

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CHNA) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2020 PROGRESS REPORT



Based on a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment conducted in 2019, NGHS identified five important health priorities and corresponding outcome measures. This document is interactive and provides 2020 progress in reaching stated goals of the 2020-2022 CHNA Implementation Plan at nghs.com/2020-plan.



Northeast Georgia Medical Center

LINKS

View the CHNA report and other resources including a series of videos that showcase our strong partnerships in community health efforts, such as with health access for indigent populations, mental health, COVID-19 and more:

<https://www.nghs.com/cbr>

Community Health Needs Assessment



Partnering to Address Mental Health



Partnering to Slow COVID-19



Partnering to Meet the Needs of the Uninsured



Partnering to Provide EMS in Barrow County



2020 PROGRESS

FIVE PRIORITIES + COVID 19 RESPONSE TABLE OF CONTENTS



Mental and
Behavioral Health
PAGE 4



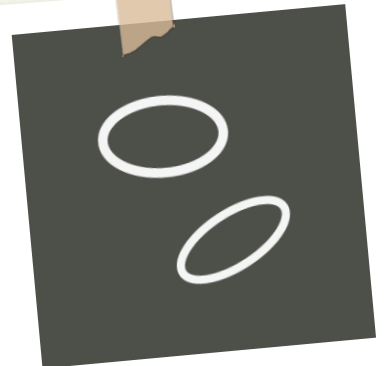
Diabetes
PAGE 8



Access to Care
PAGE 10



Cardiovascular Disease
PAGE 13



Septicemia
PAGE 15



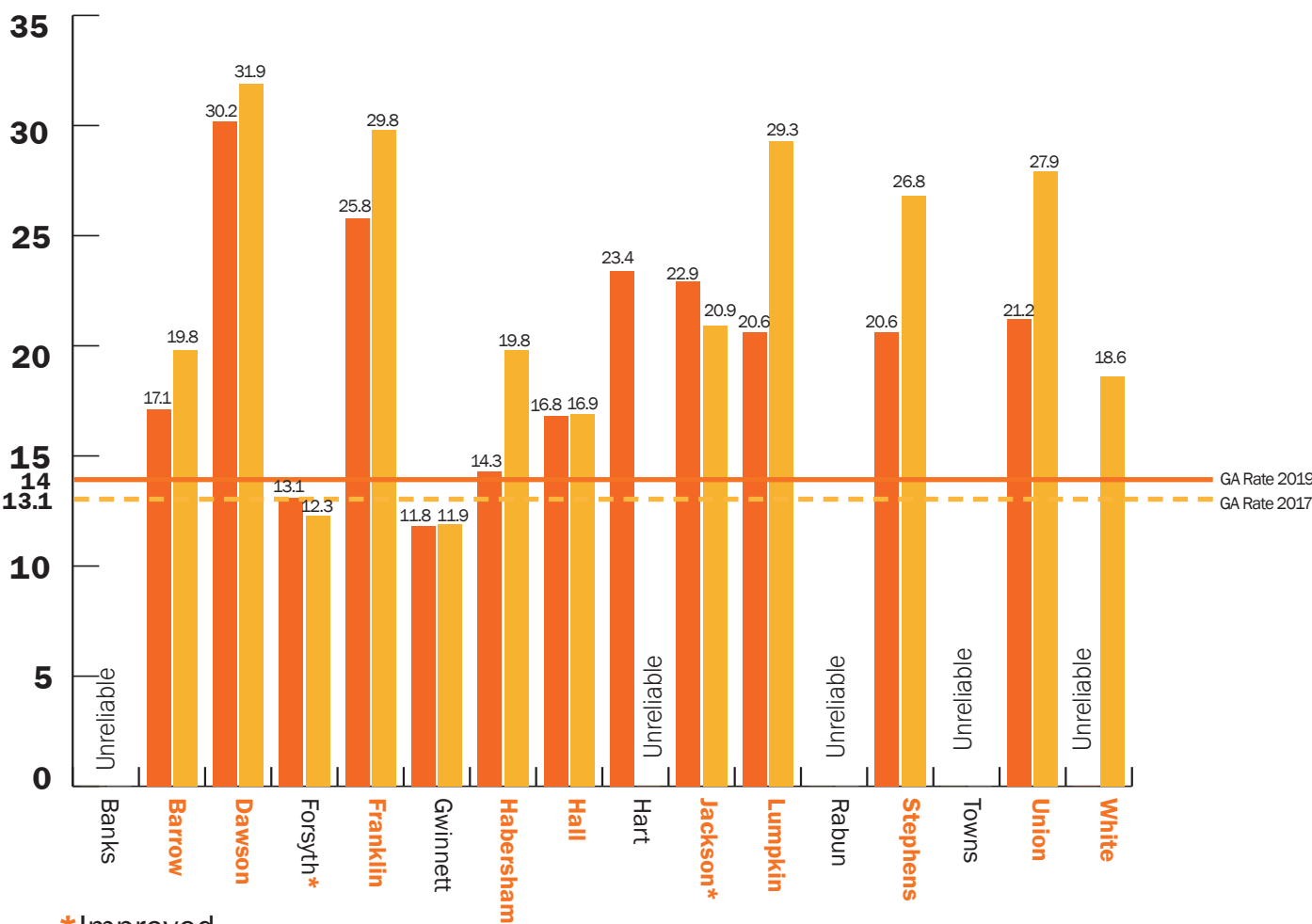
COVID 19 Response
PAGE 17



Outcome Measure:

10 of the 16 Northeast Georgia counties have a suicide rate higher than the state rate of 14 per 100,000 population (compared to 10 out of 16 counties as our baseline from the CHNA). Dawson County has the highest suicide rate at 31.9. The suicide rate in Hall County is at 16.9, above the state rate.

- 2014 - 2017 Suicide Rates, CDC wonder. GA rate 13.1
- 2016 - 2019 Suicide Rates, CDC wonder. GA rate 14



* Improved

Unreliable means the rate is calculated with a numerator under 20.

Mental and Behavioral Health

GOAL: Working with the community, create a comprehensive system of integrated services that recognizes and treats the mental and behavioral health needs of people when and where they need care. Areas of focus have been identified as **Access, Collaboration and Education** to improve measurable outcomes for mental & behavioral health in our community through United Way's One Hall Mental & Behavioral Health Subcommittee of which NGHS is a part, starting in Hall County and spreading out into the region.

Strategy Updates:

ACCESS:

- NGHS, United Way of Hall County, and other non-profits in Hall County are working together to create **a shared data platform** that will be used to make referrals and provide a universal method to track outcomes, resulting in better coordinated care for clients.
- Kalpana Prasad, MD, has been named program director for NGMC's **planned psychiatry physician residency program** and is in the process of recruiting faculty and completing the program's accreditation application to submit to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.
- **NGPG Psychiatry** opened two new locations and added six new physicians and four advanced practice providers.



- **Funds from the 2021 Medical Center Open will benefit the Justice and Mental Health Collaborative led by the Gainesville Police Department.**



Born out of the **United Way's One Hall Mental and Behavioral Health Subcommittee**, this co-responder program incorporates a fully licensed clinician to respond alongside a law enforcement officer when mental illness is a factor. They act as a liaison between the police officer and the community and provide a coordinated community policing response with access to a variety of agencies.

- The **My GCAL app**, launched by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DHBDD), was designed to reach Georgia's youth in times of need. GCAL is staffed by caring professionals who are available 24/7 to address behavioral health crises. NGHS will continue to raise awareness of the app and has promoted it through One Hall communications, community education forums, NGHS staff and other community partners.

See how NGHS is Partnering to Address Mental Health at

<https://www.nghs.com/cbr>



Mental and Behavioral Health

COLLABORATION:

- NGMC's Emergency Departments and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) continue to partner with the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse to implement the **CARES (Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialists) program**. The **ED CARES Grant** for the Emergency Department and the **NICU CARES Grant** for the NICU were renewed. NICU Managers and Peer Recovery Coaches were instrumental in policy change in Georgia and the entire U.S. that will keep mother and baby together while mother is receiving treatment for recovery. Peer Recovery Coaches have touched 1,550 individuals in 2020, with nearly 6,000 since the program began in 2017.

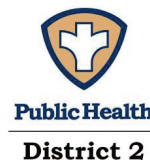


- NGMC is a co-founding partner of the **Partnership for a Drug Free Hall**, a community collaborative which provided free education about addiction, intervention, and recovery. More than 200 people were reached through live forums and 2,111 people viewed informative videos on Facebook during the pandemic. Three NGHS staff are active members of the executive committee.



EDUCATION:

- NGHS is partnering with District 2 Public Health, which has developed an **Opioid Surveillance & Prevention Program** to gather real-time data on overdose morbidity and mortality. The Public Health Analyst for this program will assist partners with developing local and district prevention and response strategies and with rolling out the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) across the State of Georgia.



Mental and Behavioral Health

EDUCATION (CONTINUED):

- **NGHS is a partner in United Way's One Hall Mental and Behavioral Health Subcommittee.**

As part of this collaborative's work, the **Reach Out Campaign** to destigmatize the need for mental health services reached about 141,000 people in 2020 through events, activities and social media, including:

- Testimonial videos featuring community leaders.
- Hosting senior adult panels on how to navigate the mental health issues associated with COVID-19 and long-term sheltering in place.
- With help from the Wisdom Keepers, collected over 1,100 letters from youth and distributed to senior adults.
- Ben Nemtin (a #1 New York Times best-selling author who suffered from crippling depression) presented to 40 students at Gainesville High School's Hub. This session is posted at <https://www.unitedwayhallcounty.org/ben-nemtin> for free community access.
- Celebrating **Healthcare Heroes** during the pandemic through messages of encouragement.



IMPACT

-\$193b

ing cause
and is a
global

Serious mental illness costs
America \$193.2 billion
in lost earning every year.

90%

90% of those who die by suicide
have an underlying mental illness.
Suicide is the 10th leading
cause of death in the U.S.

you are not alone. **REACH OUT.**

Source: NAMI

To learn more about the Reach Out campaign,
go to: [unitedwayhallcounty.org/reachout](https://www.unitedwayhallcounty.org/reachout)

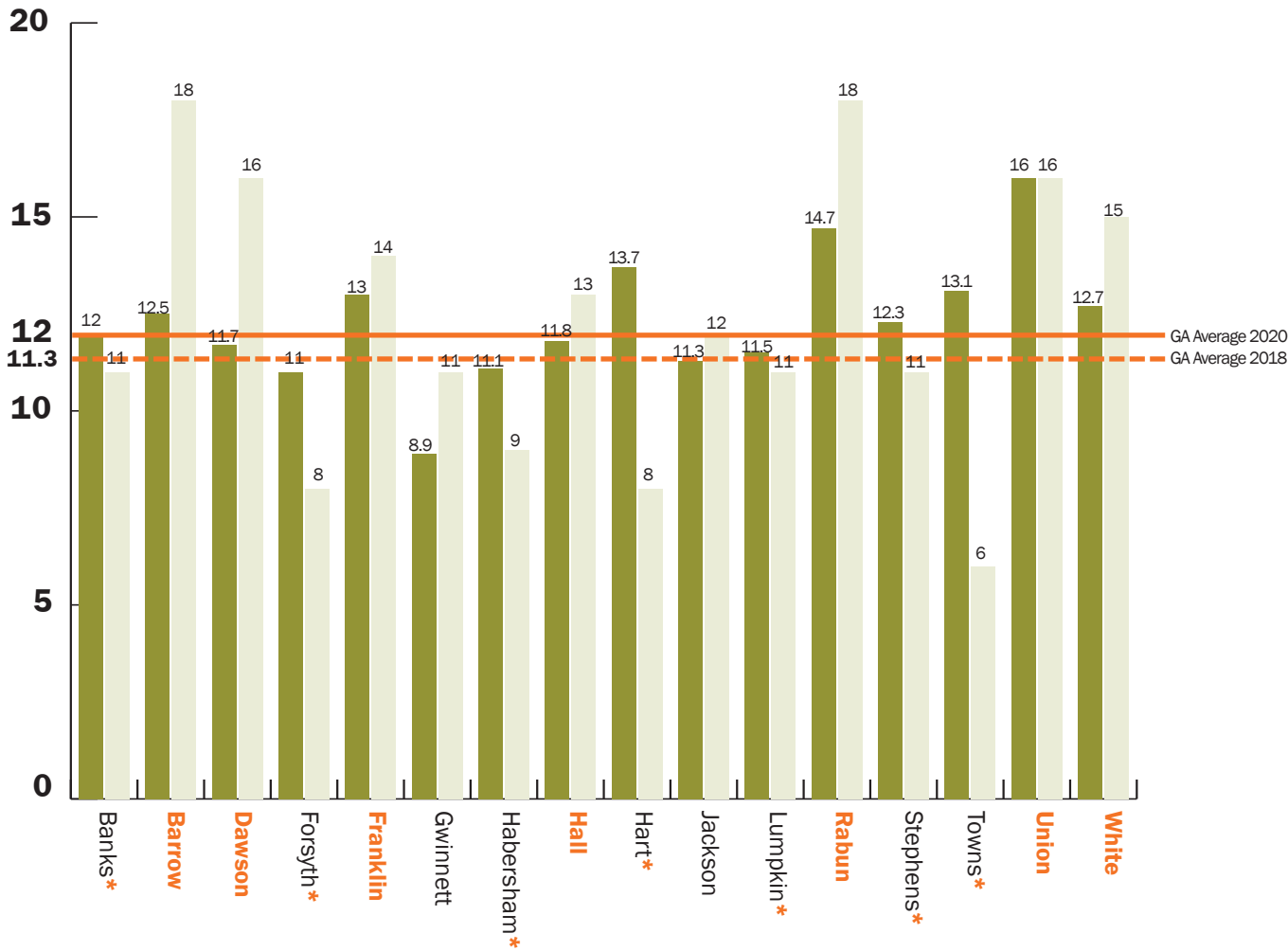
Diabetes



7 of 16 counties in Northeast Georgia have a higher rate of Diabetes prevalence in adults than the state benchmark of 12
(a decrease from 12 out of 16 counties as our baseline from the CHNA).

Source: CDC Diabetes Interactive Atlas, 2018 Health Rankings - State benchmark 11.3 (data from 2014)

Source: CDC Diabetes Interactive Atlas, 2020 Health Rankings - State benchmark 12 (2020 Health Rankings used data from 2016)



*Improved

Source: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/georgia/2020/measure/outcomes/60/datasource>

Outcome Measure:

Prevent incidence of gestational diabetes giving unborn children a better chance for more positive health outcomes

One of the greatest opportunities for impact on population health is preventing gestational diabetes, which is diabetes that develops during a woman's pregnancy.

Strategy Updates:

- **NGMC will focus preventative education and early intervention for women in prenatal care with risk factors for gestational diabetes, prior to receiving the glucose tolerance test(s).** Failure of the glucose tolerance test(s) indicates gestational diabetes which places these women at future risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. **A pilot program is being developed within one of the markets identified with highest rates for Diabetes.**
- NGHS partnered with Longstreet Clinic to standardize diabetes care across the System. Dr. Evgenia Korytnaya, Medical Director for Diabetes and Endocrinology, leads the collaborative committee of multidisciplinary teams focused on Diabetes Care. The Ambulatory subcommittee of this collaborative created a **Gestational Diabetes Pathway** and shared with providers.
- NGMC Diabetes Educators of the Diabetes Prevention Program are Certified Lifestyle Coaches and work with women diagnosed with Gestational Diabetes, offering education classes tailored to them.



Access to Care



Outcome Measure:

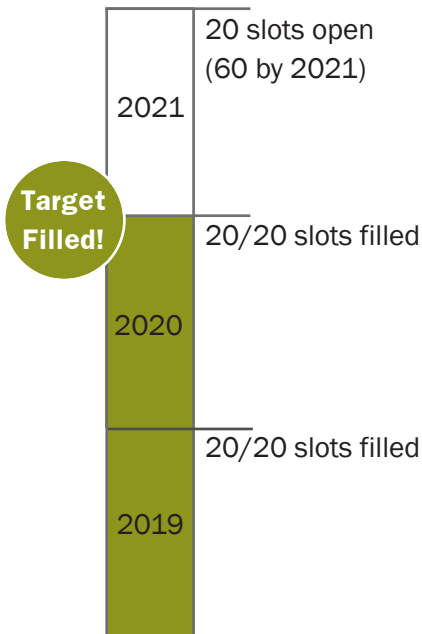
GME Residency Fill Slots

Working toward 200 residency slots in various specialties by 2025.



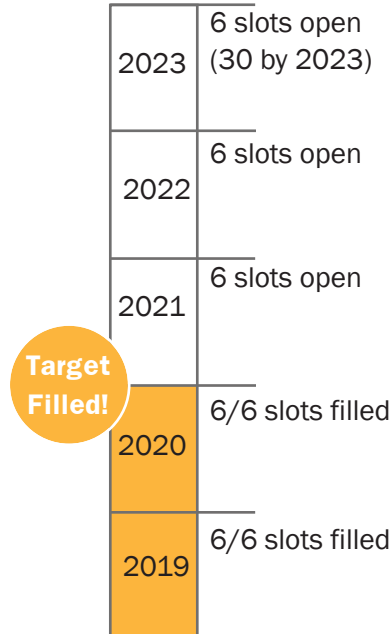
Internal Medicine

(3 yr program)



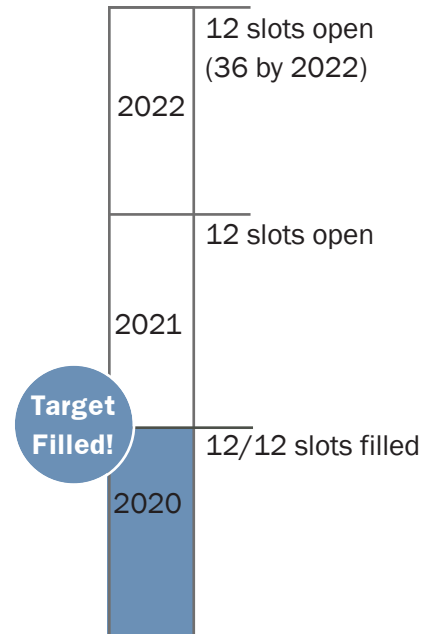
General Surgery

(5 yr program)



Family Medicine

(3 yr program)



Accreditation received by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for the following specialties in 2021:

- Emergency Medicine: 36 total positions to fill
- Obstetrics & Gynecology: 24 total positions to fill
- Psychiatry: 24 total positions to fill

Strategy Updates:

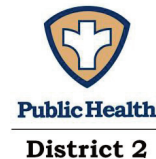
- Under the leadership of Dr. Bedri Yusuf, **a coordinated regional program** was created to assure appropriate and timely access to specialty and surgical care. Designed to eliminate the barriers to care for the region's indigent and underinsured, work continues to improve standard work and processes have been improved greatly with high physician involvement.



- NGMC partners with indigent clinics throughout the region. Over 1,000 flu vaccines were provided to the community, including **Good News Clinics, Good Shepherd Clinic in Dawson County, Community Helping Place in Dahlonega, and Open Arms Clinic in Toccoa.** A Joint COVID-19 testing event was held at Good News Clinics in partnership with NGHS and the Department of Public Health where 1,300 individuals were tested.



- **Prenatal Program with the Hall County Health Department** continues with a goal of Healthy Pregnancies and Deliveries. In 2020, NGMC provided support of over \$200,000.



- **A paramedicine pilot program was developed** with a goal to empower patients to better manage their healthcare and understand their options. With a grant from Cigna, one paramedic was hired and provided with a designated handicapped vehicle. As a program of NGHS, P.I.T.C.H. — Paramedics Improving The Community's Health — is committed to ensuring the community has access to the care it needs. Community paramedics help patients by meeting them at their home to:



- Provide and connect them to primary care services
- Seek out available community resources
- Complete post hospital follow-up care
- Discover education and health programs
- Discuss overall health and mental happiness

This type of program is being done around the country where other hospitals are seeing a 60%-80% reduction in ED visits.

See how NGHS is Partnering to Meet the Needs of the Uninsured at
<https://www.nghs.com/cbr>

Strategy Updates:

- NGHS continues cutting-edge **clinical research** in 2020. With the onset and evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, NGMC initiated and participated in clinical trials focused on COVID-19 including the Expanded Access to Convalescent Plasma for the Treatment of COVID-19 Trial.
- Through our partnership with Emory University, NGMC patients have access to Winship's more than 275 existing therapeutic clinical trials and research projects. Additionally, NGMC is a partner in a statewide cancer research group that received funding from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to help improve care for cancer patients.
- In 2020, NGMC provided financial support for **Foothills Area Health Education Center**, a community-driven, non-profit corporation, with the mission to increase the supply and distribution of healthcare providers, especially in medically underserved areas.



Digital front door: Using technology to better serve the community, NGHS is developing ways to improve access to care without the need for a traditional medical encounter in a physician's office or hospital setting, such as:

- Expanded E-Visit Options using MyChart
- Online Urgent Care Wait Times – see current wait times, save your spot in line, and set text reminders with directions at nghs.com/urgent
- Online Physician Search and Scheduling
- Care Management after Orthopedic Surgery – patients who have orthopedic surgery at NGMC have the option to prepare for their surgery and manage their recovery at home
- Video Visits for Telehealth

YOUR CARE
FROM ANYWHERE.



Cardiovascular Disease

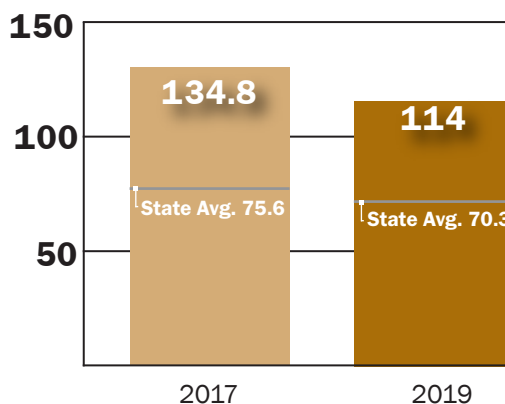
Outcome Measure:

Decrease heart disease death rate in Lumpkin County

Updated Progress:

Heart Disease Death Rate in Lumpkin County decreased from 134.8 in 2017 to 114 in 2019.

(source: CDC Wonder, 2019, age-adjusted rate)



Strategy Updates:

- NGMC adapted the **Tar Wars** program into a virtual package for Barrow County School System so students could participate online at home or in class during COVID-19. The virtual lesson plan was successfully piloted in December 2020 and implemented to 2,100 fourth and fifth grade students in Spring 2021. NGHS is partnering with the Georgia Healthy Family Alliance to promote the dangers of smoking and vaping with schools region-wide.
- While the timeline for expansion in Lumpkin County has been extended due to the restraints of the pandemic, The Heart Center of NGMC welcomed an additional eight physicians and five Advanced Practice Providers.
- NGHS is **investing in stroke care** and welcomed its first Neurointerventionalist, Dr. Sung Lee, to support the system's stroke program which is now performing thrombectomies. As of 2020, the team performed over 20 cases, 8 of which were emergent stroke procedures, thrombectomies.
- NGMC Gainesville has been accredited as a Primary Stroke Center since 2010, the first hospital in Georgia to gain this accreditation from DNV Healthcare. In 2020, NGMC Barrow and NGMC Braselton were also accredited as Primary Stroke Centers. Primary Stroke Center certification means that a hospital can provide treatment to a broad range of stroke conditions along with some acute therapies, and admit patients to a designated stroke unit specifically assigned for stroke care. Primary Stroke Centers also act as a resource center for other facilities in the region, including being a main transfer site for stabilized stroke patients. Visit www.nghs.com/stroke-care to learn the signs and symptoms of a stroke.



Cardiovascular Disease

Strategy Updates:

- NGHS provided support to the **American Heart Association**, benefitting research and local community education. In addition to a sponsorship, employee donations totaled \$12,500 for the Heart Walk. Carol Burrell, President and CEO of NGHS, was the keynote speaker at the 2020 Go Red For Women event, where The Heart Center of NGMC provided free carotid screenings for attendees.

- NGHS continues to lead the way in life-saving heart and vascular care by becoming **the first health system in the state with hospitals designated as Emergency Cardiac Care Centers** by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH). This achievement extends far beyond the walls of our system – connecting first responders, emergency departments and cardiologists throughout the region to ensure each patient receives the level of care they need. The Georgia DPH uses a three-level designation system to rank the capabilities of each facility:



- NGMC Gainesville received Level 1 designation (hospitals perform open heart surgery and interventional cardiac catheterizations).
- NGMC Braselton received Level 2 designation (hospitals perform interventional cardiac catheterizations).
- NGMC Barrow and NGMC Lumpkin both received Level 3 designation (hospitals stabilize patients until they are transported to a Level 1 or Level 2 center).



- A collaborative effort between Northeast Georgia Medical Center and EMS in 18 counties across the region ensures fast and efficient treatment to patients suffering severe heart attacks known as STEMI (S-T Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction). The STEMI Program makes sure information about the heart attack is sent to NGMC while the ambulance is en route, so a cardiologist is waiting to restore the patient's blood flow almost immediately after arrival. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the STEMI conference was not planned, however, Jackson County EMS hosted the RESTART forum where three speakers from NGHS provided education for EMS professionals. This is an example of NGHS' continued collaboration with EMS to educate them and build systems of care for STEMI, cardiogenic shock, and cardiac arrest patients.



- NGHS continues to put a significant emphasis on educating the community regarding hands-only bystander CPR and access to AED's. We know that the community's response to cardiac arrest will have great influence on a person's chance of survival because when a patient suffers from sudden cardiac arrest, without CPR, there is a 10% increase in mortality for every minute that passes without CPR. With an average EMS response time of 8 minutes, we see just how important this is. AED's are also becoming more available in public settings. NGHS will continue to educate the public that non clinical bystanders can perform CPR, use an AED, and play a significant role in saving a life.

Septicemia



Outcome Measure:

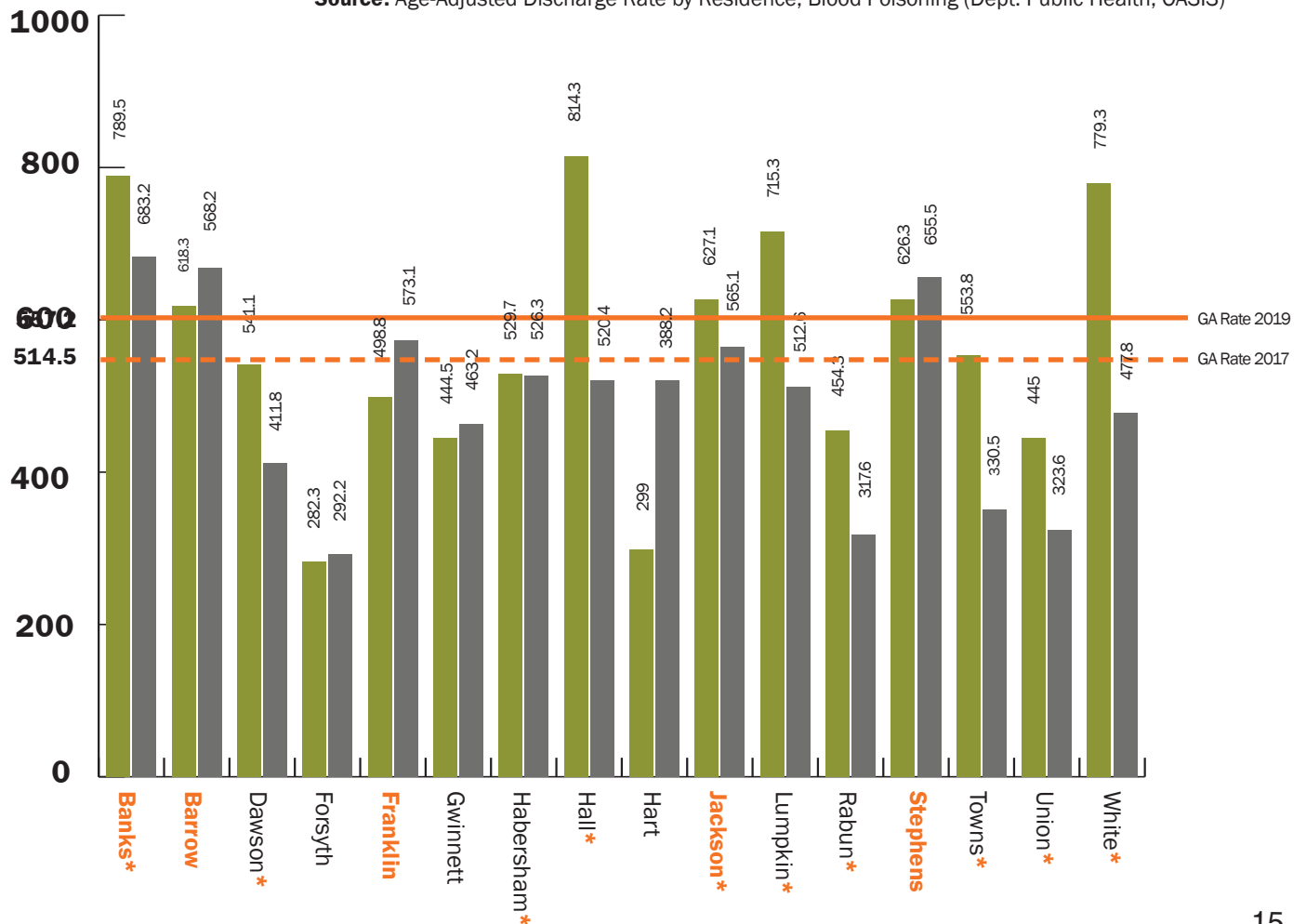
5 of 16 counties in Northeast Georgia have sepsis rates above the state average of 557.2 (a decrease from our baseline of 10 out of 16 counties from the CHNA).

In an effort to lower the overall sepsis rate in Northeast Georgia, a target has been set for two regional providers to achieve a target of 8.09, however, due to the restrictions of COVID-19, partnerships have been delayed and regional collaborative work had been put on hold until 2021. **The 2020 Mortality Rate for NGMC overall is 9.82%, above target of 8.09.** Of the 395 sepsis deaths in 2020, 116 of these deaths were in COVID patients. This leaves 279 non-COVID sepsis deaths. The rate with COVID deaths removed was 7.15%, below target of 8.09.

■ Blood Poisoning (Septicemia) 2017 Discharge Rate per 100,000 Population (age-adjusted) CHNA o/c; **GA Benchmark = 514.5**

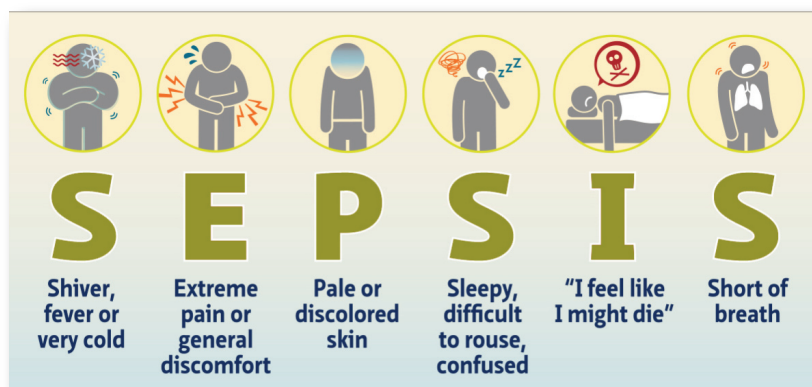
■ 2019 Age-Adjusted Discharge Rate; **GA Benchmark = 557.2**

Source: Age-Adjusted Discharge Rate by Residence, Blood Poisoning (Dept. Public Health, OASIS)



* Improved

Septicemia



Strategy Updates:

- Funding from the NGHS Foundation has been granted to create a **Sepsis Regional Population Health Team** that will use evidence-based protocols throughout the region to decrease the number of deaths due to sepsis.
- The development of the **Sepsis Regional Collaborative** to share an evidence-based protocol toolkit has begun with identification of key stakeholders from regional partners.
- **A Sepsis Alert Team was created.** In 2020, **five Sepsis Nurse Navigators were hired** and the **Sepsis Coordinator became the Nurse Manager**. Coupled with the implementation of the Epic Sepsis Predictive Model, the Sepsis Alert Team was able to provide concurrent review on over 1,276 patients where 182 patients had a change in their treatment plan as the result of the review.
- **Community education** was provided at healthy aging events and a two part Sepsis Lecture Series was developed and delivered virtually to three assisted living facilities.





NGMC's Response to COVID 19:

The **COVID-19 pandemic** became a primary focus for the organization as it did for hospitals and communities across the nation. We had to remain flexible to address the rising needs in the community through the following activities:

COVID-19 Outreach in Partnership with Community Leaders: By mid-April, Latino communities were some of the hardest hit by COVID-19. At that time, approximately 50% of the individuals in Hall county confirmed to have COVID-19 were Latino, which was disproportionate considering only 29% of Hall County's population is Latino. This prompted the creation of an **NGHS outreach group and community-wide collaboration to support and educate the Latino community through grassroots efforts.**

In partnership with Good News Clinics, NGHS hosted two events that offered free COVID-19 testing for low-income or uninsured Hall County residents. At the first event on April 19, more than 300 people were tested, and the outcome was staggering- with nearly 50 percent testing positive. At the second event on April 28, roughly 1,020 people were tested and about one-third were positive.

The prevalence of COVID-19 in these communities led to the creation of the **Gainesville Against COVID-19 Task Force** which included local Hispanic leaders, NGHS physicians, the Northeast Georgia Latino Chamber of Commerce and many others. Together, the Task Force targeted the business community and coined the mantra, "No Mask, No Service."



Working in tandem, NGHS' outreach group and the Gainesville Against COVID-19 Task Force helped to support and educate the Latino community with outreach efforts that included:

- Providing bilingual educational fliers and posters
- Distributing facemasks and cleaning supplies to local businesses and schools



- Organizing additional testing events with Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health and NGHS
- Hosting educational Zoom meetings for community groups and churches
- Producing specialized videos for local audiences such as taxi companies on how to travel safely with passengers and disinfect vehicles
- Providing health education messaging that the community could use within their circles of influence.
- Posting daily updates on NGHS' public website and social media channels to share information on the number of confirmed COVID-19 positive patients being treated in NGHS facilities, patients awaiting test results, and Hall County-specific information. Resources and trends for COVID-19 are available to the public at www.nghs.com/covid-19.

Community COVID-19 Leadership Coalition: A community-wide collaborative was formed in September 2020 that included NGHS, Longstreet Clinic, Good News Clinic, District 2 Public Health, Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, City and County Government and other local organizations to implement a unified plan for the Hall County-Gainesville area to prevent the spread of COVID-19, with a goal to meet and sustain the World Health Organization's target of no more than 5% of those tested are positive for COVID-19 – protecting the mental and physical health of all area residents and supporting a healthy economy going forward. From this, local businesses and government entities joined together to create the **“We are hALL IN” campaign** to set the standard for COVID-19 prevention. Those who are “hALL IN” pledge to wear a mask when appropriate, practice social distancing and abide by other health and safety guidelines. For worksite resources and more, go to www.wearehallin.com.

Implementing Epic at Good News Clinic: In June 2020, Good News Clinics (GNC) joined NGHS on the same electronic health record (EHR) system, called Epic. **With the assistance of local donors, the NGHS Foundation was able to accelerate the implementation of Epic for GNC, which provides free medical care to underinsured and uninsured residents in Hall County. Sharing the same EHR system helped to streamline communication and record sharing between NGHS and GNC, improving care for patients with COVID-19 and other illnesses throughout the community.**



In light of COVID-19, NGHS implemented a plan to increase access to flu vaccinations in the community. NGHS provided over **1,000 free flu vaccines** to the community through distribution to **Good News Clinics, Good Shepherd Clinic in Dawson County, Community Helping Place in Dahlonaga, and Open Arms Clinic in Toccoa.**

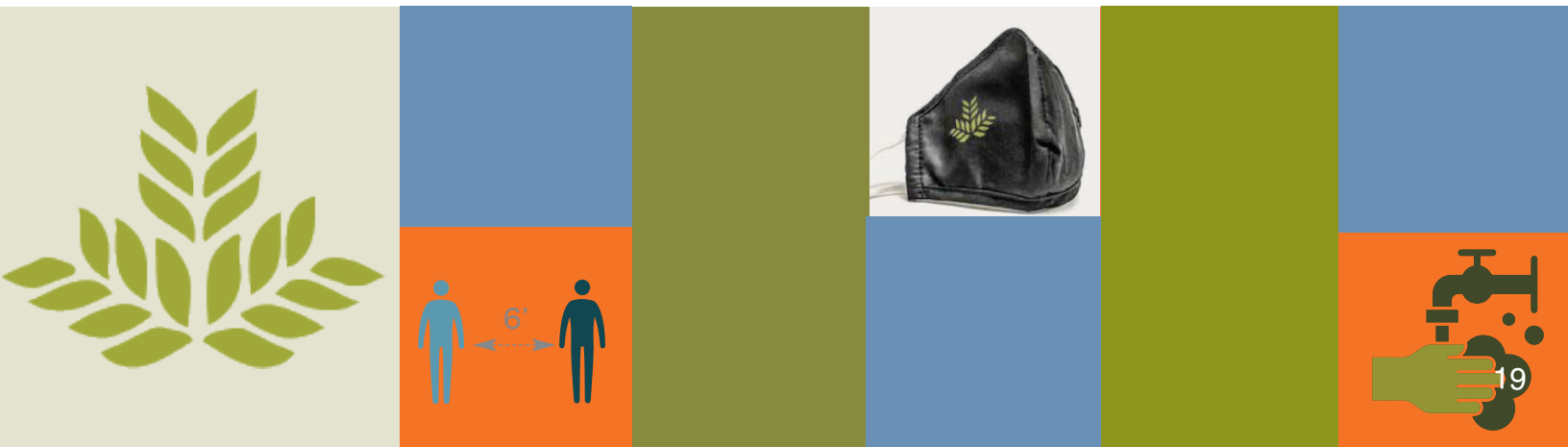
Health System Collaboration Across the State: NGHS participated in a social media campaign with some of our peers in Atlanta – namely Emory, Grady, Piedmont, Wellstar and CHOA. The #3Ws campaign encourages people to Wear a mask; Watch your distance; and Wash your hands.

Mask-Making and Supply Distribution by NGHS Staff: NGHS staff made 13,222 masks in 6 weeks and distributed to the community to a screening event at Good News Clinics, Gainesville and Hall County Schools, Jackson County and Banks County. The NGHS Foundation was a drop-off location for masks and community donations that were distributed to United Way of Hall County and other sites.

Community Roundtables with Regional Skilled Nursing Facilities: NGHS hosted three community roundtables (via Zoom) with nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the northeast Georgia region to share current activities and lessons learned as the region's Skilled Nursing Facilities manage clinical and operational issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Education with School Systems: In partnership with District 2 Public Health, NGHS hosted a community webinar with school systems across the northeast Georgia region to answer questions and share recommendations for school nurses and administrators related to the COVID 19 pandemic as they manage issues and guidelines in the school.

Secured State and Federal Resources: Working with state and federal officials, NGHS was able to secure many resources to assist in our pandemic response efforts. These include one of four mobile medical units made available in the state — adding 20 medical/surgical beds for patients with less severe cases of COVID-19, additional staff for critical care testing and increased allocations of the drug Remdesivir, which has been instrumental in our successful treatment plans.



Emergency Response Leadership Recognized as a State Model: NGHS' Emergency Preparedness Manager **Matthew Crumpton** received the **Georgia Commendation Medal** from the **Georgia National Guard** for his tireless service and leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NGHS is grateful to have a generous and supportive community who celebrated **Healthcare Heroes** through positive messages, videos, food donations and volunteering.

More than \$1Million has been donated to the **NGHS Foundation Covid-Relief Fund** to help:

- Distribute more than \$125,000 of meals and snacks to frontline staff – supporting local businesses and economy
- Improve the COVID patient experience through distraction and connection tools
- Provide over \$250,000 in emergency PPE
- Secure emergency equipment and tools necessary to treat and assist COVID recovery
- Deliver thousands of self-care kits to frontline staff
- Encourage staff through signs, cards and messages of hope





Stretching our Resources: volunteers under the age of 65 and without underlying health conditions, including a significant number of college students, were able to volunteer mainly as front entrance screeners and with PPE projects outside of the clinical areas. **Over 160 volunteers have contributed nearly 10,000 hours in support of COVID-19 relief efforts.**

Early in the pandemic, NGHS persevered through the supply shortage, thanks to the creativity and ingenuity of employees, community members who made masks, face shields and isolation gowns, and the generosity of the poultry industry and other companies who donated their PPE supplies. **NGHS' employee sewing team and community sewers produced more than 10,000 N95 mask covers, using donated linen.** This team also produced almost 1,000 fabric isolation gowns and more than 800 masks for Good News Clinics.

Questions?
Contact: Christy Moore,
Director, Community Health Improvement
770-219-8097 | christy.moore@nghs.com



Northeast Georgia Medical Center