



**Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC)
Gainesville, Braselton, Barrow & Lumpkin
Executive Summary
FY20 Community Benefit Report
October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020**

Improving the health of our community in all we do

The mission of Northeast Georgia Health System, Inc., (NGHS) and all related affiliates is to “improve the health of the community in all we do.” Led by volunteer boards made up of community leaders, the Health System serves more than 1 million people in 19 counties across Northeast Georgia.

NGHS is a Georgia, not-for-profit corporation that along with its affiliates, provides healthcare services to the residents of Northeast Georgia. NGHS affiliate, Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC), operates a 557-licensed bed inpatient facility in Gainesville, and a 134-licensed bed inpatient facility in Braselton. NGHS operates a 56-bed licensed hospital located in Winder (NGMC Barrow, LLC) and in July 2018, NGHS acquired NGMC Lumpkin, LLC (formerly Chestatee Regional Hospital), to include emergency services, 10 inpatient beds and other support services in Dahlonega and surrounding communities.

What Drives NGMC’s Community Health Improvement Activities?

Northeast Georgia Health System, with input from the community, completed a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) in 2019. 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 5 following health priorities that fit hand-in-glove with the strategic direction of the organization: **Behavioral and Mental Health; Access to Care; Diabetes; Cardiovascular Disease; and Septicemia.**

For details on how NGHS is addressing the significant needs identified in its most recently conducted CHNA, go to: www.nghs.com/2020-plan.

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 Northeast Georgia, to partnering with other organizations such as Good News Clinics and the Department of Public Health to reach at-risk populations in need of health care.

Visit www.nghs.com/cbr and click on **View Videos** to see how NGHS is partnering in the community.

In FY20, NGMC Gainesville and Braselton provided over \$12 million in community benefit programs/outreach. Health education was provided through free community lectures, health screenings, and various support groups. NGMC also offered 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.

The unforeseen **COVID-19 pandemic** quickly became a primary focus for NGHS. Committed to improving the health of our community in all we do, NGHS pivoted in 2020 to meet the demands of the pandemic, remaining flexible to address the rising needs in the community through the following activities:

COVID-19 Testing in Partnership with Good News Clinics and District 2 Public Health: NGMC partnered with District 2 Public Health and Good News Clinics to host two free COVID-19 testing events for low income and uninsured residents of Hall County who otherwise may not have had the testing. Over 1,300 people were tested, with nearly 50% testing positive at the first event and about one-third testing positive at the second event. **NGMC provided COVID-19 testing kits, supplies and staff to support these events.**

COVID-19 Outreach in Partnership with Community Leaders: By April 2020, 50% of confirmed COVID-19 cases were in the Latino population, which was disproportionate considering 29% of Hall County's population is Latino. This prompted NGMC to gather an outreach committee and community-wide collaborative to support and educate the Latino community through grassroots efforts. The group accomplished the following:

- Produced bi-lingual fliers and posters (for businesses and community).
- Distributed face masks and cleaning supplies to businesses and schools
- Partnered with area school systems to provide masks, cleaning supplies, and one-on-one education to children and their families through lunch delivery routes over the summer.
- Organized testing events in partnership with Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, which also doubled as clinical trials for Emory to compare a saliva test to the nasopharyngeal testing for those willing to undergo both tests.
- Hosted educational webinars for community groups and churches.
- Produced specialized videos for the local audience.
- Provided health education and messaging for the community to use with their circles of influence.
- Posted daily updates on NGHS' public website and social media channels to share information on the number of confirmed COVID 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.

The prevalence of COVID-19 in these communities also 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 others. NGMC representatives Christy Moore and Antonio Rios, M.D., served on this task force which was born out of the Governor's visit to Hall County in May 2020 with Georgia Department of Public Health Commissioner, Kathleen Toomey, M.D.

Community COVID-19 Leadership Coalition: A community-wide collaborative was formed in September 2020 that included **NGMC, Longstreet Clinic, Good News Clinic, District 2 Public Health, Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce 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. Learn more at www.wearehallin.com.

Epic at Good News Clinics: In June 2020, Good News Clinics (GNC) joined NGMC 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 NGMC and GNC, improving care for patients with COVID-19 and other illnesses throughout the community.**

In light of COVID-19, NGMC implemented a plan to increase access to flu vaccinations in the community. NGMC provided over **1,000 free flu vaccines** to the community in 2020 through distribution to **Good News Clinics, Good Shepherd Clinic in Dawson County, Community Helping Place in Dahlonega, and Open Arms Clinic in Toccoa.**

Health System Collaboration Across the State: NGMC participated in a social media campaign with hospital peers Emory, Grady, Piedmont, Wellstar and Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta. The #3Ws campaign encouraged people to **Wear a mask; Watch your distance; and Wash your hands.**

Mask-Making and Supply Distribution: NGMC staff and volunteers made 13,222 masks in 6 weeks and distributed to the community to a screening event at Good News Clinic, 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 then distributed by United Way of Hall County to the community.

Community Roundtables with Regional Skilled Nursing Facilities: NGMC hosted three community roundtable events (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 managed clinical and operational issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Education with School Systems: In partnership with District 2 Public Health, NGMC 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 managed issues and guidelines in schools.

Secured State and Federal Resources: Working with state and federal officials, NGHS was able to secure resources to assist in pandemic response efforts. These included 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.

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 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. **NGMC's 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.

Visit <https://youtu.be/w5K8tux3OEM> to see how NGHS partnered in the community to Slow COVID-19.

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

Northeast Georgia Medical Center is a partner in United Way's One Hall Mental and Behavioral Health Subcommittee. Under **United Way's One Hall** framework, the committee is working better to coordinate mental health services in northeast Georgia through new forms of connectivity and greater collaboration. NGHS, United Way of Hall County, and other non-profits in Hall County are working together on a **coordinated community network** to create a shared data platform to become more efficient when serving those who have **social needs that impact overall wellbeing**. This platform will be used to make referrals to resources and provide a universal method to track outcomes, resulting in better, more coordinated care.

The group is working through NGHS's relationship with **AVIA**, a digital solution technology company, to learn from other communities across the country who have been successful in this arena. According to AVIA, **68% of patients have at least one social challenge**, be it housing, food or transportation. And, **avoidable ER utilization is usually a symptom of an unmet social need**, which underscores the reason health systems across the country are actively pursuing similar projects to impact Social Determinants of Health. In addition to this, Mental Health First Aid training will be provided to targeted audiences.

NGMC is a leading partner in the **Reach Out Campaign** to destigmatize the need for mental health services. As part of this group's work, testimonials from community members are featured on United Way's Facebook page. Featured community members include **NGMC board chair Phillippa Lewis Moss, NPGP/GME's own Dr. Monica Newton and NGHS Chief Strategy Executive Tracy Vardeman**. Dr. Newton's post reached **11,290 people and had 555 engagements**. Testimonials and more can be seen at <https://www.unitedwayhallcounty.org/mental-and-behavioral-health>.

Visit <https://youtu.be/4jP58VTTQAw> to see how NGHS is partnering in the community to Address Mental Health.

NGMC's emergency departments continue to partner 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 remains the only hospital system 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. 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.

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, 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. Forty-six physicians, 9 mid-level providers, 43 dentists and one dental hygienist volunteer to treat patients at GNC. In addition, 340 specialist physicians volunteer to treat patients in their offices through Health Access Initiative. **In FY20, over \$550,000 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 worked to implement a high-level electronic medical record system, EPIC, 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; and partnered with GNC's Registered Dietitian to ensure all low-income, uninsured CHF patients received nutrition education in addition to treatment, free medication, and supplies needed for home monitoring. **This project has been extremely successful, holding the 30-day hospital readmissions to less than 5% in 2020.**

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 FY20, NGMC contributed over \$1 million 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. **In FY20, NGMC provided support of over \$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 Northeast Georgia Health System Foundation provides funding for this program that **served over 350 people** in FY20.

Good Shepherd Clinic of Dawson County: NGMC provided office space in addition to financial and in-kind support to the indigent care clinic, valued at over **\$130,000**.

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. In FY20, the Financial Navigator team **served over 53,400 people** seeking assistance.

Visit <https://youtu.be/kbyedPAPSlk> to see how NGHS is partnering in the community to meet the needs of the uninsured.

Community Education

Safe Kids Coalition Works to Keep Kids Safe: Safe Kids Northeast Georgia, led by NGMC, is part of Safe Kids Worldwide, the first and only national organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury, 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 2020 thanks to the support of the NGHS Foundation and The Medical Center Auxiliary proceeds from Marketplace (an annual fundraising event of The Medical Center Auxiliary, which benefits healthcare services of NGMC).

In FY20, members of the Safe Kids Northeast Georgia Coalition provided over 50 programs and events that **reached an estimated 33,694 children and their family members, teachers and caregivers**. Through these programs, **over 2,000 safety items were distributed** to families in need of them.

Partnership for a Drug Free Hall (DFH): 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, who, 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 DFH, a collaborative dedicated to providing the people of Hall County with information, resources and actions to address drug abuse. In 2020, more than 200 people were reached through live forums and 2,111 people viewed informative videos on Facebook during the pandemic. Additional resources, such as, forum recordings, Parent Support Group information and more can be found at <http://drugfreehall.org>.

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, an estimated 4,350 copies were distributed for all babies born at NGMC Gainesville and NGMC Braselton. To accompany the distribution of this book, 81 staff from the Post-Partum Mother/Baby unit attended the **Talk With Me Baby** training program which is a public action campaign to **coach parents and caregivers on vocabulary development with their babies**; vocabulary by age 3 is the strongest predictor of a child's future success with literacy and education.

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 FY20, **over 1,250 individuals were served** through these programs. Additionally, **Hospice of NGMC was designated as a level 5 partner of We Honor Veterans (WHV) - the highest level of its kind** for its above-and-beyond commitment to providing veteran-specific care. Hospice of NGMC was one of two hospices in the state of Georgia to be designated for its commitment to understanding the differentiated needs of veterans and how to provide veteran-specific care.

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 over 400 health professionals in the region in FY20**. In addition to this, community education on injury prevention and trauma, such as with falls and the Stop the Bleed Campaign, was provided to nearly 1,000 professionals and individuals in the community.

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, which provided **education to nearly 200 health professionals in FY20**. This conference is 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.

Sepsis Education: Community education was provided to nearly 470 people in the community to increase sepsis awareness; what it is, what it looks like, and when to seek treatment. Additionally, 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.

Stroke Education: Nurses on the Stroke Unit at NGMC provide education to the community about stroke prevention, symptoms, risk factors and actions to take. Education was provided to over 1,700 people in the community.

Diabetes Support Groups, Education and Screenings: NGMC provided diabetes outreach for prevention and education, screenings and support groups. Even though COVID-19 halted many sessions, the Diabetes Education team served 245 people in the community.

NGHS continues to improve the **STEMI regional system – a collaborative effort between Northeast Georgia Medical Center and EMS in 18 counties across the region to provide 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. While the STEMI conference was canceled due to COVID-19, 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. Additionally, The Heart Center of NGMC provided **328 free carotid screenings** in the community.

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>).

Foothills AHEC 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 provided \$186,724 in support for AHEC employee benefits packages, phone, utilities and cleaning service expenses.**

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. NGMC expects this program to grow to 200 residents by 2025, which would make this program one of the largest in the state. The GME program is on target with **64 positions filled** by 2020.

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. In FY20, 354 students participated representing 11 area high schools. 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 FY20, 16 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 FY20, 6 students 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 Efforts to Improve Community 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.

Blood Drives: In FY20, NGMC hosted 9 drives, resulting in 347 donors and over **321 pints of blood**.

United Way Pacesetter & More: NGMC has partnered with United Way to engage employees and leaders in the community. NGHS employees **contributed \$97,857** to United Way as a Pacesetter Company.

The Northeast Georgia Health System Foundation Raises Funds to Benefit the Community

The NGHS Foundation 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 **\$4.4 million** has been raised for community health improvement projects through the NGHS Foundation's Medical Center Open golf tournament.
- Through the **employee giving club known as WATCH** (We Are Targeting Community Health), members have donated more than **\$11 million** in support of capital improvements, community initiatives, equipment and enhanced patient care since the program's inception in 1999.

Community Support to combat Infant Mortality, Cancer, Heart Disease: NGMC employees walked for American Heart Walk, March for Babies and Relay for Life. These events were hosted virtually in 2020 where participants walked in their setting of choice. 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.

WATCH has grown to include more than 3,600 employee donors. Together, WATCH employee donors have supported hundreds of projects that have helped improve the lives of patients, visitors and colleagues each day. In FY20, WATCH employee donors extended their impact towards funding **Change Grants** – a program for employees to propose new projects that enhance patient, visitor or employee experience. Change Grants funded programs such as Caring Kids, a Long-term care visitation program, and more. WATCH employee donors also celebrated the launch of **NGHS' Therapeutic Music Program** (fully funded through WATCH), allowing NGHS to hire certified therapeutic musicians who provide Live Therapeutic Music (LTM) to patients as part of their care plan. LTM creates a healing environment that helps minimize perception of pain, helps vital signs stabilize and allows patients to relax – even those who are intubated or not responsive.

Volunteers: In FY20, **615 NGMC volunteers** contributed **46,429 volunteer hours**, equivalent to 28 full time employees and a **value of over \$1.26 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. **Twenty-seven teens** participated in the Teen Volunteer Program in 2020. The teens represented **17 high schools** within the area.

Encouraging Medical Volunteering: NGMC provides information at physician orientation to encourage physicians to **step up to volunteer at 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**, physicians actively participate in community outreach, including educational seminars, screenings, cancer prevention, and **volunteer in regional indigent clinics**.

For more information about progress on these and other health priorities of 2020-2022, go to www.nghs.com/progress-report-2020.

Leading the Way

Many NGMC leaders support community, civic, or professional organizations on their Board of Directors or as a participating member. In addition to this, NGPG Advanced Practice Providers support events in the community and provide GME instruction to Medical, Physician Assistant, and Nurse Practitioner students. **Here are a few highlights of NGHS leadership recognized in the community:**

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

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.

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**, recognizing the following staff and programs at the 2020 Healthy Hall Awards:

- **Outstanding Healthcare Administrator- Dr. John Delzell**, NGHS VP of Medical Education
- **Senior Impact - Lifeline** of Northeast Georgia Medical Center
- **Corporate Innovation-** Information Technology at Northeast Georgia Health System
- **Nurse of the Year (LPN)- Abby Odle**, LPN, Northeast Georgia Medical Center Gainesville
- **Lifetime Achievement Award- Dr. Buddy Langston**, Retired, Northeast Georgia Health System & Longstreet Clinic

Two NGHS clinicians were recognized by the **Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce at their annual Healthcare Awards** ceremony:

- **Healthcare Professional of the Year- Angie Caton**, RN, assistant nurse manager, Cancer Services
- **Allied Health Professional of the Year- Heather Wilsey**, supervisor, Clinical Rehabilitation in Braselton

NGMC Barrow

NGMC Barrow provides emergency care, surgery, orthopedics, heart care, imaging /radiology, laboratory services, pulmonary rehabilitation, wound healing, stroke care and more. Since joining Northeast Georgia Health System in 2017, NGMC Barrow has been named one of Top 5 Small Hospitals

in the state by Georgia Trend magazine, achieved designation as a Primary Stroke Treatment Center and added 3D mammography to better detect breast cancer.

NGMC 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 and support.

In FY20, NGMC Barrow provided over \$97,000 in community benefit programs/outreach. Barrow supported the community in a variety of ways, from sponsoring study rooms and mobile hotspots for the Winder Public Library to actively participating as a District level Partner in Education. In addition, Barrow provided support to other local non-profit organizations that serve the community.

The following contains highlights of community benefit activities provided by NGMC Barrow in FY20:

Partnering in the Community

Partner in Education with Barrow County School System: As a District level Partner in Education, it is NGMC Barrow's role to support student motivation and achievement, teacher and faculty appreciation and community service and involvement. In addition to providing these opportunities for students, **NGMC Barrow donated medical supplies to stock 18 nurse clinics** providing for the care of **over 14,000 students and 2,000 staff.**

As many events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **NGMC Barrow partnered with Barrow County Schools to implement a virtual version of the "Tar Wars" program to 2,100 fourth and fifth grade students learning in person and online.** "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. Through this program, students and their parents also become aware of smoking cessation support and resources.

For 4th and 5th grade combined, post-tests showed significant learning gains. To name a few, the highest learning gain was for the question, "Advertisers tell the truth about tobacco use," increasing from 41.8% answered correctly (false) in pre-test to 74.4% answered correctly in the post-test; followed by the question, "E-Cigarettes or Vapes are safer than regular cigarettes," with 51.8% answered correctly (false) in the pre-test to 79.2% answered correctly in the post-test. Of note, 87.5% of students who took the post-test responded that they did learn something new from the Tar Wars program.

In FY20, 13 students from Apalachee High School and Winder-Barrow High School participated in the **Youth Apprenticeship Program** whereby high school students gain work experience in the hospital for one class period in their day. The program provides hands-on exposure to many different healthcare careers.

NGMC's emergency departments continue to partner 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.

Partner with YMCA of Georgia's Piedmont: NGMC Barrow supports the Brad Akins branch in Winder and affiliated sites with medically based programming for the community such as support groups and education on nutrition and other health related topics, and also supports summer swim lessons for kids.

Supporting Barrow County EMS Ambulance Service: As part of a collaborative agreement between NGMC Barrow and Barrow County Board of Commissioners, two EMS ambulances are now staffed and operated by NGMC. Since implementation, response time has reduced in half. Visit <https://youtu.be/LyAc178Nsds> to see how NGHS is partnering in the community to Provide EMS in Barrow County.

Volunteers: In FY20, **10 NGMC volunteers** contributed **634 volunteer hours in Barrow, a value of \$17,000 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.

Community Education and Outreach

Support of Community Efforts to Improve Health

NGMC Barrow provided a donation to **Piedmont Regional Library System** to support the Mobile Hotspot Lending Program to enable residents of Barrow County with internet access, **bridging the digital divide** for access to health information, schoolwork, employment, and connectivity to other social needs.

NGMC Barrow supports child advocacy, protection and wellness: NGMC Barrow provided financial support for **Piedmont CASA** (Court Appointed Special Advocates). CASA's are appointed by the juvenile court judge to advocate for the best interest of the child and are solely responsible for ensuring the child's needs are met and the child's best interest is heard.

The Tree House, Inc. Support: A donation was provided to The Tree House, Inc. whose mission is to strengthen communities by reducing the occurrence and impact of child abuse through counseling, educating, supporting and nurturing children and families in Barrow, Banks and Jackson counties.

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

Boy Scouts Support: A donation was provided to support the Boy Scouts in Barrow. This program strives to build better communities as it believes youth involved in scouting are more likely to do better in school and finish high school and college. This program's mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices through life.

The Cancer Foundation Support: A donation was provided to support The Cancer Foundation whose mission is to help alleviate the financial burden of cancer patients living in northeast Georgia who are experiencing an immediate financial crisis and are currently receiving treatment or are six-months post-treatment.

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.

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

Leading the Way in Barrow

Every day, employees of Northeast Georgia Medical Center go about the business of caring for the health of the people of our community. Caring for our community is part of their everyday routine, but also, they give back by leading or supporting community, civic, or professional organizations on their Board of Directors or as a participating member.

Chad Hatfield, President of NGMC Barrow, serves on the Board of Directors for the **Boys & Girls Club of Winder**. This organization provides programs that empower youth to excel in school, become good citizens and lead healthy, productive lives. Chad is also Vice Chair for the Barrow Chamber of Commerce and serves on the SIMS 2.0 Board for SIMS Academy in Barrow County Schools.

Sunita Singh, Public Relations Manager of NGMC Barrow serves on the Board of Directors for the Rotary Club of Winder. Having served as President in 2018, this club benefits various community programs and nonprofit agencies in Barrow County. Sunita also serves on the Barrow Arts & Science Academy School Governance Team with Barrow County Schools and the Board of Athens Chamber's LEAD (Leadership, Education, Awareness, and Development) Athens program.

Heather Standard, Chief Nursing Officer of NGMC Barrow, serves on the Advisory Board for Wimberly's Roots, a non-profit organization working to enhance food security in Winder. Heather also serves on the Board of Directors for Lanier Tech in Gainesville.

NGMC Lumpkin

NGMC Lumpkin, LLC values cooperative efforts with community organizations and other healthcare providers to improve the health status of area residents. The organization demonstrates this through providing financial and staff support to local nonprofit agencies, developing partnerships with established indigent clinics dedicated to serving the under-served population, and other local nonprofit organizations.

In FY20, NGMC Lumpkin provided over \$55,000 in community benefit programs/outreach. Health education and flu vaccines were provided through free community health fairs and outreach.

The following contains highlights of community benefit activities provided by NGMC Lumpkin in FY20:

Partnering to Reach the Uninsured

Through various physician leadership councils, **NGHS physicians actively participate in community outreach**, including educational seminars, screenings, and volunteering their time and expertise with indigent clinics throughout the region.

NGMC works cooperatively with other area healthcare providers to care for area residents, particularly the indigent population. NGMC provided \$17,000 in financial support for **Community Helping Place**, an indigent health clinic in Lumpkin County that provides medical and dental services for the area's most vulnerable populations.

While serving as Chief of Medical Staff at NGMC Lumpkin in 2020, **Dr. Donna Whitfield** volunteered at **Community Helping Place** and was **honored by the Sunrise Dahlonga Rotary Club** for her contributions to the community in Lumpkin County.

Kay Hall, Nurse Manager for NGMC Lumpkin Clinical Areas is on the **Board of Directors** for Community Helping Place and is also a serving member of the Dahlonga Rotary Club. She frequently volunteers at community events such as Inspire for Women, Lumpkin Matters events and CHP events.

In conjunction with this partnership, NGMC staff participated in the **Lumpkin Matters Initiative** which is focused on reaching the uninsured and connecting them with healthcare, educational and social services. NGMC provided education and **free flu shots** to the community at these events.

Community Education and Outreach

Lumpkin Youth Leadership Support: Tammy Soles, Director of Clinical Care at NGHS, Co-Chaired the Lumpkin Youth Leadership program of the Dahlonga-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce. Working together with community partners, this program is designed to empower Lumpkin County High School students through the development of leadership skills, connecting with community resources and exploring career opportunities. During 2020, 24 students participated in the program.

Hospice Bereavement Support and Outreach: Hospice of NGMC provided bereavement support and education in Lumpkin for those grieving a loss or caring for a loved one. While the bereavement camps along with other live activities were cancelled due to COVID-19, virtual support groups were offered.

Northeast Georgia Interfaith Ministries Support: NGMC Lumpkin provided financial support to this organization that works in cooperation with churches and county partnerships to **serve the homeless** in North Georgia, providing transitional housing, counseling services, and basic life-skills training.

Youth Education: NGMC Lumpkin provided a donation toward education for youth in **Lumpkin County Schools** about making safe and responsible life choices, such as with drugs and alcohol.

Lumpkin Literacy Support: NGMC Lumpkin provided a donation to The Lumpkin County Literacy Coalition which provides funding and volunteer support to literacy efforts in the community where they offer programs at all stages of life. Their mission is to increase adult and childhood literacy in Lumpkin County.

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 campuses in Gainesville, Braselton, Winder and Dahlonga – with a total of more than 700 beds and more than 1,100 medical staff members representing more than 50 specialties.

The Health System offers a full range of healthcare services including oncology, orthopedics, cardiac surgery, critical care, surgical trauma, neonatology and women’s care. In 2020, NGMC became the first hospital in Georgia to receive accreditation as a Center of Excellence in both Robotic Surgery and Hernia Surgery by the Surgical Review Corporation (SRC). NGMC also received three additional Center of Excellence designations as the first in Georgia for Colorectal Surgery, Minimally Invasive Surgery and Minimally Invasive Gynecology.

Led by volunteer boards made up of community leaders, the Health System serves more than 1 million people in 19 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 500 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.

Charity Care Cost is an estimated cost and does not include bad debt.

For more information, contact Christy Moore, Director, Community Health Improvement, at (770) 219-8097, email at christy.moore@nghs.com or go to www.nghs.com.