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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NORTHEAST GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER PERFORMS FIRST ADOLESCENT WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY

GAINESVILLE, Ga. – People as young as 15 years old who are struggling with obesity even after following a medical weight-loss program now have a new option to help them improve their health. The Bariatric Weight Loss Center at Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) recently completed its first adolescent weight-loss surgery.

Adolescent patients in northeast Georgia have had access to a comprehensive weight-loss program since July 2023, when NGMC achieved adolescent surgery accreditation from the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP).

“Many of our patients achieve success through weight-loss medications, but, for other patients, weight-loss surgery is ideal,” said Robert Richard, MD, medical director for the Bariatric Weight Loss Center at NGMC and a bariatric surgeon with Longstreet Clinic. “An adolescent patient’s journey to surgery often takes longer than it would for an adult patient. We take extra care to ensure our younger patients, and their families, are well-prepared for surgery and committed to lifestyle changes.”

Adolescent weight-loss patients must commit to monthly appointments with a pediatrician, pediatric psychologist, registered dietitian and certified personal trainer for at least six months prior to surgery. Following surgery, patients have access to a comprehensive aftercare program that includes monthly support groups. Surgical weight-loss options are

available for patients ages 15 and older and medical weight-loss options are available for patients ages 12 and older.

“The real key for parents is to act quickly when they realize their child is struggling with the disease of obesity,” said Dr. Richard. “Research shows us that early intervention is more likely to improve long-term health.”

For more information about adolescent weight-loss services at NGMC, visit nghs.com/adolescent.

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ABOUT NORTHEAST GEORGIA MEDICAL CENTER

Since 1951, Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) has been on a mission of improving the health of our community in all we do. With hospitals located in Gainesville, Braselton, Winder, Dahlonega and Demorest, the five NGMC campuses have a total of more than 1,000 beds and more than 1,500 medical staff members representing more than 60 specialties. NGMC is part of Northeast Georgia Health System, a non-profit that cares for more than one million people across more than 19 counties. Learn more at nghs.com.