



# Northeast Georgia Health System, Inc. & Affiliates

## Executive Summary

### FY18 Community Benefit Report

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

## NGMC Gainesville & Braselton

NGMC Gainesville and Braselton value cooperative efforts with community organizations and other healthcare providers to improve the health status of area residents. This is demonstrated through many partnerships ranging from serving as lead agency of Safe Kids Gainesville/Hall County, to partnering with other organizations such as Good News Clinics and the Public Health Department to reach at-risk populations in need of health care.

**In FY18, NGMC Gainesville and Braselton provided over \$8 million in community benefit programs/outreach.** Health education was provided through free community lectures, health screenings, and various support groups. NGMC also offered many community education seminars for health professionals in the community, region and state, as well as for students pursuing careers in health. In addition, NGMC provided support to other local non-profit organizations that serve the community.

### **What Drives NGMC's Community Health Improvement Activities?**

NGMC, with input from the community, completed a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2016. The assessment focused mainly on the needs of the community's most vulnerable populations, particularly those with low-incomes who are uninsured. Input from the community was gathered through focus groups and interviews. The study culminated in the identification of the following 5 priority health needs across the region: Septicemia, Access to Care, Diabetes, Cancer and Injury. The 5 health priorities fit hand-in-glove with the strategic direction of the organization.

Mental and behavioral health is a priority for NGMC. A listening session was held with over 60 stakeholders in the community, ranging from behavioral health counseling agencies, to schools and businesses. From this, a steering committee emerged that is being housed under **United Way's One Hall**. Within the One Hall framework, the steering committee is working better to coordinate mental health services in northeast Georgia through new forms of connectivity which will include a shared platform and navigation system, providing Mental Health First Aid training to targeted audiences, and collaboration.

**Proceeds from the 2019 Medical Center Open will go toward a Student Success Center located on the campus of Gainesville High School** and will be available to students throughout Hall County. The center will address academic and workforce development while also increasing access, collaboration and education regarding mental and behavioral health supports.

**NGMC's emergency departments have partnered with the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse to implement the ED-CARES (Certified Addiction Recovery Specialists) program** which connects people who have been admitted to emergency rooms for an opioid-related overdose with trained peer recovery coaches who play an important role in helping people avoid another overdose and encouraging them to seek treatment. NGMC is the only hospital system in Georgia to provide this support, which is provided in all three Emergency Departments (at Gainesville, Braselton and Barrow).

**NGMC is the first in the nation to offer the CARES program in its Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs)** to help families of babies born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) find a path to recovery. NGMC also has dedicated NICU staff educating the families on how to care for their infant with NAS.

For more information about progress on these and other health priorities, go to [www.nghs.com/chna-outcome](http://www.nghs.com/chna-outcome).

**The following contains additional highlights of community benefit activities provided by NGMC in FY18, often partnering with other organizations and individuals in the community:**

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

NGMC works cooperatively with other area healthcare providers to care for area residents, particularly the indigent population. Partners include, but are not limited to, NGMC, the Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG) Primary Care Clinic at Hall County Health Department, The Longstreet Clinic, Medlink (federally qualified health center), area physicians and indigent clinics such as Good News Clinics in Gainesville and Good Shepherd Clinic of Dawson County.

**Good News Clinics (GNC):** NGMC provides funding to GNC (the largest free clinic in Georgia) that helps provide medications, medical supplies and other support. Founded in 1992, GNC is a Christian ministry that provides medical and dental care to the indigent and uninsured population at no charge. Thirty-nine physicians, 5 mid-level providers, 43 dentists and one dental hygienist volunteer to treat patients at GNC. In addition, 256 specialist physicians volunteer to treat patients in their offices through Health Access Initiative. **In FY18, over \$560,000 was donated to help GNC provide care to indigent patients** who were at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines and did not qualify for other programs. To provide integration between GNC, NGHS, and other providers in the community, NGMC is working to help support the implementation of a high-level electronic medical record system to improve coordination of care and outcomes for this vulnerable patient population.

**Eva Johnson**, NGMC Nurse Practitioner and Heart Failure Disease Manager, helped establish and now runs the Heart Failure Clinic at GNC. Eva has worked with Good News Clinic to successfully apply for grants that awarded funding for medications, blood pressure cuffs and scales for patients in the Heart Failure Clinic. **This project has been extremely successful, holding the 30-day hospital readmissions to one patient in 2018.** Due to the success of the Good News Clinics Heart Failure Clinic, Eva was given Brenau University's Masters in the ART of Nursing - **Healers Among Us Award** in February, 2018.

**NGPG Primary Care Clinic at the Hall County Health Department:** NGMC funds and staffs 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 FY18, NGMC contributed \$938,386 to provide this clinic.**

**Prenatal Care Program at the Health Department:** NGMC, The Longstreet Clinic, and Hall County Health Department partner to improve birth outcomes by increasing early prenatal care for low-income,

uninsured and under-insured pregnant women via the Health Department's primary care clinic. Yearly support from 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 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.

**Charity Care:** NGMC's charity care policy removes barriers for low-income populations within our service area beginning with free, medically necessary care for patients whose gross family income is 0 to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) adjusted for family size. Further, patients from our service area, whose FPL is from 151 to 300%, may qualify for an adjustment equivalent to the hospital's Medicare reimbursement rate plus an additional 40% discount to the Medicare reimbursement rate.

**Total Charity Care Cost for FY18: \$23.3 million for Hall County with another \$22.4 million for regional residents outside of Hall County.**

**Financial Navigators:** NGMC has **financial assistance counselors who help patients become insured**, be it through **Medicaid, PeachCare** or other programs. 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 healthcare exchanges or processing charity applications when appropriate.

#### **Patient Navigators**

NGMC has a **cancer patient navigation program** to provide cancer patients with guidance throughout their cancer journey, and they are seen as a "living resource directory" for patients.

#### **Clinical Research**

NGMC's Office of Research is responsible for overseeing the quality, scientific integrity, academic impact, regulatory compliance and financial responsibility of clinical human subject research conducted at NGHS. In FY18, NGMC had an average of 35 clinical trial research studies available to patients in the community and enrolled approximately 250 patients into clinical trials. Cancer studies cover the spectrum of breast, lung, colon, prostate, bladder and thyroid cancers, and studies in cardiology include innovative therapies and devices for use in treating cardiovascular disease. Research impacts the standard of care, improving the care that patients receive. NGMC's **Oncology Research program**, through the Georgia NCORP (National Cancer Institute Community Oncology Research Program), received recognition as a high performing research site member. Georgia NCORP provides Georgians with access to state-of-the-art cancer prevention, screening, control, treatment and post treatment trials in 41 locations throughout the state. NGMC was recognized for results in meeting or exceeding goals for providing patients access to cancer research trials. NGMC's **Cardiology Research program** was recognized by major sponsors as a top enrolling site through participation in pharmaceutical and device clinical trials in cardiology with outcomes that have the potential to improve standard of care for patients throughout the U.S. and around the world.

#### **Partnering in the Community**

**NGMC Volunteers:** In FY18, **758 NGMC volunteers** contributed **69,655 volunteer hours**, equivalent to **41 full time employees** and a **value of over \$1.7 million to the organization** (inclusive of Gainesville,

Braselton and Barrow). 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. 118 teens participated in the Teen Volunteer Program in 2018. The teens represented 29 different schools within the area.

**Partnership for a Drug Free Hall (DFH):** At NGMC, the number of opiate overdose patients arriving in the Emergency Departments has increased from 281 patients in 2015 to 696 in 2016. Hall County's response to the opioid epidemic is the collaborative Partnership for a Drug Free Hall (DFH). Modeled after a partnership formed in Gwinnett County led by Senator Renee Unterman, she, along with Deb Bailey, Executive Director of Governmental Affairs at NGHS, Dallas Gay, former NGHS Board Member, and Judy Brownell, Director of Prevention at Center Point, pulled together a diverse group of agencies in Hall County to form this partnership. DFH is dedicated to providing the people of Hall County with information, resources and actions to address drug abuse. The DFH ***Not My Family forums for awareness and education targeted families, educating over 745 people live in Gainesville.*** Additional resources, such as, forum recordings, Parent Support Group information and more can be found at <http://drugfreehall.org>. Visit <http://opioidoverdoserescue.com> to complete the video training on **3 Steps to Save a Life.**

**Falls Prevention Expo/ Getting Older & Better Workshop:** The 2018 Falls Prevention Expo was held jointly with the Getting Older & Better Workshop, sponsored by The Medical Center Auxiliary, and provided by Brenau University Ivester College of Health Sciences, Legacy Link Area Agency on Aging, and Trauma & Acute Care Services of Northeast Georgia Medical Center (a subgroup of the Northeast Georgia Falls Coalition). About 200 seniors and caregivers attended on Friday, September 21, 2018 at the Gainesville Civic Center where they participated in exercise demonstrations, screenings, and group-facilitated education provided by many community organizations that volunteered their services.

NGMC partnered with Legacy Link Area Agency on Aging and Stephens County Senior Center to provide fall prevention education classes. Additionally, NGMC's Trauma Outreach Coordinator traveled on route with Meals on Wheels providing one-on-one awareness and resources about falls to Stephens County residents.

**Read Learn Succeed:** In an effort to improve school readiness and literacy for our community's children, NGMC partnered with the **United Way of Hall County's Read Learn Succeed** initiative to produce a children's book. Printed in English and Spanish, "**Welcome to the World,**" provides education about the importance of reading to children every day, for at least 15 minutes, starting at birth. The book also includes keepsake pages for baby's first footprints and handprints. Funded by The Medical Center Auxiliary, 4,625 copies in English and 1,125 in Spanish were distributed for all babies born at NGMC Gainesville and NGMC Braselton.

**NGMC is actively involved in Vision 2030** ([www.Vision2030.org](http://www.Vision2030.org)), a community-wide program sponsored by the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce. **An NGMC employee currently serves on the board of Vision 2030** which 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.

### **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, approximately \$4.1 million has been raised for community health improvement projects through The Medical Center Open.**
- The 2017 Medical Center Open Golf Tournament, which was held in FY18, **raised \$262,082 for Gateway Domestic Violence Center** to help fund the construction of a new domestic abuse shelter. Over 100 community volunteers, 200 sponsors, and 200 players made the tournament a success! This entry reflects staff time serving on The Medical Center Open Committee.
- **Through the employee giving club known as WATCH (We Are Targeting Community Health), members have donated more than \$9.5 million in support of capital improvements, community initiatives, equipment and enhanced patient care since the program's inception in 1999.**

### **Community Education**

**Safe Kids Coalition Works to Keep Kids Safe:** The Gainesville-Hall County Safe Kids Coalition, led by NGMC, is part of Safe Kids Worldwide, 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 19 and under. This program provides affordable safety equipment such as car seats, bike helmets, and life jackets 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 2018 thanks to the support of MCF and The Medical Center Auxiliary proceeds from Marketplace (an annual fundraising event of The Medical Center Auxiliary, which benefits healthcare services of NGMC).

In FY18, members of the Gainesville-Hall County Safe Kids Coalition provided over 126 programs and events that **reached an estimated 33,526 children and their family members, teachers and caregivers.** Through these programs, **over 10,580 safety items were distributed** to families in need of them.

**T2 Diabetes Program:** This program offers group support and encouragement in weekly and monthly sessions and uses an evidence-based lifestyle program to help participants (with elevated risk for developing diabetes) understand and choose methods to decrease risk of getting diabetes. **NGMC has partnered with YMCA Gainesville and Brad Akins YMCA in Winder** to offer Prevent T2 Program within the facilities. To further expand access to the program, NGMC **partnered with Good News Clinic** for their Registered Dietitian to help facilitate the Gainesville Prevent T2 group. This program is also available in Spanish. According to the CDC, losing 5%-7% of weight by reducing calories and increasing physical activity will reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58%. With 26 total participants in the program, the average weight loss was 9.3 pounds. **NGMC achieved Full Recognition Status through CDC for Prevent T2 Programs.** Full recognition means that a program has demonstrated effectiveness

by achieving all of the performance criteria detailed in the CDC's Diabetes Prevention Recognition Program Standards.

**Respecting Choices Advanced Care Planning:** Gunderson Respecting Choices® advance care planning is an evidence-based model of advanced care planning that honors an individual's goals and values for current and future health care. This program is designed to create a culture of open discussion about end of life care in Northeast Georgia so that families are relieved of unnecessary stress. This project is funded by the Medical Center Foundation's Healthy Journey Campaign, which funds the training and materials needed to educate the community on implementing this model.

**Hospice Bereavement Camps, Support Groups and Outreach:** Hospice of NGMC provided multiple bereavement support groups and education for those grieving a loss or caring for a loved one with an illness (such as dementia), and two camps for children dealing with the loss of someone close to them. In FY18, **over 4,513 individuals were served** through these programs.

#### **NGMC Provides Vital Community Professional Education at Home and Throughout the State**

**Northeast Georgia STEMI Summit:** Hosted each year by NGMC, the Northeast Georgia 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 providing critical care and rapid response in 18 counties across the region to people suffering a severe heart attack known as STEMI (S-T Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction). Keynote speakers at the conference include the nation's leading cardiologists and experts in the study of regional approaches to heart attack care. **The 2018 conference educated more than 1,500 medical professionals and first responders.**

**Infection Prevention Symposium:** The Northeast Georgia Regional Infection Prevention Symposium is a free conference offered to any healthcare provider throughout the state by NGMC's Infection Prevention & Control Department. With 140 attendees, this conference focused on increasing knowledge on infection prevention. Many of the small rural facilities throughout Georgia have limited to no access to infection prevention and control education.

**Regional Trauma Advisory Committee (RTAC) Symposium:** As part of the State of Georgia's trauma system, the Regional Trauma Advisory Committee (RTAC) develops and maintains the region's trauma system plan and monitors system compliance and improvement activities. NGMC partners with other EMS agencies, participating hospitals, local governments and the public as a part of this committee and the annual RTAC Symposium, which provided **education to 600 health professionals in the region in FY18.**

Additionally, NGMC trauma staff provided training in the community for the **Stop the Bleed Campaign**, a School Response Program designed to enable teachers, nurses, and staff to render immediate, potentially life-saving medical aid to injured students or co-workers while awaiting the arrival of professional responders. **NGMC staff along with Region 2 RTAC members trained 9,346 teachers, administrators, and other school staff at 149 schools (elementary, middle and high school).**

#### **Workforce Development**

NGMC continues to serve as a **"pipeline" to help get more qualified people interested in healthcare positions and help provide training and education to students.** This training and education is done through a variety of avenues from job shadowing to the nurse extern program and pharmacy residency

program, as well as significant support to Foothills Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) (<https://www.foothillsahec.org>).

Coordinated by AHEC, NGMC hosted its first **Health Careers Symposium for more than 140 high school Health Science students within the Hall County School System**, where students met with NGMC professionals throughout different areas within the hospital.

**Graduate Medical Education (GME):** Northeast Georgia Medical Center's GME program is designed to train residents to be leaders in the medical field as well as in the community. Medical students will receive hands-on training in one of six medical specialties: internal medicine, family medicine, general surgery, OB/GYN, psychiatry and emergency medicine (currently accredited in internal medicine, family medicine, and general surgery). NGMC expects this program to grow to 170 residents by 2024, which would make this program one of the largest in the state, and expects its first students in July 2019.

**Youth Apprenticeship and Mentorship Program:** In the Youth Apprenticeship Program, high school students work in the hospital for one class period in their day and rotate through multiple departments. This year, 80 students participated. Additionally, with the Hall County Schools Honors Mentorship Program, juniors and seniors are matched with a healthcare professional in their area of interest as part of a real-life career experience in an honors level elective. In FY18, 19 students participated in this program.

**Project SEARCH:** NGMC provides employment and education opportunities for individuals with mild to moderate disabilities. The program is dedicated to workforce development that benefits the individual, community and workplace. Employers are challenged to increase employment opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities and to advocate on behalf of their employment to other organizations in their communities. The High School Transition Program is a one-year educational program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school. It is targeted for students whose main goal is competitive employment. In FY18, 17 students, one job coach and one instructor participated. The students work 20 hours per week in each assigned department. Mentors are assigned in each department and attend a monthly meeting to discuss progress/needs of students.

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

Every day, employees of Northeast Georgia Medical Center go about the business of caring for the health of the people of our community. They are nurses at the bedside, therapists helping people learn to walk again, cooks preparing meals, administrators planning for the future, or office personnel pushing through the details. Caring for our community is part of their everyday routine. And when asked to give back to support healthcare through the Foundation campaigns, they do – generously and passionately.

**When it comes to supporting MCF's employee giving club, WATCH, over 3,500 employees donated about \$800,000 in 2018.**

#### **Community Support: Infant Mortality, Cancer, Heart Disease**

962 NGMC employees walked for American Heart Walk, March for Babies and Relay for Life. As part of The Medical Center Foundation's Healthy Journey Campaign, WATCH members contributed a significant donation toward the walks in addition to sponsorships provided by NGMC.

**Blood Drives:** In FY18, NGMC hosted 24 drives, resulting in 637 donors and over 579 pints of blood.

**United Way Pacesetter & More:** NGMC has partnered with United Way to engage employees and leaders in the community. NGHS employees **contributed \$120,468** to United Way as a Pacesetter Company.

**Encouraging Medical Volunteering:** NGMC provides information at physician orientation to encourage physicians to **step up to volunteer** opportunities through **local free clinics** as well as Health Access. **NGPG also encourages physicians to give of their time volunteering** at these locations. **Through various physician leadership councils, NGMC** physicians actively participate in community outreach, including educational seminars, screenings, cancer prevention opportunities.

### **Leading the Way**

Twenty-seven NGMC leaders reported that they lead or support community, civic, or professional organizations on their Board of Directors or as a participating member. In addition to this, NGPG Advanced Practice Providers supported 53 events in the community and provided 10,880 hours of GME instruction to Medical, Physician Assistant, and Nurse Practitioner students.

**Carol Burrell**, NGHS President and CEO, has been named to **Georgia Trend magazine's list of the 100 Most Influential Georgians** for the fifth year in a row for her contribution to making life better for Georgians.

**Kerry Smith**, Executive Director of Long Term Care at NGHS, was **elected Northeast Council President for the Georgia Health Care Association**, a non-profit association of skilled nursing care centers, assisted living centers, and home and community-based case managers.

**Dr. Antonio Rios**, Chief Physician Executive for NGPG, was honored by Good News Clinics with the **2018 Sam Poole Volunteer of the Year Award**. Dr. Rios serves on the Good News Clinics and District 2 Public Health boards. He is also the **Chairman of The Georgia Board for Physician Workforce** where he is committed to furthering the board's mission to identify the physician workforce needs of Georgia communities and to meet those needs through the support and development of medical education programs.

**Dr. John Delzell**, VP of Medical Education and designated institutional official for Graduate Medical Education, was **appointed by Governor Nathan Deal to the Georgia Board for Physicians Workforce**.

**Dr. Sam Johnson**, Chief Medical Officer at NGHS, serves as **Chairman on One Hall United Against Poverty**. United Way unites people, organizations and resources within the community to build a stronger, healthier and safer Hall County. The purpose of the One Hall initiative is to break the cycle of poverty in Hall County by gaining the perspectives of those directly experiencing poverty and working side by side with community agencies to develop strategies to address the needs.

The **Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's Healthy Hall Awards of Excellence** are presented to those in **healthcare making a significant impact on quality of life**. The following NGMC employees were recognized: **Carol Burrell**, NGHS President and CEO (Outstanding Healthcare Administrator); **Aprill Exley**, NGMC (Nurse of the Year); **Dr. J. Jeffrey Marshall**, The Heart Center of NGMC (Physician specialist of the Year); and **Dr. Antonio Rios**, NGPG (Primary Care Physician of the Year).

Northeast Georgia Health System earned the **2018 Community Wellness Award (Gwinnett Chamber Healthcare Awards)** for the health system's opioid initiative. In recent years, NGHS in partnership with



other Hall County representatives played key roles in the passage of significant opioid-related legislation, as well as, programs for recovery. Executive Director of Governmental Affairs for NGHS, **Deb Bailey**, RN, BSN, MSN, and **Dallas Gay**, former NGHS Board Member, were instrumental in these change efforts. For full details about this effort, visit [www.nghs.com](http://www.nghs.com) for the **Fall 2018 issue of Communicare, Fighting the Opioid Epidemic.**

## **NGMC Barrow**

NGMC Barrow, LLC (Barrow) values cooperative efforts with community organizations and other healthcare providers to improve the health status of area residents. The organization demonstrates this through community partnerships ranging from free health screenings at local health fairs to providing a meeting space for other non-profit organizations, such as the Rotary Club of Winder.

**In FY18, Barrow provided over \$214,000 in community benefit programs/outreach.** Barrow offered many community education seminars on topics ranging from healthy cooking demos to heart health and more. In addition, Barrow provided support to other local non-profit organizations that serve the community.

### **What Drives Barrow's Community Health Improvement Activities?**

NGMC, with input from the community, completed a region-wide Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2016 that included Barrow and surrounding counties (before Barrow was acquired by NGMC). Through the CHNA, lung cancer was identified as a health priority for Barrow County. According to the National Cancer Institute 2008-2012, Barrow County has a lung cancer indicator value of 87.9, well above its neighbor Gwinnett County's value of 54.1 and the state benchmark of 68.8. Additionally, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health's Georgia Tobacco Use Surveillance Report, in 2015, approximately 4% of middle school students and 53,000 or 13% of high school students in Georgia smoke cigarettes.

**As part of the response to community health priorities identified throughout the region, NGMC partnered with Barrow County Schools to implement "Tar Wars" to 2,258 elementary school students.** "Tar Wars" is a tobacco-free education program for fourth and fifth grade students developed by the American Academy of Family Physicians to teach kids about the dangers of tobacco use, the cost associated with using tobacco products, and the advertising techniques used by the tobacco industry to market their products to youth.

Oncology Services also provided community education in Barrow County at local health fairs, as well as, three **lung cancer support groups** that were held during FY18, with the program continuing into FY19. In addition, NGMC received a grant from the Georgia Healthy Family Alliance to promote awareness and access to **low dose CT scans for lung cancer screening for indigent patients** in Barrow County. This program will increase access and assist those without insurance coverage to receive proactive screening.

**For more information about NGMC's overall Community Health Improvement Plan, go to [www.nghs.com/chna-outcome](http://www.nghs.com/chna-outcome).**

**The following contains highlights of community benefit activities provided by Barrow in FY18:**

**Charity Care:** Like NGMC Gainesville and Braselton, Barrow's charity care policy removes barriers for low-income populations within our service area beginning with free, medically necessary care for patients whose gross family income is 0 to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) adjusted for family size. Patients from our service area whose FPL is from 151 to 300% may qualify for an adjustment equivalent to the hospital's Medicare reimbursement rate plus an additional 40% discount to the Medicare reimbursement rate.

**Total Charity Care Cost for Barrow in FY18: \$2.3 million with another \$738,000 provided to regional residents outside Barrow County.**

**Encouraging Medical Volunteering:** Through various physician leadership councils, NGMC physicians actively participate in community outreach, including educational seminars, screenings, cancer prevention opportunities.

**Financial Navigators:** Barrow has **financial assistance counselors who help patients become insured**, be it through **Medicaid, PeachCare** or other programs. 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 helping patients apply for Medicaid or disability, accessing healthcare exchanges or processing charity applications when appropriate.

#### **Partnering in the Community**

**NGMC Barrow Volunteers:** In FY18, **30 NGMC volunteers** contributed **2,958 volunteer hours**, equivalent to **1.76 full time employees** and a **value of \$73,000 to the organization**. While these figures are not included in the quantitative portion of the community benefit report, they show the depth of support the community gives Barrow.

**NGMC's emergency departments have partnered with the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse to implement the ED-CARES (Certified Addiction Recovery Specialists) program** which connects people who have been admitted to emergency rooms for an opioid-related overdose with trained peer recovery coaches who play an important role in helping people avoid another overdose and encouraging them to seek treatment. The program was created in response to the increasing number of overdose fatalities and seeks to curtail that trend by better connecting people at high-risk with community supports and services. NGMC is the only hospital system in Georgia to provide this support, which is provided in all three Emergency Departments (at Gainesville, Braselton and Barrow).

**Rotary Club of Winder Leadership:** In FY18, Sunita Singh, public relations manager for Barrow, served as President of the Rotary Club of Winder, which benefitted various community programs such as Peace Place, United Way, and Boys & Girls Club, to name a few.

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

**American Cancer Society (ACS):** NGMC Barrow was the Platinum Sponsor for the ACS Relay for Life in Barrow County. The walk benefits cancer research and community education. NGMC employees turned out in full force for Relay for Life, with over 327 walkers throughout the region.

**Northeast Georgia Homeless Veterans Shelter:** NGMC Barrow provided a donation to the Northeast Georgia Homeless Veterans Shelter, the only homeless Veterans Shelter in the Northeast Georgia Area.

**Boys & Girls Club:** NGMC Barrow provided a donation to the Boys & Girls Club which provides programs that empower youth to excel in school, become good citizens and lead healthy, productive lives.

As a **Partner in Education with the Barrow School System**, NGMC Barrow provided a **donation of medical supplies to stock 18 nurse clinics**, funded **two scholarships** for two high school graduates pursuing a career in the medical field, and volunteered time to **support the Special Olympics at Winder Barrow High School**.

The Diabetes Education Program expanded to offer individual and group classes at NGMC Barrow. **NGMC partnered with the YMCA in Winder** to offer the **Prevent T2 Diabetes Program**, a proven program to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. This course is taught by a certified facilitator and is designed to offer the group support and encouragement needed to prevent diabetes. This program offers weekly and monthly sessions and uses an evidence-based lifestyle program to help participants with elevated risk for developing diabetes understand and choose methods to decrease risk of getting diabetes. According to the CDC, losing 5%-7% of weight by reducing calories and increasing physical activity will reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58%. With 26 total participants in the program, the average weight loss was 9.3 pounds. **NGMC achieved Full Recognition status through CDC for Prevent T2 Programs**. Full recognition means that a program has demonstrated effectiveness by achieving all of the performance criteria detailed in the CDC's Diabetes Prevention Recognition Program Standards.

### **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. Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) has three hospital campuses – NGMC Gainesville and NGMC Braselton and Barrow – with a total of 713 beds and more than 700 medical staff members representing more than 50 specialties.

The Health System offers a full range of healthcare services through NGMC such as gynecologic oncology, electrophysiology, cardiac surgery, critical care medicine, surgical trauma, neonatology and perinatology. Northeast Georgia Medical Center's Cancer Services is the only program in Georgia – and one of only 24 programs in the nation – to receive the 2018 Outstanding Achievement Award by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Commission on Cancer (CoC). NGMC has also been recognized in recent years as Georgia's #1 Hospital for overall hospital care, overall surgical care, heart care, orthopedic surgery, women's care and more.

Led by volunteer boards made up of community leaders, the Health System serves 1 million people in more than 18 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.

Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG) brings together more than 350 talented physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, midwives and other clinical staff at more than 65 locations across North Georgia. NGPG is the state's sixth-largest physician group, offering expertise in more than 25 specialties.

### **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. for this report. The guide’s purpose is to help not-for-profit mission-driven healthcare 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, Community Health Improvement, at (770) 219-8097 or go to [www.nghs.com](http://www.nghs.com).*