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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NORTHEAST GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER GAINESVILLE FIRST IN REGION
TO OFFER ADVANCED TESTING FOR PACEMAKER INFECTION**

GAINESVILLE, Ga. — Heart patients in northeast Georgia now have access to advanced testing and expert diagnosis for a rare, potentially fatal infection, all in one place. Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) Gainesville recently began using PET/CT scans to check patients for endocarditis infection in the wire leads of their pacemakers or implantable cardiac defibrillators. NGMC Gainesville is the first and only hospital in the northeast Georgia region to offer this state-of-the-art diagnostic service.

“As patients’ life expectancy is significantly improved with these devices, the chances of infections involving the devices has also increased,” said Vedang Bhavsar, MD, a cardiologist with Georgia Heart Institute and medical director of Echo/Vascular and Nuclear Cardiology Imaging for Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS). “If results from other tests are unclear, this PET/CT imaging protocol could literally be a lifesaver for some patients. At NGMC Gainesville, this process can be handled from beginning to end by your heart doctor, who understands your unique needs.”

Earlier this year, NGMC Gainesville moved most of its heart and vascular services to the hospital’s new, 11-story Green Tower. Along with new operating rooms and cardiac catheterization labs, the Green Tower features upgraded cardiac imaging technology. The facility now offers cardiac viability scans as well as tests for cardiac sarcoidosis, a rare inflammatory disease of the heart.

“We do every kind of test that is available within the field of nuclear cardiology,” said Dr. Bhavsar. “These new services help us achieve our mission to improve the health of our community in all we do.”

To learn more about cardiac diagnostic services at NGMC Gainesville or to make an appointment, go to georgiaheartinstitute.org/testing or call 770-534-2020.

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ABOUT GEORGIA HEART INSTITUTE

Georgia Heart Institute is the most forward-thinking heart and vascular program in the state and includes one of the largest cardiology practices in the region, including more than 120 clinicians seeing patients at more than a dozen locations. With a multi-disciplinary team of experts treating nearly every type of heart and vascular disease and participating in leading national research, we’re providing advanced care that ensures lasting heart health for generations. Request an appointment and learn more at georgiaheartinstitute.org.

The experts of Georgia Heart Institute also form the core of the cardiac care team at Northeast Georgia Medical Center’s five hospitals in Gainesville, Braselton, Winder, Dahlonega and Demorest. It’s all part of Northeast Georgia Health System, a non-profit which serves more than 1 million people across the region. Learn more at nghs.com.