nghs.com](http://www.nghs.com) to see a spreadsheet of initiatives and activities NGMC is involved with which address those needs. Many activities overlap different priorities, and NGMC's involvement ranges from providing the activity itself to contributing in some way. The spreadsheet is not an exhaustive list, but highlights many of the organization's efforts to address identified community health needs. The full CHNA is also available on the website.

#### **Partnering to Reach the Uninsured:**

**Indigent Care Council:** NGMC has developed a **Community Council on Caring for the Indigent**. The purpose of the council is to identify a roadmap toward **greater alignment and coordination around medical home management**, with the objective being that healthcare providers in Hall County who care for the indigent population will unite to ensure consistent and quality patient care through enhanced coordination. Members of the council include representatives from NGMC, the Primary Care Clinic at Hall County Health Department, Northeast Georgia Diagnostic Clinic, The Longstreet Clinic, Good News Clinics (indigent clinic), Medlink (federally qualified health center), as well as physicians.

**Good News Clinics:** Funding from NGMC helps provide medications, medical supplies and other support for Good News Clinics – the largest free clinic in Georgia. Founded in 1992, Good News Clinics is a Christian ministry that provides medical care to the indigent and uninsured population at no charge. Forty-four physicians, five mid-level providers and 43 dentists volunteer to treat patients at Good News Clinics. In addition, 218 specialist physicians volunteer to treat patients in their offices through referrals from Good News Clinics, Northeast Georgia Physicians Group's (NGPG) practice at the Hall County Health Department and other physicians in Hall County. **In FY13, more than \$300,000 was donated to help Good News Clinics provide care to indigent patients who were at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines and did not qualify for other programs.**



Clinical professionals from NGMC staff a **Congestive Heart Failure Clinic at Good News Clinics (GNC)**, as well as a **cardiology clinic**. Additional health screenings are provided to vulnerable populations at GNC such as prostate screenings, cancer education at churches or at community events.

**NGPG Health Department Primary Care Clinic:** NGMC plays a major role in funding a primary care clinic at the Hall County Health Department to improve access to primary healthcare services for low-income people in our community. **In FY13, NGMC contributed more than \$500,000.**

**Prenatal Care Program at the Health Department:** NGMC partners with The Longstreet Clinic to improve birth outcomes by increasing early initiation of prenatal care for low-income, uninsured and under-insured pregnant women via the Health Department's primary care center. Yearly cost to NGMC is approximately \$200,000.

**Indigent Patient Fund:** At NGMC, financial assistance is provided for indigent patients to obtain urgently needed discharge medications and transportation. Individuals eligible for these funds are

those patients whose needs cannot be met through primary insurance, their own personal funds, government programs or other charitable services. This helps to ensure medication compliance and maximize conditions for recovery and recuperation. The Medical Center Foundation provides funding for this.

#### **NGMC Volunteers:**

In FY13, nearly **638 NGMC volunteers** contributed more than 61,627 volunteer hours, equivalent to **36 full time employees** and a **value of more than \$1.3 million**. While these figures are not included in the quantitative portion of the community benefit report, they show the depth of support the community gives NGMC. The Teen Volunteer Program had 117 teens participate in 2013. The teens came from seven counties and represented 21 different schools within the area. Teens donated more than 4,900 hours of service.

#### **Encouraging Medical Volunteering:**

NGMC provides information at physician orientation to encourage physicians to **step up to volunteer** opportunities through **local free clinics** (Good News Clinics in Gainesville and Helping Hand Clinic in Cleveland) as well as Health Access. NGPG **also encourages physicians** to give of their time volunteering at these locations. **The Cancer Center at NGMC has developed a membership model for physicians** that contains conditions of participation which includes active participation in a speaker program, screening activity, cancer prevention activity or outreach. The purpose of this membership model is to improve patient care quality, access and programmatic excellence.

#### **Financial Navigators:**

NGMC has **financial assistance counselors who help patients become insured**, be it through **Medicaid, PeachCare** or other programs. NGMC is currently making financial counselors into "Financial Navigators." This team focuses on being advocates for uninsured and under-insured patients aiding them in finding viable means to access care. They find the best solutions for helping patients apply for Medicaid or disability, accessing the new healthcare exchanges or processing charity applications when appropriate.

The team is undergoing training to become certified in this area as **“Certified Healthcare Reform Specialists.”**

#### Patient Navigators:

NGMC also has a **patient navigation program**. This program provides cancer patients with guidance throughout their cancer journey, and they are seen as a “living resource directory” for patients. Services include: providing emotional support, helping patients understand their diagnoses, communicating with healthcare staff and providers, addressing logistical issues such as transportation needs and helping patients understand medical terms and treatment options. The Cancer Center offers the community two patient navigators as part of a comprehensive Patient Navigation program: one is an RN who is a certified breast health navigator who works exclusively with breast cancer patients; and the second is an American Cancer Society patient resource navigator who assists all cancer patients and is bilingual.

#### Partnering in the Community:

**Vision 2030:** NGMC is actively involved in Vision 2030 ([www.vision2030.org](http://www.vision2030.org)). This program is sponsored by the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce and is a community project, and participation is open to everyone in the community. **An NGMC employee currently serves on the board of Vision 2030.** Vision 2030 focuses on the creation of a culture of community wellness, the support and maintenance of lifelong learning, the building of an economy around emerging life sciences, the encouragement of innovative growth/infrastructure development and the promotion of cultural integration.

NGMC is also an active partner on other chamber committees such as the **Healthcare Committee** and the **Health Initiative Consortium**. NGMC is also a partner in **HALLmark**, which is a community investment plan that addresses economic development, education, government and community development through partnership.

NGMC helps promote access to physical activities for both adults and children through **participation in the Healthy Beginnings Partnership**, a collabora-

tive effort between NGMC, United Way, Family Connection, Gainesville Parks and Recreation, Good News Clinics and more that seeks to raise awareness of healthy living, particularly to families.

Members of NGMC’s bariatric service line also serve on **Hall County School System’s Wellness Council**.

An NGMC representative serves on **Hall County Family Connection (HCFC)**. HCFC adopted **Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Obesity Prevention** as its two focus areas for the next three years. Hall County Family Connection is a collaborative which serves as the local decision-making body, bringing community partners together to develop, implement and evaluate plans that address the serious challenges facing the children and families in our county. Its vision is that every child has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential for good health, be secure from abuse and neglect and become a literate, productive, economically self-sufficient member of our community. The mission of HCFC is to identify and monitor areas of community concern and to mobilize the community and its resources in a common effort to develop solutions.

#### The Medical Center Foundation (MCF) Raises Funds to Benefit the Community:

The MCF is the fundraising arm of NGMC and raises funds to improve the health of the community. The Foundation’s operating expenses are supported by NGMC so that donated funds can be used to support NGMC projects and community health improvement initiatives. Following are items of interest to note:

- **Since 1997, more than \$2.7 million has been raised for community health improvement projects through The Medical Center Open**
- **The 2013 Medical Center Open Golf Tournament raised more than \$217,101 for My Sister’s Place**, a ministry that cares for and helps homeless women and their children by funding the remodel and expansion of a newly acquired, 3,200 square-foot property to double their current capacity.



- **W.A.T.C.H. members have donated more than \$4 million to support the Healthy Journey Campaign since the program’s inception in 2000.**



#### Investing in Our Youth:

**SAFE KIDS**  
GAINESVILLE/HALL COUNTY

**Safe Kids Coalition Works to Keep Kids Safe:** The Gainesville-Hall County Safe Kids Coalition, led by NGMC, is part of the National Safe Kids Cam-

paign, the first and only national organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury, which is the nation’s number one killer of children ages 14 and younger. This program provides affordable safety equipment such as car seats and bike helmets to area children in need. Working with a coalition made up of law enforcement, area schools, community volunteers and others, Safe Kids provides educational materials and programs that teach children and their parents how to avoid accidents and injuries. Safe Kids continued the work of injury prevention for families in the Hall County community in 2013 thanks to the support of MCF and the Healthy Journey Campaign.

In FY13, members of the Gainesville-Hall County Safe Kids Coalition provided more than **367 programs** and events that reached an estimated **58,000 children and their family members, teachers and caregivers**. Through these programs, more than 3,241 safety devices were distributed to families who were in need of them.

**Prescription Drug Abuse Program:** As part of a community focused effort to reduce prescription drug abuse, NGMC has instituted **specialized prescription medication guidelines** with particular focus in the Emergency Department. There is a **national epidemic of prescription narcotic abuse**. With this in mind, NGMC put into place new policies and protocols to assist in the management and tracking of ED narcotic use and prescriptions. This is in compliance with state and nationwide efforts to save lives. Good News Clinics is a partner in this effort as well,



and it will soon be expanded into NGPG's urgent care centers.

NGMC is also partnering with the **Drug Free Coalition of Hall County** locally as well as the Medical Association of Georgia's "**Think About it Campaign.**" The "Think About It" Campaign for the education about and prevention of prescription drug abuse is a project sponsored by the Medical Association of Georgia Foundation. The "Think About It" Campaign is working with a broad range of organizations to further educate and create programs to help eradicate prescription drug abuse across our state. NGMC's ED medical director, a board member, physicians and other ED staff are heavily involved in these efforts. In the past, we have hosted speakers about the topic and made donations to the campaign; we currently have educational posters and brochures throughout the hospital and NGPG offices and have plans to include educational pamphlets in Employee Pharmacy bags.

**Safe Kids of Gainesville Hall County, led by NGMC, partners with other community agencies on "Drug Take Back Days" (Operation Pill Drop),** with various collection points in the county. This gives community members a safe way to dispose of unwanted, unused drugs.

#### **Education at Interactive Neighborhood for Kids (INK):**

NGMC provides an exhibit at INK that encourages multi-sensory learning through tools that allow kids the opportunity to experience working (and playing) in the healthcare industry. Through hands-on interactive play, kids have fun doing everything from dressing up in doctor's scrubs and pushing a "patient" around in a wheelchair to taking their parent or friend's make-believe blood pressure or listening to their heart with a real stethoscope. It is hoped that being in this environment will help kids feel more comfortable the next time they are in a doctor's office or in the hospital.

A second exhibit called the **Building a Healthy Body Exhibit**, funded by The Medical Center Foundation, serves as INK's **core gallery on health-related edu-**

**cation and programming.** The exhibit explores two primary themes: maintaining a healthy body as it relates to nutrition, exercise and lifestyle choices; and the anatomy of a healthy body as it relates to body systems, organs and functions. The main centerpiece is a larger-than-life boy named "Buddy" which stands for Body Under Development. Buddy is a fun, interactive exhibit that kids and parents can explore and gain a basic understanding of the following topics: Obesity/Exercise/Nutrition, Smoking, Hygiene/Germs and Diabetes.

#### **Diabetes Education:**

The Diabetes Education Program at NGMC is **recognized by the American Diabetes Association** for quality self-management education. A comprehensive range of educational programs is offered to people with diabetes and their families by certified diabetes educators, registered nurses and registered dietitians.

#### **Education for Seniors:**

**Getting Older and Better Workshop: More than 200 people participated** in the Getting Older and Better Workshop in May at First United Methodist Church in Gainesville and the Spout Springs Library in Flowery Branch. This event was sponsored by The Medical Center Auxiliary, provided by NGMC and featured physicians who spoke about the topic of Eye and Skin Health.

**Flu and Pneumonia Program at the Guest House:** NGMC provides flu and pneumonia vaccinations at no charge to clients at the Guest House, an adult day health service provided in the community. These are often the frail and elderly who have a difficult time getting to their physician.

**Wisdom Project:** NGMC supports this leadership program for seniors to share their wisdom, experience and talents in creative ways through action and advocacy on behalf of Hall County. The initiative is sponsored by Brenau University's Center for Lifetime Study. An NGMC staff member played a major role in the concept and development of this program. NGMC has sponsored one to two participants during each class, generally retired employees, and The Medical Center

Auxiliary has also sponsored one to two active volunteers to participate in each session. NGMC also hosts a program for each class, educating them about how national health care issues affect NGMC.

#### **Support of Community Efforts to Improve Health:**

NGMC employees are very active in the community, volunteering at the Good News Clinics, in their churches on mission trips and for community agencies such as the Humane Society and Habitat for Humanity. **When it comes to supporting MCF's employee giving club, W.A.T.C.H. (We Are Targeting Community Healthcare), more than 2,700 employees donated more than \$402,000 in FY13.**

**Relay for Life, American Heart Walk, March for Babies:** NGMC employees also turned out in full force for community events such as the American Heart Walk, March of Dimes' WalkAmerica and American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, averaging participation of 200 employees per event.

**Blood Drives:** NGMC employees donated more than 450 units of blood in FY13.

**Employees Lead the Way: United Way Pacesetter & More** NGHS employees contributed over **\$107,000** to United

Way as a Cornerstone Company. Two NGMC employees serve on the United Way Board.



**Sponsorships and Donations: In FY13, NGMC sponsored or made a donation to approximately 20 community agencies** serving health and human service needs, ranging from supporting the American Cancer Society to Teen Pregnancy Prevention. Sponsorships/donations totaled more than \$850,000 in FY13.

#### **Training and Education for Healthcare Professionals:**

NGMC continues the activities below to serve as a "**pipeline**" to help get more qualified people interested in healthcare positions or get them the training and education they need:

- **Allied Student Health Education** – clinical rotations are provided for

allied health students from area schools at NGMC.

- **Community Based Vocational Instruction** - NGMC is a training site for high school students with disabilities. Students work approximately three times per week for a few hours with an instructor from the school and work in Materials Management, Nutritional Services, Pharmacy and Linen Distribution. They gain knowledge outside the classroom by learning different skills and are able to get jobs when they graduate. **In FY13, 11 students and two instructors participated.**
- **Continuing Medical Education (CME)**– Continuing Medical Education activities are provided for physicians and allied health personnel within NGMC and are also offered outside the organization. **In FY13, there were 138 live CMEs provided to 21,956 physicians and 4,180 allied healthcare providers.**
- **Job Shadowing** - this program allows high school and post secondary students from area schools to shadow professional healthcare staff for the purpose of better understanding the various healthcare roles. The primary purpose is to foster student interest in healthcare fields and encourage enrollment in programs of study that would train and educate future healthcare workers. This is an observational program requiring a staff mentor. **In FY13, 77 job shadows were placed.**
- **Support of Associate Degree in Nursing Program at University of North Georgia:** NGMC partners with the University of North Georgia to provide in-kind support for the ASN (associates degree in nursing) program by providing funding for one full time faculty position.
- **Nurse Extern Program:** NGMC provides a 10-week summer program for rising senior nursing students to work on nursing units as employees to gain additional clinical skills and critical thinking skills. The externs are oriented as a group to the organization, then placed on nursing units for the remainder of the program with the exception of a few educational activities. All appli-

cants are interviewed by recruiters and nursing managers prior to acceptance into the program. In FY13, there were **33 externs.**

- **Nursing Scholarships**
- **Nursing Student Education-** Clinical rotations at NGMC in FY13 totaled approximately 1,500.
- **Partners in Education:** The Gainesville/Hall County Chamber of Commerce provides the opportunity for businesses and educational institutions to partner. Through this partnership, they work together to build educational opportunities and resources for the community. NGMC is the Partner in Education for West Hall High School and North Hall Middle School.
- **Pharmacy Residency Program:** The pharmacy residency program at NGMC is a one-year postgraduate training program for licensed pharmacists. The program provides direct clinical pharmacy experience in the areas of critical care, cardiology, internal medicine, emergency medicine, oncology and women and children's health with a goal of graduating a practitioner who is prepared to accept a clinical pharmacy position in any number of settings.
- **Radiology Tech Program:** NGMC partners with Lanier Technical College to house the Radiology Tech program at the Lanier Park Campus. Four full-time classrooms are provided as well as one faculty salary.
- **Support to Foothills AHEC:** Foothills Area Health Education Center is a community-driven, non-profit corporation, supported by federal and local sources. The mission is to increase the supply and distribution of healthcare providers, especially in medically underserved areas. Through joint efforts, communities experience improved supply, distribution and retention of quality healthcare professionals. Foothills AHEC serves 31 counties in the Northeast Georgia area. NGMC provides support to this program through employee benefits packages, phone, utilities and cleaning service expenses.
- **Youth Apprenticeship Program, Junior Achievement and Youth**

**Leadership Hall County** – Students from seven area high schools apply for unpaid youth apprenticeships in various departments. **In FY13, 44 students participated.**

### NGMC Provides Health Information & Support:

**Cancer Information Line:** NGMC operates a Cancer Information Line 1-800-466-5416. This is a free telephone service for Northeast Georgia communities that provides information, education and resources to cancer patients, family members and the general public.

**Nurseline:** NGMC provides the Nurseline, a free service to the public that provides telephone triage and health information services. This service increases the Hall County community's access to medical information; provides standardized medical information instead of just "nursing judgments"; and helps off-load physician office medical information calls, allowing them more time to care for patients.

 **Nurseline**  
770-219-INFO (4636)

**The Health Sciences Library and Resource Center at NGMC** serves the health information needs of the community. The library is located on the NGMC campus in Gainesville. Consumers, patients and their family members have access to credible resources relating to medical symptoms, conditions and treatments. The Resource Center encourages visitors to make healthy choices and become active, informed partners in their health care.

**Clergy Seminars & Accreditation by Association for Clinical Pastoral Education:** NGMC held two clergy seminars in FY13, two units of clinical pastoral education and seven lunch and learn meetings for volunteer chaplains. The seminars were on the topics of end-of-life issues and critical incident stress management. More than 80 clergy members from across North Georgia participated in these events. NGMC plans to do more of these types of events during the next three years. NGMC is home to a Clinical Pastoral Education center, which is focused on offering our area clergy practical theological education in a clinical set-

ting through the CPE model. Our center is accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE).

### Hospice Bereavement Camp and Support Groups:

#### Camp Braveheart:

NGMC provides a day camp for children and teens who have experienced the death of a close friend or family member. This camp is free and available to any youth in the community who has experienced a significant death. Facilitated by a team of licensed social workers, therapists and trained volunteers, Camp Braveheart is a structured, supportive environment which provides campers with vocabulary to talk about death, loss and intense emotions; healthy ways to cope with those intense emotions; opportunities to talk about and remember their loved ones; a safe place to talk about changes, fears and frustrations; and the chance to interact with other children/teens with similar losses.

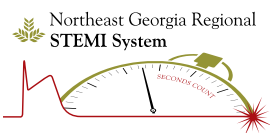
#### School Based Bereavement Support Groups:

Braveheart counselors guide grief support groups at area schools. Counselors understand children's natural resiliency and can help them navigate their feelings based on individual emotional and developmental needs.

#### STEMI Summit:

Hosted each year by NGMC, the Northeast Georgia Regional

STEMI Summit brings together paramedics, EMS staff and doctors from across the state. They meet to discuss the state of the Northeast Georgia Regional STEMI System – a collaborative effort between NGMC and EMS in 15 counties across the region to provide fast and efficient treatment to patients suffering severe heart attacks known as STEMI (**S-T** Segment **E**levation **M**yocardial **I**nfarction). Keynote speakers at the conference include the nation's leading cardiologists and experts in the study of regional approaches to heart attack care. The STEMI system benefits all patients, regardless of ability to pay.



**Mended Hearts:** Mended Hearts, Inc., is a nationwide support organization for individuals with heart disease, including persons recovering from heart attacks, angioplasty or open heart surgery. Mended Hearts volunteers visit cardiac patients and their families before and after surgeries and help answer questions and concerns, offer hope and encouragement and share educational materials. Since August 2002, members of Chapter 302 at NGMC have donated 20,000 hours of community service and visited more than 21,000 patients.



**In keeping with guidelines for community benefit reporting, NGMC did not include quantitative data on the following programs/projects, but they do meet health needs in the community identified via the 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment and warrant inclusion in this summary:**

#### Patient-Centered Medical Neighborhood:

NGHS has been selected as one of 15 communities in the nation to establish a patient-centered medical neighborhood (PCMN) as part of a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) Innovation Challenge Grant. The **PCMN** builds on the concept of a patient-centered medical home (PCMH) by connecting acute-care hospitals, specialty and sub-specialty practices and other community health resources with primary care providers in order to drive higher-quality, provide more affordable care and ensure a positive patient experience. The first step in this three-year project is to build strong medical home practices. Partnering with NGPG and other community practices, this project is designed to provide **more individualized care to patients**. A medical home is a concept of care – not a building, a house or a hospital. **The goal of the medical home model is to better coordinate care through primary care practices with hospitals, medical specialties and other community health services to support a more fully-integrated approach to care.** Being cared for in a Patient Centered Medical Home means NGMC's health-care providers will work with patients to help understand their total healthcare needs and connect them with commu-

nity and other resources to help meet their individualized needs. A partnership is developed between the patient, the personal primary care physician and other members of the healthcare team, and there is a **key focus on encouraging patients to participate in their care.**

**Disease care managers:** NGMC employs four **disease care managers** to focus on the core measures identified by CMS, which are **pneumonia and sepsis, heart failure, stroke and acute myocardial infarction**. CMS began focusing on these disorders to improve care and reduce costs, therefore these professionals manage care to improve outcomes. Disease managers provide community education and some disease managers provide health education at Good News Clinics (the indigent clinic). Other community education provided by disease managers includes church/civic/senior groups, health fairs and special programs.

**SANE program:** NGMC provides a SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) program which provides nurses special training in rape crisis, trial time with a District Attorney and training with law enforcement and a pediatrician's office. NGMC employs nurses who have specialized training to complete the Sexual Assault Nurse Exam and provide specialized care for patients who are victims of sexual assault. This program is not a requirement of hospitals and is also not provided at all hospitals throughout the state.

**Lifeline:** NGMC has a Lifeline emergency response service which allows people to continue living independently in their homes with the security of knowing they can quickly access help if they need it. By pressing a lightweight, waterproof alert button worn around the neck or wrist, subscribers can signal Lifeline monitors who determine what kind of help is needed and call for it immediately. Currently NGMC has approximately **330 subscribers**.

NGMC recently achieved **Stage 6 designation of the Health Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Analytics Hospital Electronic Medical Record (EMR) Adoption Model**. This distinction honors NGMC's accomplishments to implement technology solutions



to improve patient safety and quality of care. NGMC is one of 487 hospitals in the United States and 12 in Georgia to earn this designation. This will improve coordination of care across multiple providers and better support coordination of care, especially when there are language issues.

**Special Notes:**

NGMC uses the precepts outlined in "A Guide for Planning and Reporting Community Benefit," provided by the Catholic Health Association of The United States and VHA, Inc. The guide's purpose is to help not-for-profit, mission-driven health-care organizations develop, enhance and report on their community benefit programs.

**Community Benefit Definition:**

Program or activity must address a demonstrated community need and seek to address at least one of the following community benefit objectives:

- improve access
- enhance population health
- advance generalizable knowledge

- relieve government burden to improve health.

The program or activity must:

- primarily benefit the community rather than the organization
- result in measurable expense to the organization.

If the program or activity is provided primarily for marketing purposes, standard practice, expected of all hospitals (such as activities required for accreditation, licensure or to participate in Medicare) or is primarily for employees (not including interns, residents and fellows) and/or affiliated physicians, it is not community benefit.

**For more information, contact Christy Moore, manager of Community Health Improvement, at 770-219-8097 or go to [www.nghs.com](http://www.nghs.com).**



## A Way to give back

Use the envelope provided in the center of this *Communicare* issue to make a gift to The Medical Center Foundation in honor or memory of a family member, friend or physician and help build a strong and healthy community.

The Medical Center Foundation is dedicated to improving the health of the community we serve. 100% of each Gift from the Heart directly impacts the lives of families throughout northeast Georgia and supports essential initiatives such as expansion and improvement of facilities, state-of-the-art technology and community wellness.

Imagine taking a childbirth class in the comfort of your own home.



To learn more, or to register, visit [nghs.com/obclasses](http://nghs.com/obclasses)

no two are the same   
at Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Inc.



## Online Childbirth Education Classes

**The perfect option for:**

- Moms-to-be who are on bed rest
- Couples with time constraints or scheduling conflicts
- Those who are unable to attend a traditional childbirth class
- A refresher course