

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



2021 PROGRESS REPORT



Northeast Georgia Medical Center

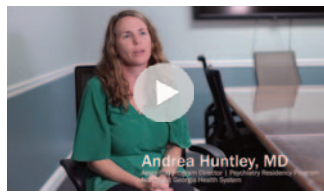
Based on a comprehensive Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) conducted in 2019, Northeast Georgia Health System identified five important health priorities and corresponding outcome measures. This document is interactive and provides 2021 progress in reaching stated goals of the 2020-2022 CHNA Implementation Plan. To view this report, please visit nghs.com/2021-plan.

LINKS

Visit the url below to view the CHNA report and other resources, such as a series of videos that showcase our strong partnerships in community health efforts. These efforts include health access to indigent populations, mental health, COVID-19 and more:

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

Psychiatry Residency Program and Telehealth



Mental health needs increased dramatically during the pandemic. NGHS pivoted to provide virtual health appointments - including those for mental health - to help meet these needs.

2021 NGHS Accomplishments



2021 NGHS Accomplishments Highlight video

Thank You Healthcare Heroes!



The community came together to support and encourage NGHS team members during COVID.

2021 PROGRESS

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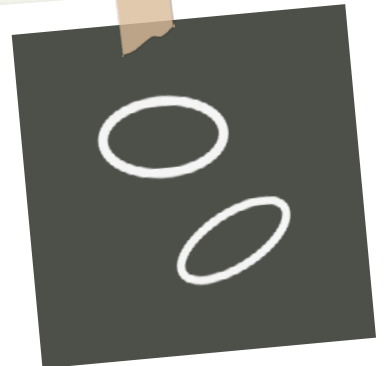
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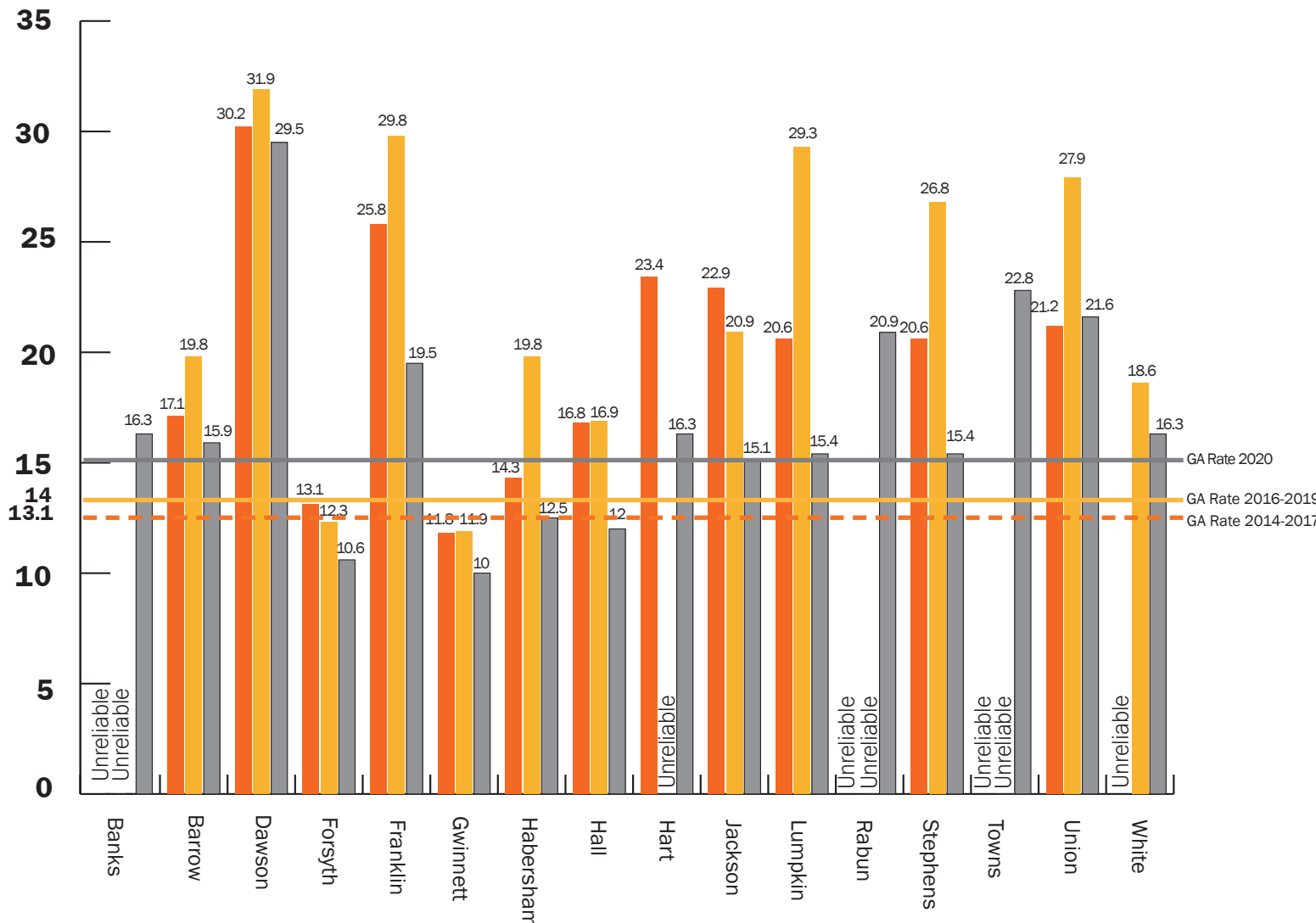
Mental and Behavioral Health



Outcome Measure:

11 of the 16 northeast Georgia counties have a suicide rate higher than the state rate of 15.1 per 100,000 population (compared to 10 out of 16 counties used as the baseline from the CHNA). Dawson County has the highest suicide rate of 29.5. The suicide rate in Hall County is 12 per 100,000 population, which is below the state rate.

- 2014 - 2017 Suicide Rates, CDC wonder. GA rate 13.1
- 2016 - 2019 Suicide Rates, CDC wonder. GA rate 14
- 2020 Suicide Rates, CDC wonder. GA rate 15.1



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 and behavioral health in our community through United Way's One Hall Mental & Behavioral Health subcommittee, of which NGHS is a partner. The program initially launched in Hall County and is now expanding into the northeast Georgia region.

Strategy Updates:

ACCESS:

Among many efforts to provide mental health resources in the age of COVID, NGHS experts and United Way Hall County led Facebook Live panel discussions focused on providing senior adults and their caregivers tangible information to navigate the mental health implications associated with COVID-19 and the effects of long-term sheltering in place.



Funds from the **2021 Medical Center Open golf tournament benefited the Justice and Mental Health Collaborative** led by the Gainesville Police Department. In its second year, the program is expanding to hire a second mental health counselor to respond alongside a law enforcement officer when mental illness is a factor. Counselors act as liaisons between the officer and the community, providing a coordinated community policing response with access to a variety of agencies.



Graduate Medical Education:

In 2021, Northeast Georgia Medical Center's (NGMC) Psychiatry Physician Residency program launched, recruited faculty and gained accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. Interviews to fill six physician resident opportunities will take place in 2022.



Peer Coach Program Continues:

Thanks to a grant from the Georgia Council of Substance Abuse, NGHS PEER coach program continued in the Emergency Department (ED) for the fifth year, and in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for the third year. This innovative approach of using PEER coaches to assist victims of substance abuse is unique. NGHS' ED program is the only one of its kind in Georgia, and the NICU program is the only one in the nation.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Mental and Behavioral Health Partnerships



NGHS continues to play an integral role in the One Hall Mental and Behavioral Health Community Initiative, which is co-chaired by Monica Newton, DO.

Raising awareness of and resources for mental health is the region's top health priority; and it takes everyone coming together with a unified approach to recognize and treat the behavioral health needs of people where and when they need care.

This need was confirmed through data from United Way of Hall County's Community Game Plan and NGHS Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), along with input from 60 stakeholders participating in community listening sessions.

- More than 12 collaborative organizations participated, representing thousands of Hall County residents
- More than 30 participants consistently attended monthly meetings

ACCESS – Getting people what they need when they need it

- Implemented a Digital Shared Data Platform to make referrals for services and better coordinated care
- Community workgroup identified functional requirements and a vendor to provide platform

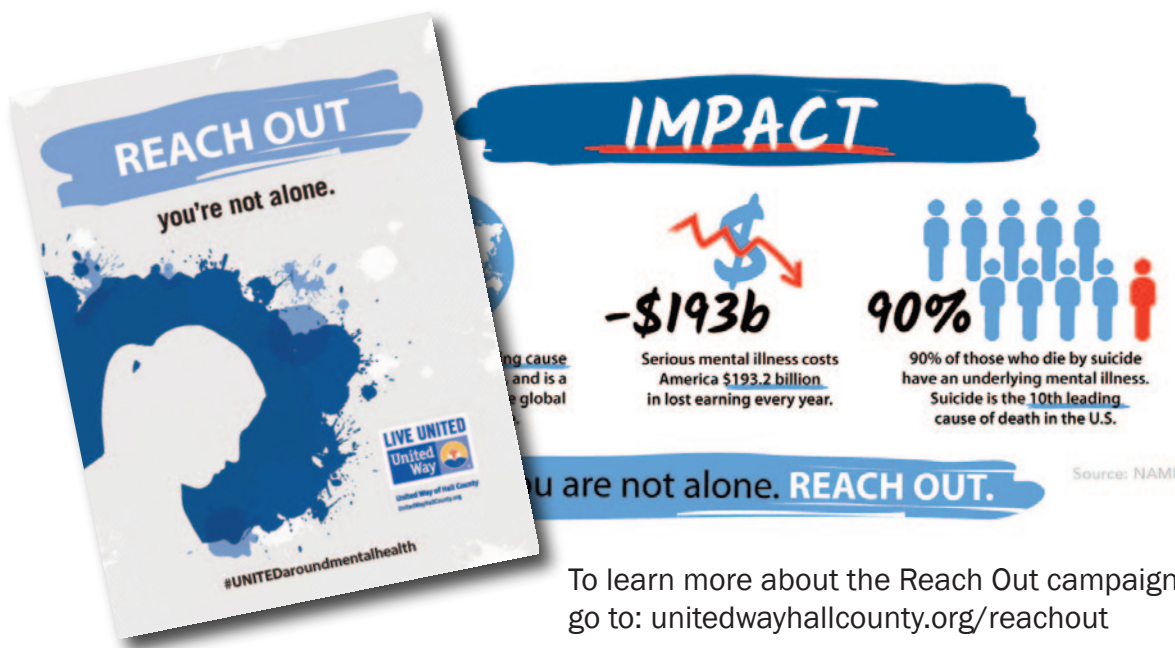
COLLABORATION – Partnering for a healthier community

- Added mental health clinicians on staff at the Gainesville Police Department to respond to mental health calls. After one year of the Mental Health Justice Initiative, 87 people connected to resources with 32 of those following up with resources and receiving support.

Mental and Behavioral Health

EDUCATION – Continued partnership with the United Way’s One Hall Mental and Behavioral Health subcommittee to destigmatize mental health and create a unified voice in Hall County for mental health

- Launched a community-wide Reach Out campaign to educate citizens about the importance of mental healthcare
- 95 social media posts reached more than 110,000 viewers
- Trained 24 One Hall Advocates to lead community conversations about mental health and racial equity
- Created Reach Out website and Facebook Live events
- 72,000 pieces of collateral distributed in English and Spanish
- Banners and bus stop ads elicited 270,000 views
- 21 community testimonial videos shared and 17 blogs published
- More than 3,400 people trained in Mental Health First Aid



Diabetes



Updated Progress:

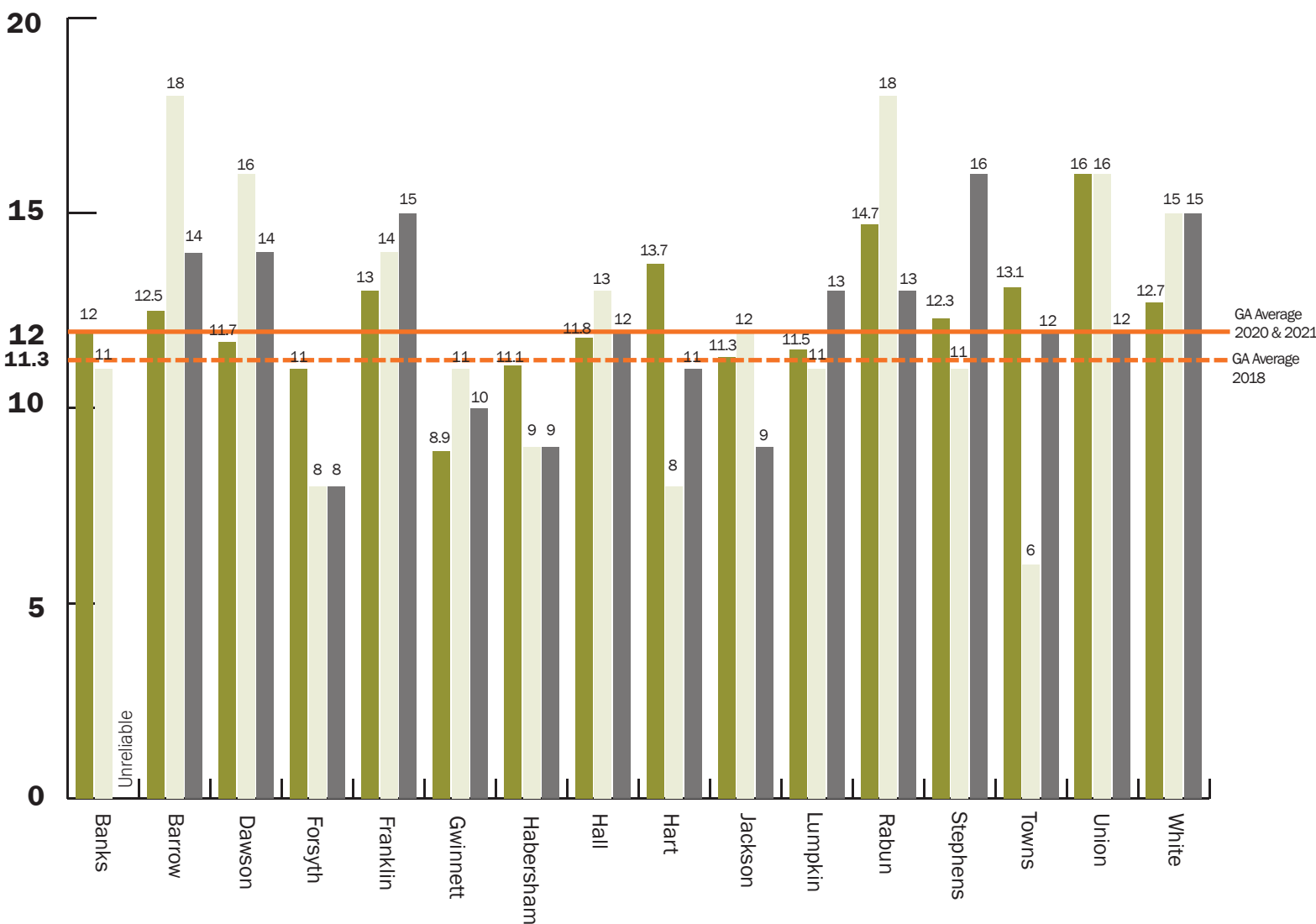
7 of 16 counties in northeast Georgia have a higher rate of Diabetes prevalence in adults than the state benchmark of 12.

(A decrease from 12 out of 16 counties as the 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)

Source: CDC Diabetes Interactive Atlas, 2021 Health Rankings - State benchmark 12 (2021 Health Rankings used data from 2017)



Outcome Measure:

Prevent incidence of gestational diabetes in mothers, 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:

In 2021, work continued on preventative education and early intervention for women in prenatal care with risk factors for gestational diabetes, prior to receiving the glucose tolerance test(s).

Northeast Georgia Medical Center also **implemented gestational diabetes and adult Type 1 and 2 clinical pathways**, enabling the NGHS team to provide better health care and better patient outcomes at a lower cost; increased the number of patients screened for diabetes up to 12 weeks postpartum if gestational diabetes was present; and educated providers on the treatment of hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia to prevent hospital admissions.





Outcome Measure:

Graduate Medical Education (GME) residency filled slots working toward 200 residency slots in various specialties by 2023.

The expansion of GME programs will help ensure more physicians are trained in the region to provide quality care to the community.

New Residency and Fellowship Programs Achieve Initial Accreditation

NGMC Graduate Medical Education (GME) expanded to six residency programs, and three new residency programs achieved ACGME accreditation this year:

NEW RESIDENCY AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS
ACHIEVE INITIAL ACCREDITATION

PROGRAM	DURATION	SLOTS (PER YEAR)	STARTS
EMERGENCY MEDICINE	3-YEAR	12	JULY 2022
PSYCHIATRY	4-YEAR	6	JULY 2022
OB/GYN	4-YEAR	5	JULY 2023

NGMC also received initial accreditation for two new fellowship programs

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS	DURATION	SLOTS (PER YEAR)	STARTS
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE	3-YEAR	6	JULY 2022
HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE MEDICINE	1-YEAR	2	JULY 2023

Access to Care

Strategy Updates:



The 53-acre site for the proposed **NGMC Lumpkin replacement hospital** is located on Georgia 400, south of Highway 60 in Dahlonega. The project was in the design development phase before pausing due to the COVID-19 health emergency. The project restart has begun.

In October, NGHS broke ground on the **Medical Plaza in Jefferson**, an 11,000-square-foot facility that will include Urgent Care, Family Medicine, Georgia Heart Institute and Northeast Georgia Physician Group (NGPG) specialty practices.



NGHS continued to **expand HealthConnection (HeC)**, the regional Health Information Exchange (HIE) covering a 19-county area in northeast Georgia as well as four surrounding counties in neighboring states. HIE enables healthcare providers to view electronically-shared files including facility/provider visits, emergency department visits, imaging orders, referrals, meds, etc. Currently, there are more than 609 participating providers, with more subscribers joining each month.



Access to Care

Tracy Vardeman, NGHS' chief strategy executive and chair of **One Hall's Mental Health Collaborative Access subcommittee**, is working to expand the data platform to provide more patient information and sharing capabilities in 2022.

The P.I.T.C.H program – Paramedics Improving the Community's Health – continued to empower patients to better manage their healthcare and understand their options. PITCH connects patients to primary care and other services and resources, educates about health programs and prevention, and addresses overall health and mental happiness. Twenty patients have “graduated” and now address most of their health issues with their new primary care physician, rather than at Emergency Department (ED) visits. Unnecessary ED visits were reduced from 19 to 0 in these original patient groups. Partnering with Graduate Medical Education, family medicine residents are allowed to accompany the PITCH paramedics to patient home visits.



NGHS continues to provide financial support for **Foothills Area Health Education Center (AHEC)**, a community-driven, non-profit corporation with the mission to increase the workforce of healthcare providers, especially in medically underserved areas.



In June, NGMC and Longstreet Clinic opened the doors of a new, collaborative cancer center. The **Braselton Cancer Center** houses both Longstreet Clinic's Medical Oncology and Hematology and Northeast Georgia Physician Group (NGPG) Radiation Oncology in a state-of-the-art, easily accessible and collaborative space.



University of North Georgia Educational Partnership Program Expands

NGHS greatly expanded the Dedicated Education Unit (DEU) pilot with the University of North Georgia (UNG), enabling nursing and physical therapy students to gain hands-on, clinical experience at NGMC Gainesville and NGMC Lumpkin, as well as NGPG's Urgent Care and primary care facilities. In Fall 2021, the program expanded from two DEUs to nine, increasing the number of students participating from 10 to 40. The innovative DEU program pairs junior and senior level students with a staff RN who guides the immersive learning experience.

Cardiovascular Disease

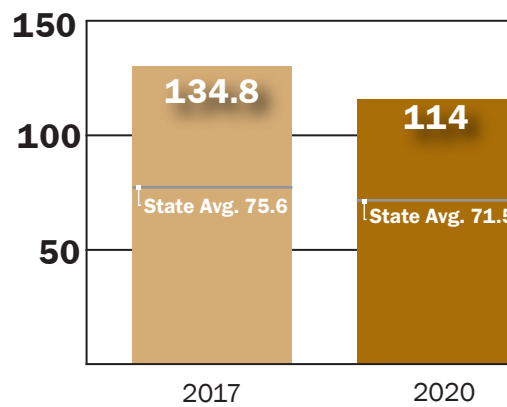


Outcome Measure:

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 2020.



Strategy Updates:

NGMC Welcomes New Heart & Vascular Leader

Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) welcomed internationally recognized physician leader, Habib Samady, MD, to help launch Georgia Heart Institute (GHI). As the president of Georgia Heart Institute, Dr. Samady is working to strengthen and grow services, ultimately improving and enhancing care for patients throughout the region.



NGMC Gainesville received **Comprehensive Stroke Center certification from DNV**, the highest certification awarded to hospitals for their treatment of serious stroke events. NGMC performed 219 interventional neurosurgeries in 2021.

Strategy Updates:

NGMC Braselton and NGMC Barrow continued their vital partnership with Barrow County Schools by supporting the **Tar Wars program**, which has educated more than 2,000 fourth and fifth grade students since 2019 about the dangers of smoking and vaping. The curriculum was delivered virtually in 2021 with teachers conducting in-class exercises and quizzes. 87.5% of students who participated indicated they learned something new about the dangers of smoking and vaping.



The **STEMI (S—T Elevation Myocardial Infarction)** program continued as a collaborative effort between NGMC and EMS in 18 counties across the region ensuring fast and efficient treatment of patients suffering from severe heart attacks. While en route to NGMC, EMS team members are enabled to relay vital patient information and alert Emergency Department staff so a cardiologist is waiting to restore the patient's blood flow almost immediately upon arrival.



Sepsis

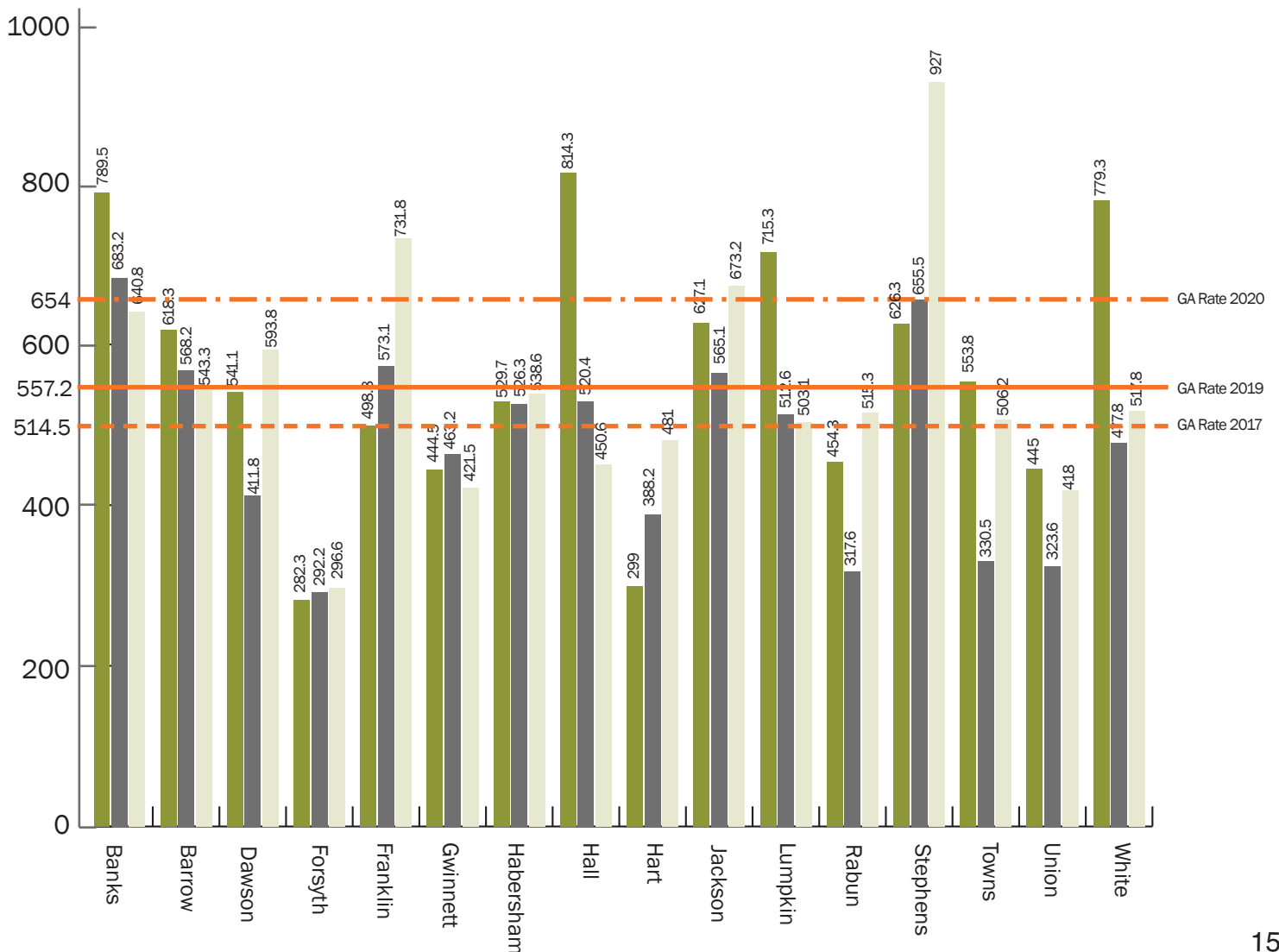


Outcome Measure:

3 of 16 counties in northeast Georgia have sepsis rates above the state average of 654. (A decrease from the baseline of 10 out of 16 counties from the CHNA. The 2020 rate increased due to COVID patient/sepsis deaths.)

- 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**
- 2020 Age-Adjusted Discharge Rate; **GA Benchmark = 654**

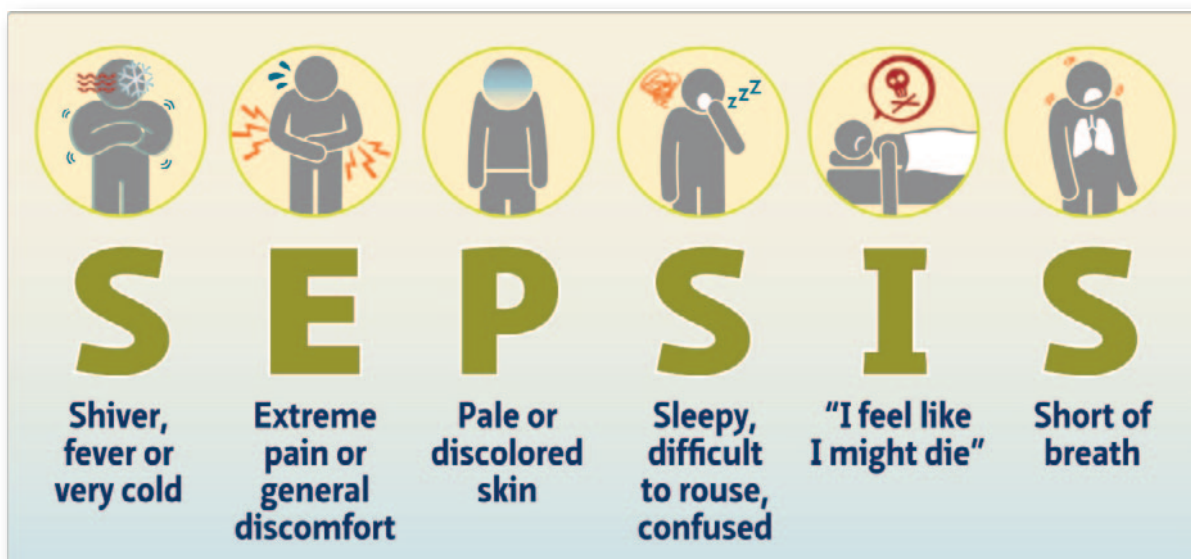
Source: Age-Adjusted Discharge Rate by Residence, Blood Poisoning (Dept. Public Health, OASIS)



Strategy Updates:

In 2021, the **Sepsis Alert Team** continued to evaluate, monitor and respond to patients with sepsis infection. The 2021 mortality rate for NGMC overall was 14.27, above the target of 8.09. Of the 677 deaths in 2021, 333 of these were COVID-19 patients.

In 2022, the regional partnership will educate and enable regional providers to collaborate on best practices.



COVID 19



NGMC's Response to COVID 19:

As NGHS continued the fight against COVID-19, staff and physicians dug even deeper to care for the community in the following ways:

- NGHS led a **Community Vaccine Coalition** that focused on distributing vaccines and encouraging community vaccination in a collaborative effort. Members of the coalition include: NGHS, Northeast Georgia Physicians Group, Longstreet Clinic, District 2 Public Health, Good News Clinics, Hall County Emergency Management Association, local school systems, poultry industry representatives and leaders within the Hispanic and African American communities.
- The **hALL IN Campaign** continued for a second year, chaired by community leader Rob Fowler. hALL IN was created in 2020 as a vehicle for community collaboration to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. This year, the coalition's work focused on community vaccination efforts and continued education and guidance of businesses and the community at large to help reduce the effects of COVID-19 in the region.
- NGHS was honored with the **Lake Lanier Convention and Visitors Bureau Chairman's Award** for the commitment and efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Hall County took things seriously and put NGHS in the driver's seat where they belonged. NGHS not only served those who were ill, they helped protect the health of everyone, putting the right information in the hands of business owners, elected officials, clergy and other community leaders."

– Stacey Dickson, President, Lake Lanier Convention and Visitors Bureau





NGHS, in partnership with leading community organizations, hosted **Community Conversations**, with Newtown Florist Club, St. John Baptist Church and District 2 Public Health, engaging a panel discussion on COVID-19 in the African American community. The panel shared case data on COVID-19 by race and ethnicity, answered questions about COVID-19 and discussed myths about the virus and vaccination, reaching more than 949 people.

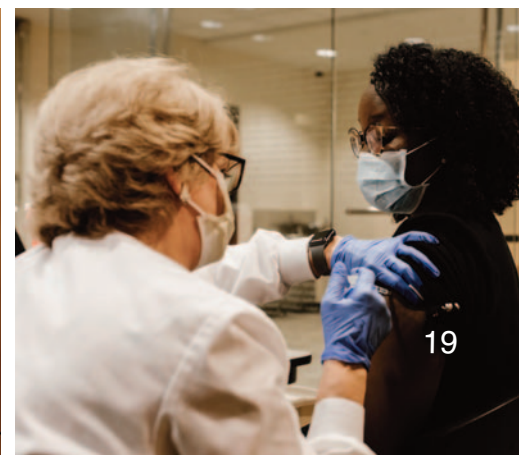
NGHS Hospital-Community Partnerships Featured at National American Hospital Association Conference

NGHS and its COVID hospital-community partnerships were featured at the American Hospital Association's (AHA) joint virtual conference of the Association of Community Health Improvement and Institute for Diversity and Health Equity titled, "Accelerating Health Equity."

Hospital-community partnership work at NGHS was one of three partnerships featured, titled, "The Power of Partnerships: Moving Ideas into Action to Advance Health Equity."

Christy Moore, Director of Community Health Improvement, and Samuel Maysonet, Hispanic Outreach Committee member and NGMC board member, represented the organization on the speakers' panel.

In October, the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce transformed their annual **HealthSmart** event to a community vaccine day, administering nearly 300 COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, as well as 300 flu shots to a diverse group of people from the community.



Questions?
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Northeast Georgia Medical Center