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**COVID-19 SCREENING BEGINS FOR VISITORS AT NORTHEAST GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER HOSPITALS AS TWO PATIENTS TEST POSITIVE**

GAINESVILLE, Ga. – Only select entrances will be open for patients and visitors at each Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) hospital starting the afternoon of Sunday, March 15. Each patient and visitor will be screened for COVID-19 as they enter. You can see a complete list of open entrances, updated visitation limitations and other helpful information at [www.nghs.com/covid-19](http://www.nghs.com/covid-19).

 “These simple screening questions will help us protect all of our patients, visitors and employees as we try to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities,” said Supriya Mannepalli, MD, chair of the Infection Prevention & Control Committee for NGMC. “If a visitor is suspected for COVID-19, we will provide them with next steps to follow for testing.”

Physicians and hospital leadership are reviewing scheduled, elective surgeries. Hospital staff will contact patients if a surgery is canceled. If you have concerns about your scheduled surgery, please contact your physician’s office.

Cafeterias at all NGMC hospitals will continue to serve food, but all dining areas are closed until further notice. That means patients, visitors and employees may purchase food to take back to waiting areas, patient rooms, break rooms, etc.

 “These decisions are being made with safety in mind,” says Carol Burrell, president & CEO of NGHS. “Our top priority is always the safety of our patients, visitors, employees, physicians and others who rely on and support NGHS.”

Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) was notified today of two confirmed positive tests for COVID-19. Both patients are currently being treated at NGMC Braselton.

“Our physicians, nurses and other staff are following all guidelines from the CDC to provide the best possible care,” says Anthony Williamson, president of NGMC Braselton. “That includes keeping the patients in negative pressure rooms, wearing personal protective equipment and following all recommended cleaning procedures to help keep patients and all others in the hospital safe. People in our community should continue coming to NGMC Braselton for care as they need it.”

If you have a fever and cough or difficulty breathing, these steps will help you find the care you need and limit the spread of COVID-19 in our region:

**Call before you come**

* Please call your doctor's office or an urgent care clinic for advice about where you should go for treatment.
* If you already have an appointment scheduled and have recently traveled to an area affected by Coronavirus, please call the office before you leave your house.

**Call 9-1-1 for emergencies**

* Calling 9-1-1 is always the fastest and most efficient way to get proper treatment for medical emergencies.

**Consider staying home and completing an E-Visit**

* We have updated our online E-Visits to ask screening questions that may indicate if you have Coronavirus.
* Just visit [www.ngpg.org/evisit-info](https://www.ngpg.org/evisit-info/) for instructions about how to complete an E-Visit from the comfort of your home.

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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 four hospitals and a variety of outpatient locations. Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) has campuses in Gainesville, Braselton, Winder and Dahlonega – with a total of more than 700 beds and more than 1,100 medical staff members representing more than 50 specialties. Learn more at [www.nghs.com](http://www.nghs.com).