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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2025

**FIRST SURGERIES SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMED IN NEW GREEN TOWER AT
NORTHEAST GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER GAINESVILLE**

GAINESVILLE, Ga. – It continues to be a week of “firsts” for the Green Tower at Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) Gainesville. The first patient arrived at the emergency department at 6:47 a.m. on Feb. 8, and now surgeries and other procedures are being performed in the new tower.

Patsy Lance, of Blairsville, became the first surgery patient on Monday, Feb. 10. She needed coronary artery bypass grafting surgery, which improves blood flow to the heart by bypassing narrowed or blocked arteries. Matthew Janko, MD, a cardiothoracic surgeon, successfully completed the surgery.

“This is an exciting time for heart care in northeast Georgia,” said Dr. Janko, who practices with Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG) Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery – which is an integral part of Georgia Heart Institute. “Performing one of the first surgeries in the Green Tower is a milestone, but what matters most is how this space will improve the experience and outcomes for our patients. With advanced technology and greater capacity, we’re able to continue providing life-saving care more efficiently and effectively than ever before.”

Also on Monday, Darrell Farmer, of Clermont, became the first patient in the procedural area on the first floor. He needed a left atrial appendage closure. The procedure, which is also called a WATCHMAN procedure – thanks to the name of the device that’s implanted in the

patient's heart – helps prevent strokes in patients with an irregular heartbeat. Joon Ahn, MD, an electrophysiologist with Georgia Heart Institute, successfully completed the procedure.

“Because of this new tower, patients like Mr. Farmer have more convenient access to the latest advancements in heart procedures right here in Gainesville,” Dr. Ahn said. “Our team is thrilled to be in this new space, where we can continue delivering the highest level of care in an environment designed for innovation and healing.”

The 927,000-square-foot, 11-story Green Tower features a new emergency department on the ground floor and is home to the region's only Level I Trauma Center – which is also one of only six Level I Trauma Centers in the state. Since opening, more than 1,400 patients have visited the new emergency department.

The new tower's first floor is home to many Georgia Heart Institute services including cardiac testing, catheterization labs and endovascular operating rooms – where Farmer's surgery took place.

The second floor adds four new operating rooms – where Lance had surgery – and is the new home of the Ronnie Green Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit. The third floor houses all mechanical support for the tower. The fourth floor includes a coronary care unit and the cardiovascular intermediate care unit, and the fifth floor features the Woody Stewart Heart Failure Treatment Unit. The remaining floors are current shell space that will be built out as needed during the coming years.

“Opening the Green Tower is a major milestone for our health system and the communities we serve,” said Carol Burrell, president and CEO for Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS). “In just a week's time, we're already seeing the positive impacts on patients'

lives. And none of this would be possible without our incredible team of physicians, nurses, other clinicians, support staff and volunteers who are bringing their best every day.”

NGMC Gainesville’s impact on the community goes beyond the bedside, as local labor was prioritized during the Green Tower’s construction. More than 80% of the construction dollars for the project were paid to contractors across the state, including nearly 60% located in the northeast Georgia region. The project also created more than 100 new jobs.

To learn more about the Green Tower and other ways NGHS is Growing the Greater Good, visit nghs.com/growing.

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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 1,000 beds and more than 1,500 medical staff members representing more than 60 specialties. Learn more at www.nghs.com.