

**ANTONIO RIOS, MD, RECEIVES GEORGIA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION'S
PHYSICIAN HERO AWARD**

GAINESVILLE, Ga. – When Antonio Rios, MD, walks into the room, he's not just your doctor or colleague. He's often a friend, a supporter or – to some – a hero. The longtime Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) internal medicine physician recently received the Georgia Hospital Association's (GHA) Physician Hero Award.

Dr. Rios, who was the only physician statewide to receive the award, was recognized for his longstanding service to NGHS, the surrounding community and the state of Georgia.

"Receiving this award is an honor, but my career has never been about recognitions like this," Dr. Rios said. "From starting out as a young physician new to this country, to stepping into leadership roles at NGHS, my focus has always been on expanding access to care, especially for those who need it most. And in my population health work, I've been able to dive even deeper into that passion."

After graduating from medical school in Mexico, Dr. Rios moved to the area to complete his residency training. In March of 1999, he started working for Lanier Park Primary Care. A few years later, NGHS acquired Lanier Park Hospital and its Primary Care Clinics, making it part of what is now known as Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG). Because of the leadership he'd displayed since the beginning, a new position with NGPG was created for him in 2008 – chief physician executive. After serving in that role for 13 years, as well as continuing to see patients at his internal medicine clinic, Dr. Rios was named NGHS' chief of population health.

Over the years, Dr. Rios has become a strong partner to Georgia Heart Institute and Longstreet Clinic. He's also been a leader on the Georgia Board for Physician Workforce, as

well as locally with District 2 Public Health. He's volunteered for years with non-profits like Good News Clinics and has been an advocate for minority groups in the community.

"Dr. Antonio Rios has been instrumental in the growth of Northeast Georgia Health System and its ability to expand care to so many surrounding communities," said Caylee Noggle, GHA president and CEO. "We are grateful for his dedication to his patients and his commitment to enhancing population health. It is a pleasure to honor him with this prestigious award."

To learn more about NGHS and its work in population health, visit nghs.com/population-health.

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