



## **WELLSTAR BEGINS ADMINISTERING COVID-19 VACCINE TO TEAM MEMBERS**

*Phase 1 system-wide distribution began today; Frontline team members participate in historic vaccination*

**Marietta, Ga.** (December 17, 2020) — Wellstar Health System, one of Georgia’s largest and most integrated healthcare systems, received the highly anticipated first doses of the Pfizer and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine yesterday evening and began administering voluntary team member vaccinations today at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital for those who meet the criteria for Phase 1 early doses. The first vaccine at Wellstar was given to Amanda Earley, who is a Critical Care Registered Nurse who provides care for patients in the Kennestone ICU, which has been converted into a COVID unit.



Earley, who has been a Wellstar team member for 3 and a half years and who works on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, signed up to receive the vaccine in the first phase due to her line of work. She shared that she wanted to get the vaccine because she has seen critically ill patients in the ICU who have been separated from family, which has been difficult to witness. She also shared that COVID-19 is unpredictable, often requiring complex care, and a vaccine will help decrease or eliminate the need for ICU care for people affected by the virus.

“Every day, I work with some of our sickest COVID-19 patients,” said Earley. “When patients are ill, having loved ones nearby can be healing, but that has been complicated during the pandemic. I am hopeful that people will have the same confidence I have in this vaccine so we can all move past this pandemic.”



Pictured at left, L-R: 1) Candice L. Saunders, president and CEO, Wellstar Health System 2) Amanda Earley, critical care nurse at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital ICU (COVID Unit) – first Wellstar team member to receive COVID-19 vaccine 3) Snehal Doshi, senior vice president of Ancillary and Support Services, Wellstar Health System 4) Dr. Mary Chatman, executive vice president, Wellstar Health System, president, Wellstar Kennestone and Windy Hill Hospitals

Healthcare workers working tirelessly on the frontlines of the pandemic are the first to get the vaccine in the first Phase of distribution. The initial group of team members to be vaccinated represents a diverse crosssection of Wellstar employees from several departments, starting with Emergency Departments, ICUs, Urgent Cares, Skilled Nursing Facilities, paramedics (1st responders), and adult and pediatric primary care offices. Wellstar will roll out the vaccine across its 11-hospital system over the coming weeks and months.

“Throughout this very challenging year, I have been inspired by the many people and communities that have provided support, shared thanks, and instilled hope,” said Candice L. Saunders, president and CEO of Wellstar Health System. “We are deeply grateful for the diligent work and science invested in the development, testing, and distribution of this historic vaccine that provides a path to immunity against COVID-19. Our team members on the frontlines continue to work with compassion, dedication, and stamina to enhance the health and wellbeing of every person we serve, and we are all grateful for this much-anticipated moment of hope.”

The first shipment of the Pfizer and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine arrived at the Wellstar delivery point the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 16, with a second shipment anticipated to arrive next week. The Georgia Department of Public Health determines the number of vaccine doses, shipping and arrival date, and recipient hospitals. According to Georgia DPH, the state received approximately 84,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine in the first allocation. Wellstar received 3,900 doses in the first shipment.

Additional photos and video of the first shipment of the vaccine and first doses to be administered to Wellstar team members are available for media to use upon request. Wellstar will capture photos and video of the first doses administered at hospitals across Wellstar System, which will be shared with media along with information about the recipients. For more information, contact [PR@wellstar.org](mailto:PR@wellstar.org).

## **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; 16 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](http://wellstar.org).

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