



WELLSTAR HEALTH SYSTEM PARTNERS WITH MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S NATIONAL COVID-19 RESILIENCY NETWORK TO SUPPORT AND INFORM AT-RISK POPULATIONS

Responding to vital needs among vulnerable communities during the pandemic, Wellstar is the first Georgia-based health system to become a national partner in new initiative

Marietta, Ga. (March 24, 2021) – Wellstar Health System, one of Georgia's largest and most integrated healthcare systems, has joined Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM)'s National COVID-19 Resiliency Network (NCRN) of partners to further inform community-driven response, recovery, and resiliency strategies for addressing the impact of COVID-19 on communities.

In response to the needs of at-risk communities across the health system's service areas, Wellstar has partnered with the MSM-NCRN and its 40 network partners across the U.S. to collaborate on offering COVID-19-related services to disproportionately impacted communities. As a not-for-profit system dedicated to providing "More than Healthcare. PeopleCare." Wellstar is committed to addressing inequities that impact the health and well-being of people and communities through more than 450 community partnerships, Wellstar Community Health initiatives, and activities led by the [Wellstar Center for Health Equity](#) (WCHE).

One of the most critical barriers to health during the pandemic has been consumer access to reliable, science-based, culturally appropriate, and native language information resources, which the partnership will facilitate. Wellstar is the first Georgia-based health system to become a national partner in this important, new initiative.

"Wellstar is pleased to partner with Morehouse School of Medicine to provide vital information and resources for at-risk communities," said Candice L. Saunders, president and CEO, Wellstar Health System. "The NCRN is a strong complement to the important work that our Wellstar Center for Health Equity is doing, and we are thankful for the collaboration."

Morehouse School of Medicine's National COVID-19 Resiliency Network Builds Community Resiliency

The MSM-NCRN coordinates a strategic and structured national network of national, state/territorial/tribal and local public and community-based organizations that, together, will work to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on racial and ethnic minority and rural populations. The network helps to provide awareness of culturally appropriate health education information and linkage to care, helping organizations and families recover from pandemic difficulties. In addition to educational and informational resources in at least 10 languages to accommodate cultural competency, initiatives will include COVID-19 testing, vaccinations following phases directed by DPH, training opportunities for community leaders.

"Our national network connects individuals, families, community organizations and clinical providers to timely and relevant COVID-19 information and services in their neighborhood," says Dominic Mack, MD, MBA, professor of family medicine and director of the National COVID-19 Resiliency Network in the [National Center for Primary Care](#) at MSM.

"Morehouse School of Medicine's National COVID-19 Resiliency Network is designed to not only provide structure to the resources that are on the ground-level fighting this pandemic but is an important resource for our partners in serving the underserved and getting people the healthcare they need," said Valerie Montgomery Rice, MD., MSM president and dean. "Organizations such as Wellstar here in Georgia, its Wellstar Center for Health Equity, and the partnerships we cultivate, are critically important to the mission of health equity and in fighting and defeating COVID-19."

Wellstar Center for Health Equity Addresses Health Inequities across Georgia

The WCHE addresses health inequities across Georgia to enhance the health and well-being of the people and communities served by Wellstar. Through partnerships such as the one with MSM-NCRN, the WCHE implements multi-disciplinary approaches to address deeply entrenched social disparities and healthcare gaps. Programs led by the WCHE over the past year include walk-up, pop-up COVID-19 family testing; distribution of masks and safety kits to at-risk communities; Congregational Health Network communications, collaboration, information, and support; Spanish-language educational information for Latinx communities; a technology-driven Community Transformation initiative for local non-profits; joint Webinars on health equity topics in collaboration with Partnership for Southern Equity, Atlanta Regional Collaborative for Health Improvement (ARCHI), and Georgia Health Policy Center; and a series of “Mobile Market” free farmer’s market-style grocery shopping experiences for hundreds of families with Goodr.

The partnership between Wellstar and MSM-NCRN will extend the organizations’ reach and resources to enhance information access and drive positive impact.

The NCRN launch follows a [\\$40 million award](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health to coordinate a strategic network focused on delivering COVID-19-related information to communities hardest hit by the pandemic. The launch of the NCRN occurs alongside the release of new digital technology accessible through the [NCRN website](#). It provides location-based recommendations on where community members can get a COVID-19 test or receive a COVID-19 vaccine when distribution increases in the coming months.

For information on COVID-19 Vaccine Updates, visit [wellstar.org/education](https://www.wellstar.org/education). To access MSM-NCRN COVID-19 resources, visit www.msm.edu/ncrn.

ABOUT MOREHOUSE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Founded in 1975, Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) is among the nation’s leading educators of primary care physicians, biomedical scientists, and public health professionals. An independent and private historically-Black medical school, MSM was recognized by the Annals of Internal Medicine as the nation’s number one medical school in fulfilling a social mission—the creation and advancement of health equity. MSM faculty and alumni are noted for excellence in teaching, research, and public policy, as well as exceptional patient care. MSM is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award doctoral and master’s degrees. To learn more about programs and donate today, please visit www.msm.edu or call 404-752-1500.

ABOUT WELLSTAR HEALTH SYSTEM

At Wellstar, people are at the center of everything we do. By listening actively to what people want, need and expect from their healthcare, Wellstar is able to provide “*More than Healthcare. PeopleCare.*” — at every age and stage. Nationally ranked and locally recognized for our personal, high-quality care, inclusive culture, and exceptional doctors and team members, Wellstar provides access to compassionate, high-quality care through our: 11 hospitals; 300+ medical office locations; 9 cancer centers; 74 rehabilitation centers; 3 hospice facilities; 1 retirement village; 29 imaging centers; 17 urgent care locations; and 5 health parks. As one of the largest and most integrated healthcare systems in Georgia, Wellstar is growing our services, footprint, capabilities, and ability to meet evolving patient needs. Our passion for people extends into the communities we serve. As a not-for-profit health system, we thoughtfully reinvest annually in prevention and wellness programs, as well as charity care for eligible patients. Our Wellstar Foundation also supports our mission to enhance the health and well-being of every person we serve with funding for equipment, services, and programs that provide more than healthcare. To learn more about how Wellstar is always listening, learning, and tailoring care to meet patients’ individual needs, visit [wellstar.org](https://www.wellstar.org).

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