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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NORTHEAST GEORGIA HEALTH SYSTEM PROVIDING FIRST SHIPMENT OF
COVID-19 VACCINE TO FRONTLINE WORKERS**

GAINESVILLE, Ga. – Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS) is now offering nearly 5,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to frontline staff and physicians.

“It feels like Christmas came early,” says Carol Burrell, NGHS president and CEO. “It’s been a long eight months for our organization and our community, as we continue to see record numbers of COVID patients. We still have a long journey ahead of us, but simply having a vaccine in our hands is a tremendous and positive step forward.”

The first shipment of the Pfizer vaccine arrived at Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) Gainesville Thursday morning, where it is being stored in specially ordered freezers to maintain the proper storage temperature. Doses are being offered to employees in a prioritized order based on risk, with more vaccinations continuing at NGMC Gainesville and NGMC Braselton. Future vaccine shipments are expected to begin on a regular basis soon, though no official timeline or cadence has been set.

“We hope other COVID-19 vaccines developed by different companies and research groups will receive federal approval soon, which would allow us to vaccinate our workforce and people in our community, faster than planned,” says Supriya Mannepalli, MD, NGMC’s medical director of Infectious Disease Medicine. “I’m amazed at how quickly our team has worked through detailed logistics to make this possible – just like they have with so many other challenges during the pandemic.”

The first employees vaccinated Thursday night include:

Rachel Brunner, RN – Critical Care Nurse at NGMC Gainesville and Braselton

Andy Cason, RRT – Respiratory Therapist at NGMC Gainesville

Tamika Johnson, RN – Charge Nurse in the Mobile Medical Unit at NGMC Gainesville

Elizabeth Larkins, MSN, RN – Director of Critical Care at NGMC Gainesville

April McDonald, MD – Pulmonology and Critical Care Medicine Physician with Northeast

Georgia Physicians Group, practicing at NGMC Gainesville and Braselton

Terry Phillips – Environmental Services Technician at NGMC Gainesville

Seth Scott, RN – Nurse in the Emergency Department at NGMC Gainesville

Important information about COVID-19 vaccines, including details about when they may be available to the general public, answers to frequently asked questions and more, is available at nghs.com/covid-vaccine.

“It’s important to remember that vaccination isn’t a magic bullet that will end the pandemic immediately,” says Dr. Mannepilli. “People need to continue following the 3Ws – wear a mask, wash your hands, watch your distance – even after getting the vaccine, at least until herd immunity is achieved.”

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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.



Photo of the first seven employees vaccinated is attached. Pictured, left to right:

- Elizabeth Larkins, MSN, RN – Director of Critical Care at NGMC Gainesville
- Terry Phillips – Environmental Services Technician at NGMC Gainesville
- Rachel Brunner, RN – Critical Care Nurse at NGMC Gainesville and Braselton
- Tamika Johnson, RN – Charge Nurse in the Mobile Medical Unit at NGMC Gainesville
- April McDonald, MD – Pulmonology and Critical Care Medicine Physician with Northeast Georgia Physicians Group, practicing at NGMC Gainesville and Braselton
- Seth Scott, RN – Nurse in the Emergency Department at NGMC Gainesville
- Andy Cason, RRT – Respiratory Therapist at NGMC Gainesville