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NGHS CEO CAROL BURRELL RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

GAINESVILLE, Georgia — Over 20 years with Northeast Georgia Health System, Carol Burrell has led the organization as it grew from a single community hospital into a regional economic powerhouse. Through it all, she has set the tone for NGHS and fostered a company culture grounded in core values. Burrell, who has announced plans to retire as president and CEO, was recently honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Atlanta Business Chronicle as part of its inaugural Health Care Champion Awards.

“I am honored to be recognized with this Lifetime Achievement Award, and I accept it on behalf of the thousands of people who have contributed to the success of Northeast Georgia Health System,” Burrell said. “I consider it to be a collective achievement award. As a leader, it has been so gratifying to see so many people come together to put our core values into action in service to our patients and our community.”

“During my time serving in governance with NGHS, I have had the privilege of observing Carol’s leadership firsthand,” said Spence Price, chair of the NGHS board, “and there is no doubt that we are better today because of the talent and expertise Carol has given to our organization, our region and the entire state of Georgia.”

Burrell looked back on the growth of NGHS in the cover story of the July 7-13 weekly edition of the Atlanta Business Chronicle.

“There were 32 employed physicians,” she said of the beginning of her tenure. “(Now it’s) a medical staff of over 1,400, almost 12,000 employees. ... To know that I’ve been a small part of helping to improve the health of our community takes (my) breath away.”

Burrell was born and raised in Barrow County, where NGHS now operates one of its five hospitals. She started her career as a medical technologist in the late 1970s and later received her master’s degree in healthcare administration from Central Michigan University. After serving as a vice president at St. Vincent’s Health System in Jacksonville, Florida, Burrell returned to Georgia in 1999 to lead NGHS’ network of primary care clinics. She was eventually named chief operating officer in 2004 and CEO in 2011.

Under Burrell’s leadership, NGHS has grown from one hospital in Hall County to a total of five hospitals across the region, including one of the state’s only Level I Trauma Centers. The system also now includes the sixth-largest multispecialty physician group in the state (Northeast Georgia Physicians Group) and the state’s most forward-thinking heart and vascular program (Georgia Heart Institute), as well as one of Georgia’s largest graduate medical education programs. NGHS’ estimated annual impact on the state and local economy has grown from around \$1 billion in 2011 to more than \$4 billion in 2021.

Burrell plans to retire once her successor is chosen, and she looks forward to spending time with her family. She will leave a legacy of successful growth rooted in a simple motto: “Improving the health of our community in all we do.”

“It feels like a dream,” she told the Atlanta Business Chronicle. “To come back and make a difference in your own region where your friends and family are — it’s really something else.”

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ABOUT NORTHEAST GEORGIA HEALTH SYSTEM

Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) is a non-profit on a mission of improving the health of our community in all we do. Our team cares for more than 1 million people across the region through five hospitals and a variety of outpatient locations. Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) has campuses in Gainesville, Braselton, Winder, Dahlonega and Demorest – with a total of more than 850 beds and more than 1,300 medical staff members representing more than 60 specialties. Learn more at www.nghs.com.



