



## THREE YEARS LATER

WELLSTAR HEALTH SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO THE 2022 CHNA



**Wellstar**

More than healthcare.

**PEOPLECARE**





At Wellstar, we have moved beyond IRS requirements – from compliance to strategic alignment – which allows the system to improve community health and demonstrate return on investment for Community Benefit activities. Maintaining efforts beyond the three-year Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) cycle ensures Wellstar remains responsive to persistent community health issues and maintains continuity from one Implementation Plan to the next.

This report shares how Wellstar Health System has continued building and aligning for health equity.



# PEOPLE-CENTRICCARE

DRIVING LASTING CHANGE

# SUPPORTING HEALTH EQUITY

In 2019, Wellstar Health System expanded its understanding and use of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) by launching the Wellstar Center for Health Equity (WCHE). The WCHE – an extension of Wellstar’s long history of community engagement and allyship to provide people-centric care – was formed to drive lasting change at a grassroots level. During the 2022 CHNA process, the following six strategic domains were identified as priorities: Access to Care, Behavioral Health, Food Access and Healthy Living, Housing, Pediatrics, and Women’s Health.



Each of these strategic domains connects to Wellstar medical service lines to utilize the deep expertise and broad bench of resources needed to identify pertinent needs, relevant partnerships and viable evidence-based programs.

Wellstar remains the only health system in Georgia with an established Center for Health Equity.

## Wellstar Community Health Department

The Wellstar Community Health department coordinates connections between people who experience poor health outcomes and resources to improve their health. Community Health programs are designed as place-based investments, particularly in high-need zip codes (Figure 1), to activate new ways for community residents to engage with their health or the health care system. The department ensures that after programs end, community residents and partner organizations are linked to more sustainable resources that they may continue to engage in health and well-being (Figure 2).

**Figure 1** | Community Needs Index Score by ZIP Code (2020)

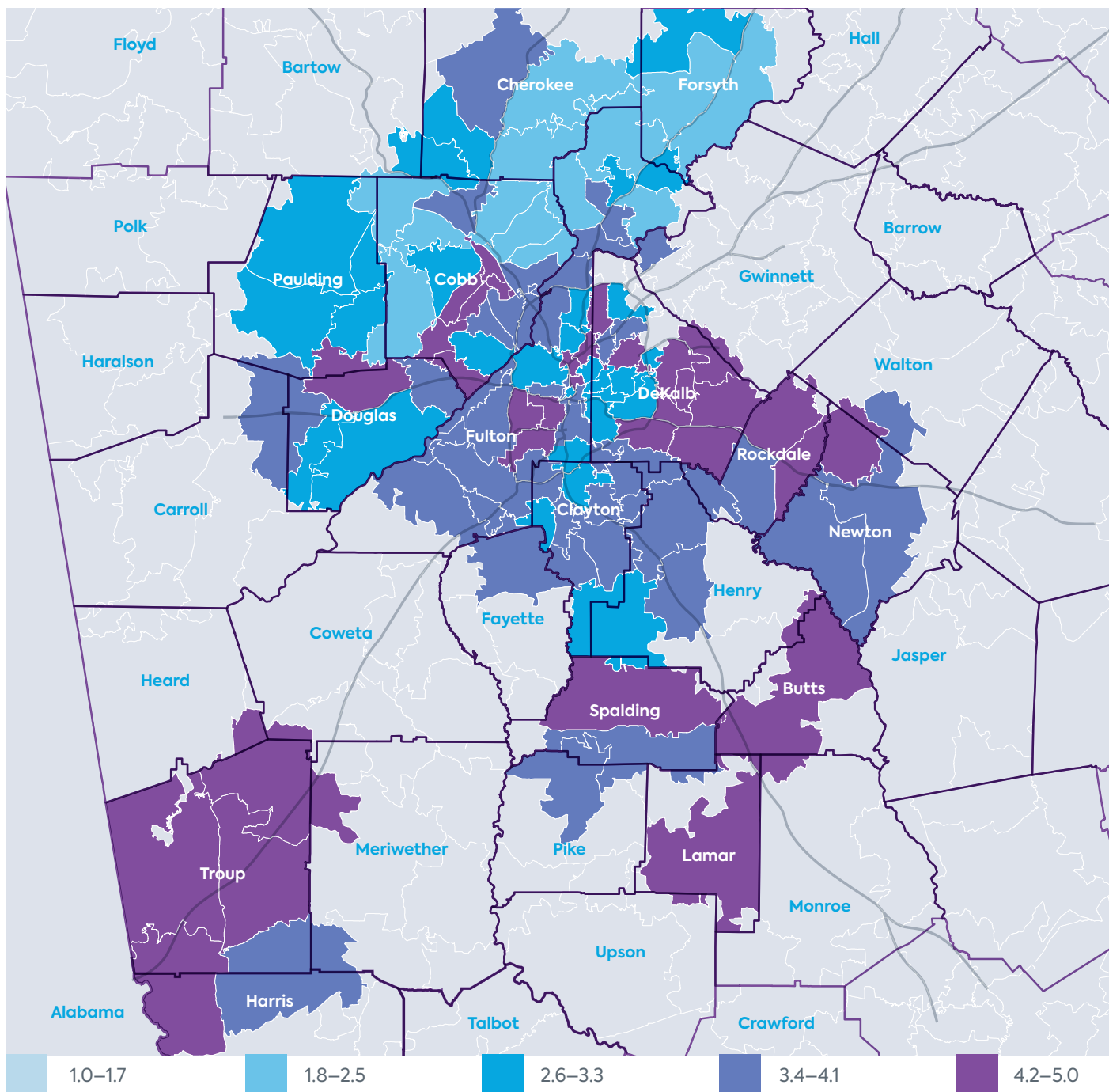
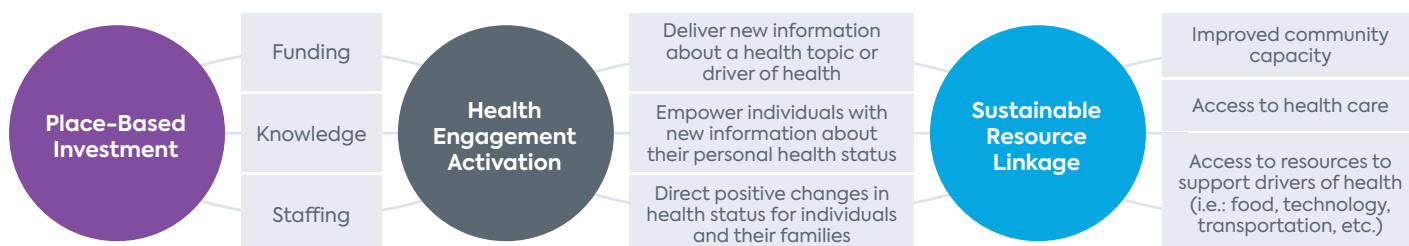


Figure 1 shows the Community Needs Index for the zip codes served by Wellstar Health System. The index ranks each zip code in the United States against all other zip codes on five socioeconomic factors that are barriers to accessing healthcare: income, culture, education, insurance, and housing. Each factor is rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 indicates the lowest barrier to accessing healthcare and 5 indicates the most significant).



**Figure 2 | Wellstar Community Health Department Program Design**



From departmental inception in June 2020 through June 30, 2024, Wellstar Community Health achieved more than 89,000 contact points (*Figure 3*). These intentional and meaningful engagements with community residents took place through a variety of community programs and across the entire Wellstar footprint.


**Figure 3 | Wellstar Community Health Contact Points (FY2020–FY2024)**

Program Name	Number of Participants	
Cancer	<div></div>	2,398
Center for Global Health Innovation	<div></div>	1,390
Center for Health Equity	<div></div>	1,490
Community Transformation Program	<div></div>	13,218
Congregational Health Network	<div></div>	868
COVID-19 Pop-Up Testing	<div></div>	3,635
COVID-19 Vaccinations	<div></div>	10,411
Dignity Packs	<div></div>	550
Live to the Beat	<div></div>	36
Mobile Market	<div></div>	13,744
MSW Student Rotation	<div></div>	15
Nourish to Flourish	<div></div>	66
Passport to Health	<div></div>	1,591
Resource Room (Educational Material)	<div></div>	17,814
Soul Support	<div></div>	451
Virtual Health Initiative	<div></div>	5,266
Wholesome Wave	<div></div>	11,063
Women's Health	<div></div>	5,055
<b>Total</b>		<b>89,061</b>


Access to Care
  Food Access and Healthy Living
  Behavioral Health
  Women's Health

Wellstar Foundation


Wellstar Foundation plays a crucial role in improving the health of our communities by actively pursuing community partnerships and philanthropic support that will transform the future of healthcare and improve access for every person within our service area. One hundred percent of all contributions are thoughtfully reinvested in programs, services, and equipment that meaningfully impact people’s lives and wellness. The strategic pillars of focus include: Health Equity, Behavioral Health, Innovation, Workforce Development, and Clinical Excellence.




**Health Equity**  
Improving access to high-quality healthcare and the preventative services that help Georgians stay healthy today and for generations to come.




**Behavioral Health**  
Providing integrated behavioral healthcare services that address the health of the whole person — mind and body.



**Innovation**  
Expanding access to world-class healthcare services and promoting best practices, like equipping patients and clinicians with state-of-the-art technology.



**Workforce Development**  
Supporting and training our team members and future healthcare professionals to provide superior, highly skilled care for patients at every age and stage.



**Clinical Excellence**  
Delivering world-class PeopleCare across all clinical services that is personalized to the unique and diverse needs of the people we serve across Georgia.

Examples of funded programs include:

- Mobile market program serving 800 families across Georgia each month to address food insecurity.
- Free mammograms and diagnostic services for high-risk communities, as well as lung cancer screenings provide peace of mind and life-saving treatment to individuals in need.
- Resources and behavioral health services for individuals experiencing homelessness and those struggling with substance addiction.



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about the Wellstar Foundation, including its impact and ways to give.

Catalyst by Wellstar

Capital and expertise fuel innovation to disrupt the status quo and create a healthier future for all of us. Catalyst by Wellstar is the first-of-its-kind innovation company and venture firm. Catalyst builds better healthcare by harnessing problems, creating solutions, investing in promising startups, and partnering across industries to deploy a true ecosystem of care.

**Care of Tomorrow**  
Enabling well-being and sick care integration through health accessibility, such as inventive digital health methods, using wearables for early detection to increase wellness.

**Customer Experience**  
Relieving “dread of the doctor” with patient-centric care tailored along your health journey that provides empathic connection across digital and physical environments.

**Data and Security**  
Equipping you with your own health data secured through leading edge technologies and providing breakthroughs with real world data reporting.

**Future of Work**  
Empowering team members to feel support and belonging and be the best version of themselves whether providing care in-person or remotely.

**Sustainability**  
Reducing negative environmental impacts to create a healthy Earth for future generations with investments in farming and nutrition, renewable energy and sustainable value chains.

**Supply Chain and Mobility**  
Powering smart, orchestrated logistics and navigation with autonomous solutions and supply delivery to remote populations.



**SUCCESS STORY:** In 2024, Catalyst partnered with WCHE to bring Enrichly – a fun, interactive digital program that teaches confidence, self-acceptance, and resilience to youth at Atlanta Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church.










Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about Catalyst, including its impact and ways to fund innovation at [wellstar.org/catalyst](https://wellstar.org/catalyst)

**Wellstar Strategic Community Development**

Wellstar focuses on engagement, partnership and investment with organizations in the communities we serve across three primary domains, including Mission-Aligned & Other Non-Profits, Business & Civic, and Academic & Workforce Development. Wellstar also supports engagement opportunities that align with our current enterprise and strategic business goals and priorities.

**Mission-Aligned and Other Non-Profits:** Includes organizations with a clear mission focused on health, well-being, and clinical outcomes. Wellstar will partner with these groups to address priority health needs as defined by Wellstar’s current Community Health Needs Assessments and to further enterprise strategic priorities and goals, including:

 Access to Care <a href="#">page 12</a>	 Behavioral Health <a href="#">page 22</a>	 Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging <a href="#">page 9</a>	 Food Access and Healthy Living <a href="#">page 26</a>	 Housing <a href="#">page 36</a>	 Pediatrics <a href="#">page 38</a>	 Women’s Health <a href="#">page 42</a>
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**Business & Civic Partnership:** Includes organizations that exist to further the collective interests of the business and/or civic community such as Chambers of Commerce, Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, and local city and government agencies.

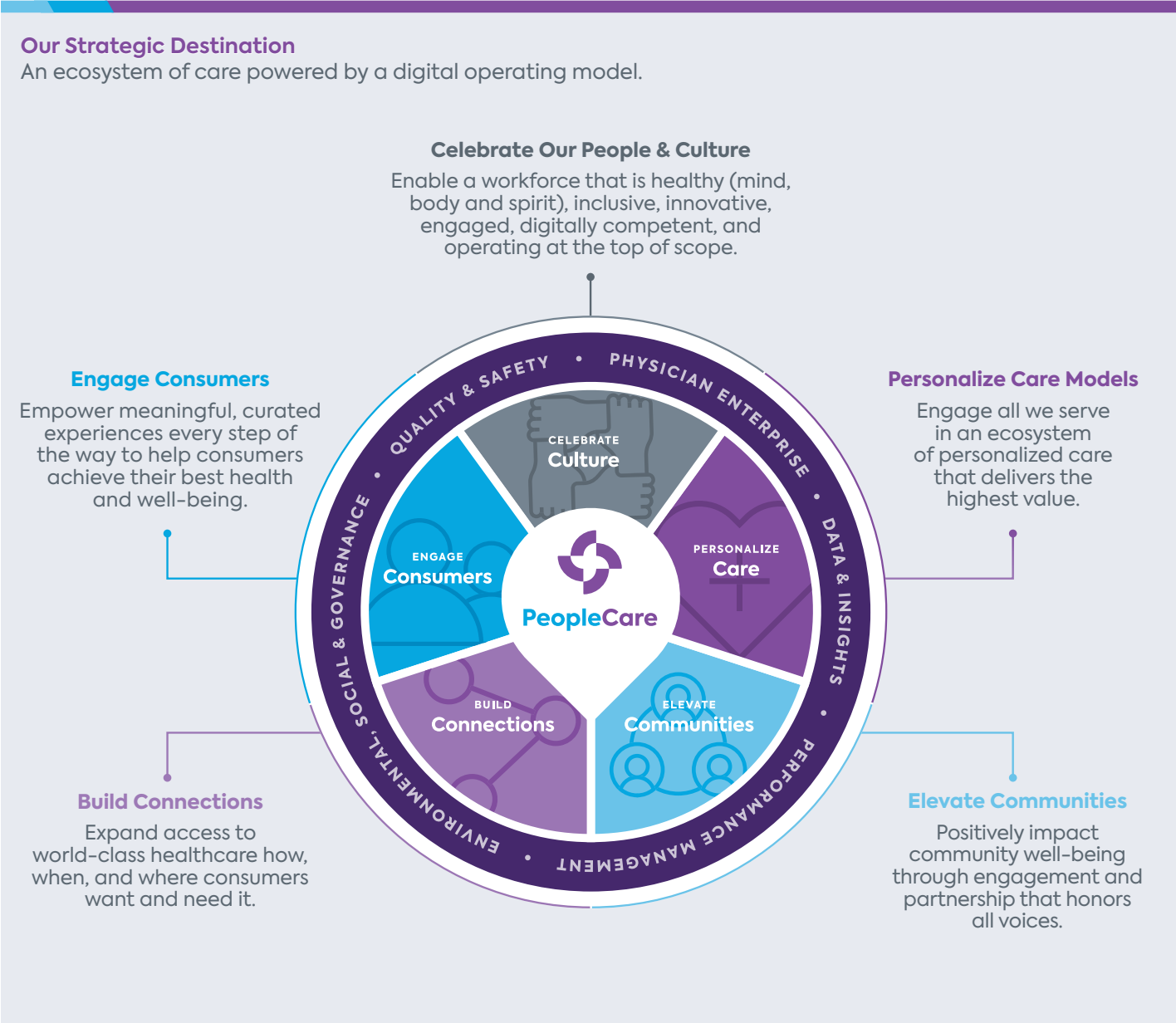
**Academic & Workforce Development Partnership:** Includes local school districts and organizations focused on youth and career development whose missions are aligned with creating talent pipelines to clinical and non-clinical careers in healthcare.

**Enterprise and Strategic Business Goals and Priorities:** This includes community events or programs that serve to increase awareness of Wellstar’s presence and services.

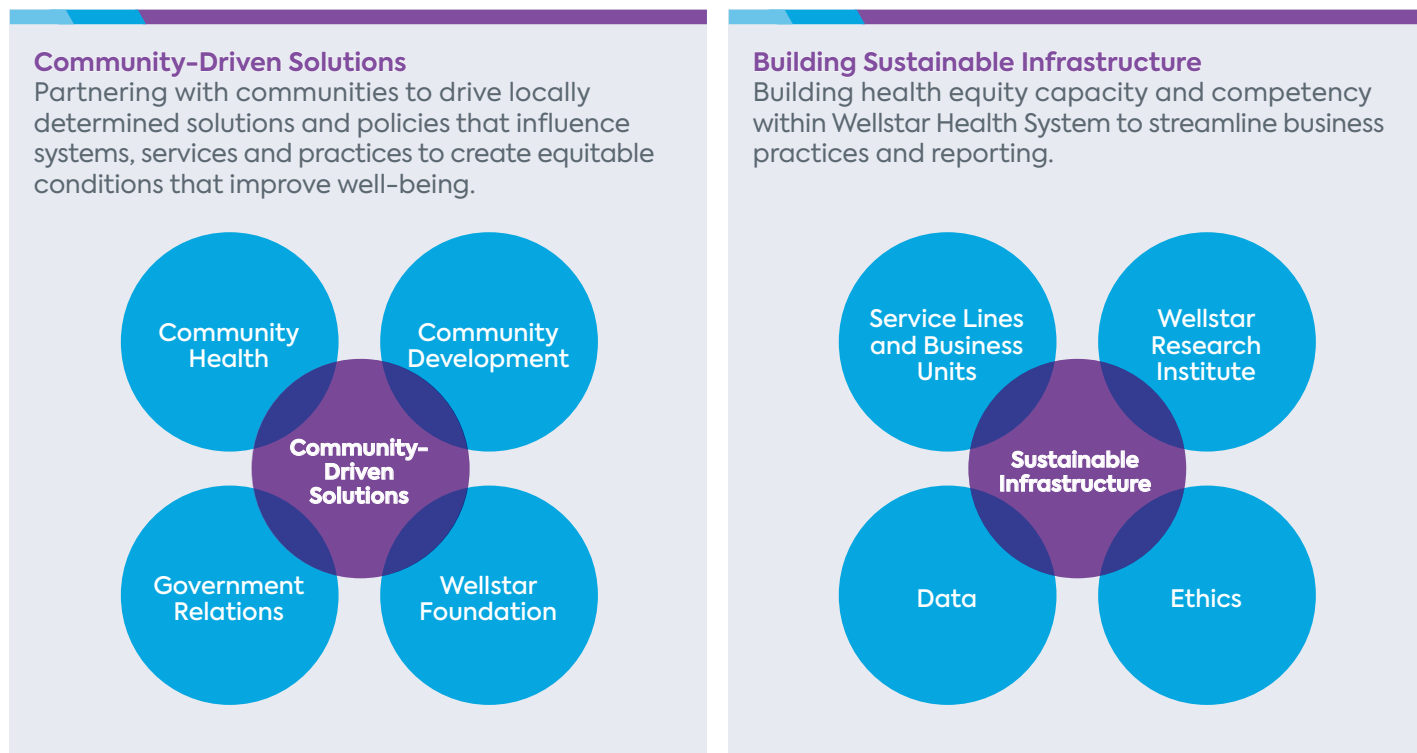
In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Strategic Community Development committed to increase corporate social responsibility investments and provide positive social value through strategic partnerships and sponsorships.

Additional Strategic Collaborations

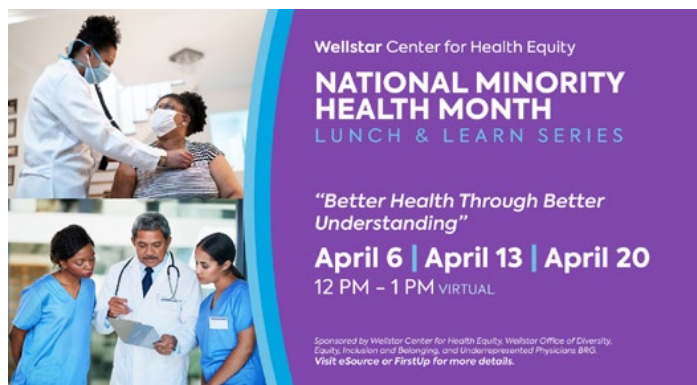
WCHE drives change in alignment with Wellstar’s strategic destination as an ecosystem of care powered by a digital operating model. Wellstar’s bold approach ensures that digital transformation is not just about technology products, but also reflects transformation in Wellstar’s operations, spaces, and company culture. Priorities and initiatives centering improvements in access and enhanced health and well-being for patients, team members, and communities alike are demonstrated in each strategic theme.



To elevate communities, WCHE partners closely with internal departments for strategic thought leadership, institutional competency-building, partnership development, funding distribution, and project management support. WCHE follows a two-pronged approach:



**Inclusive Insights in Partnership with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB).** April is annually recognized as National Minority Health Month. The recognition builds awareness of health disparities and encourages preventive action. In April 2023, Wellstar hosted a 3-part speaker series to amplify the voices of our internal subject matter experts. Members of Wellstar Community Health and Center for Health Equity and the Underrepresented Minority Physicians Business Resource Group (BRG) identified qualified and engaging speakers to share information related to the historical inequities and disparities in healthcare. The series aimed to increase awareness of the root causes of health disparities among traditionally medically underserved communities, and promote best practices for reducing disparities and achieving equity. The series was attended by more than 800 team members; 98% of surveyed team members were likely to recommend the series to others.

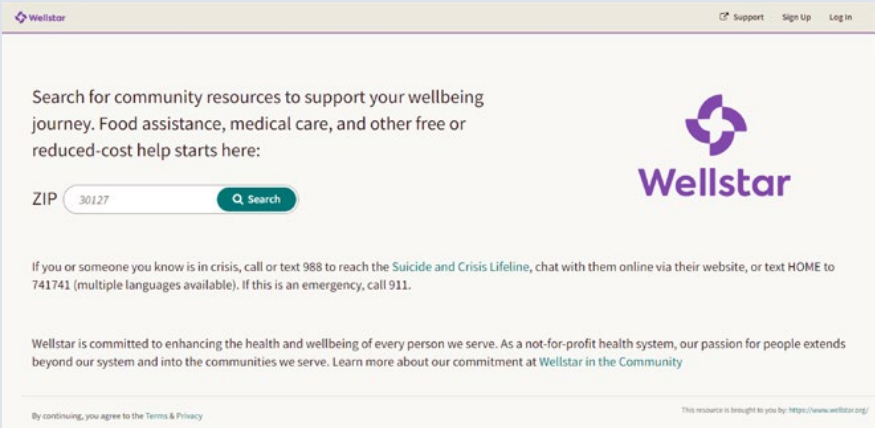


Three virtual Lunch & Learn events were attended by more than 800 individuals.



**Advancing a Digital Ecosystem for Health Equity.** In partnership with information technology teams, and with funding support from Wellstar Foundation, WCHE implemented Wellstar Find Help, a system-wide digital tool connecting patients to local resources for food, transportation, housing, and other resources. Wellstar Find Help enables Wellstar to address social determinants of health, the non-medical factors influencing the health and wellbeing of patients and community members. Additionally, WCHE team members began development and socialization of an “Equity Dashboard”. The dashboard is comprised of digital demographic information intended to guide system-wide decision-making for serving patients from traditionally medically underserved communities.

Wellstar Find Help search screen



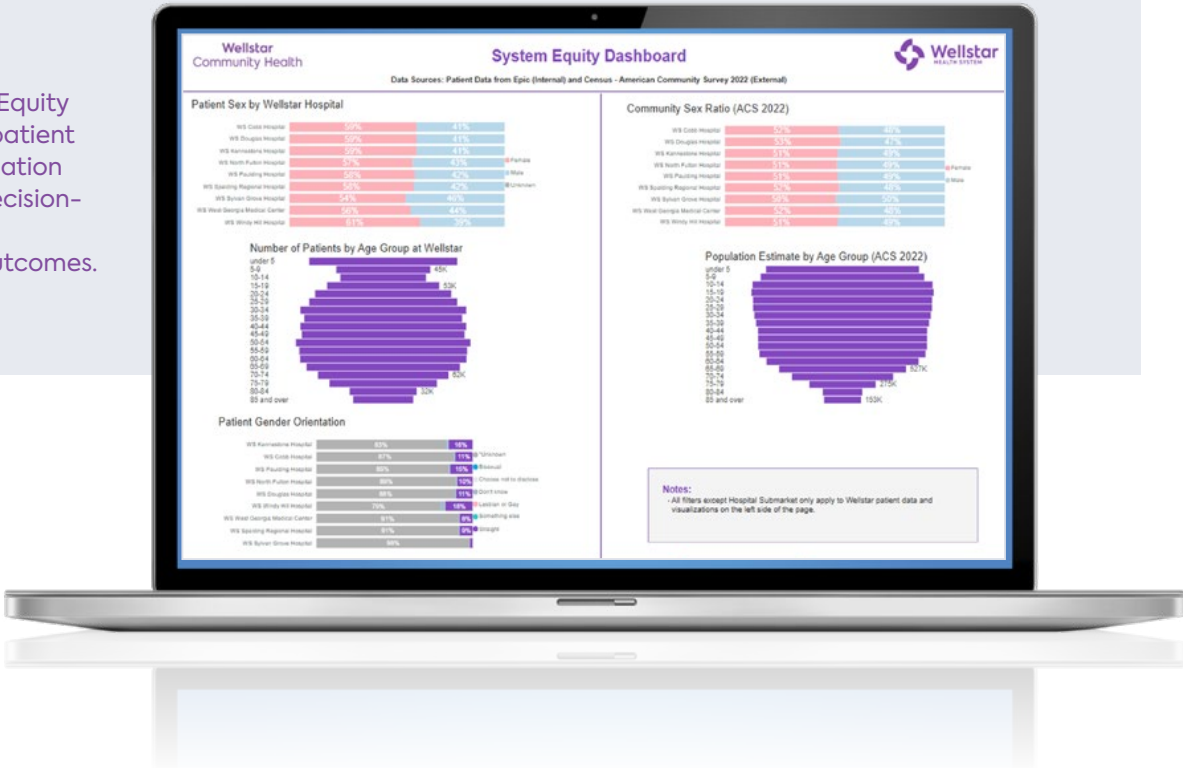
With the Wellstar Find Help tool, people can search for free or reduced-cost resources to help care for every aspect of well-being, including: Food, Housing, Transit, Clothing, Personal care items, Financial assistance, and Legal aid. The site translates into multiple languages to best serve our communities.



Click or scan the QR Code to access Wellstar Find Help.

Wellstar System Equity Dashboard

The Wellstar System Equity Dashboard depicts patient demographic information intended to guide decision-making to transform population health outcomes.







# Access to Care

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.

## Primary Care Access

According to the 2022 CHNA, the communities served by Wellstar are largely classified as underserved by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Douglas, Paulding, Spalding Regional and Sylvan Grove hospitals, and West Georgia Medical Center are all defined as Health Professional Shortage Areas, with lower provider rates (per 100,000 pop.) than is average for the state in primary care, dental, and mental health services.

In response, the Primary Care service line embarked on a journey to offer non-traditional access hours that meet the needs of both patients and physicians who are seeking flexible hours. By the end of fiscal year 2024, Primary Care identified several practices across all regions to offer extended hours.

3 of 5

Wellstar health parks now offer extended primary care hours.

7

Wellstar primary care practices operate seven days a week.

9

others offer weekday extended hours.

These extended hours provide approximately six additional appointments per clinician during the week and between 10 to 16 more appointments on the weekends, per practice.

## Congregational Health Network

Wellstar’s Congregational Health Network (CHN) serves as a bridge between our healthcare system and faith communities. Coordinated by a full-time registered nurse who specializes in faith community nursing, Wellstar’s program is designed to assist congregations of all faiths to develop or support volunteer or paid health ministries. With more than 100 congregations and 1,500 spiritual care partners, CHN serves as a key to Wellstar’s successful implementation of equity-centered programs. Through this network, Wellstar can disseminate information, implement programs at trusted neighborhood-based sites, and strengthen the organizations to provide whole-person support.

**SUCCESS STORY:** The Congregational Health Network – with support from the Wellstar Foundation – forged a relationship with Ser Familia to employ a “Promotora”. Promotoras serve as trusted community partners, advocating for and educating on the individual health needs of community residents. The Promotora – having completed Community Health Worker training – educates and connects Spanish-speaking community members to resources to address social determinants of health. Through this partnership, Wellstar helps traditionally medically underserved communities gain access to health and social care resources.

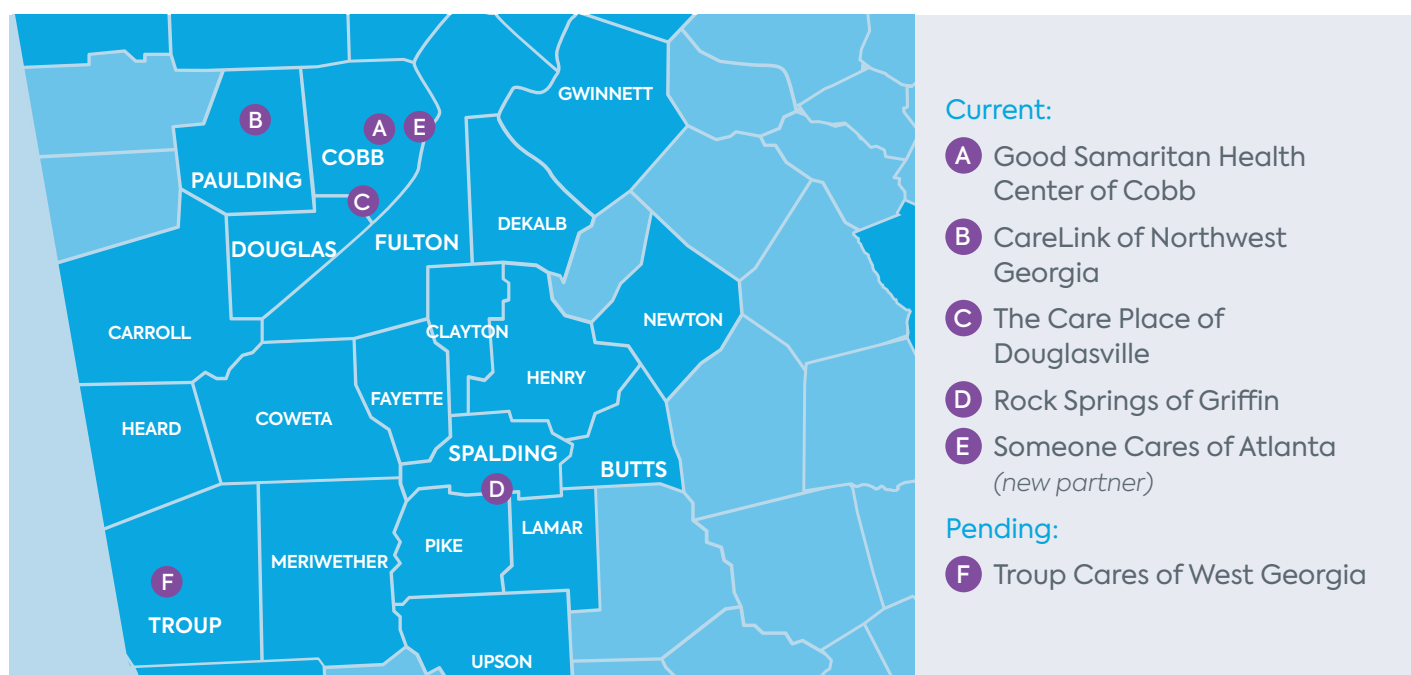


## Community Clinic Network

In 2016, Wellstar 4-1 Care was created to increase access to care and the capacity of partnering community clinics by providing reduced-cost outpatient medical services.

**Evolution of Wellstar 4-1 Care to the Community Clinic Network:** The Community Clinic Network evolved to advance Wellstar's ability to support community access to care and social support services. As Wellstar's geographical footprint has expanded, Wellstar is also committed to forging new partnerships with community clinics (i.e., Community Safety-Net Clinics, Community Health Centers and Federally Qualified Health Centers) to more collectively achieve optimal outcomes for more medically underserved and uninsured residents. Wellstar's reach into critical communities is continuing to grow (Figure 4).

**Figure 4 | Community Clinic Network Map**



# \$12 million+

in relief from medical charges obtained for more than 6,000 Community Clinic Network patients between 2022 and 2023.

# 6,672

Community Clinic Network patients served from 2022 to 2023.

**SUCCESS STORY:** With support from Wellstar Foundation, CareLink of Northwest Georgia received a \$150,000 donation to provide stipends to clinical providers to serve uninsured and underinsured residents in Paulding and surrounding counties.



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about this funding.

Community Transformation Program

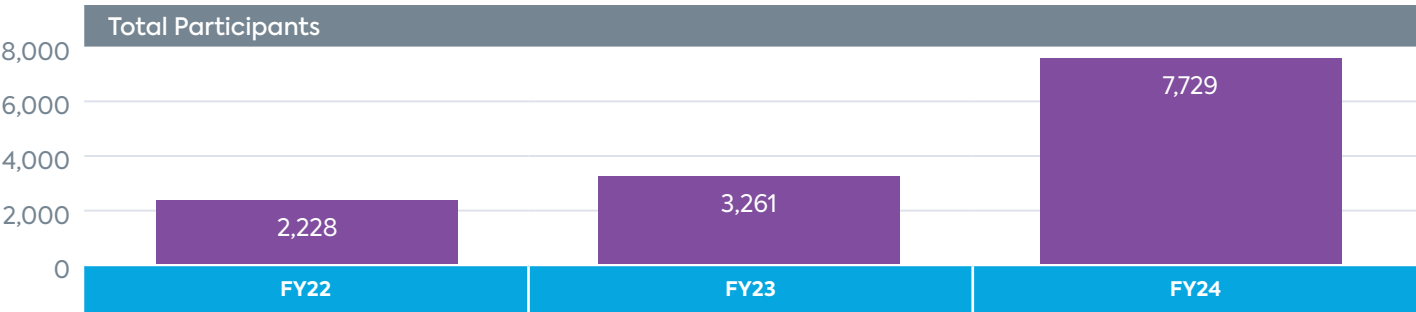
In 2020, WCHE launched a year-long initiative to enhance access to medical care via technology with leading community partners. The Community Transformation Program (CTP) provides a scalable solution for improving access to care in partnership with trusted community assets.

Funded CTP partners leverage technology to produce long-term, sustainable changes in the communities we serve. Initiatives are expected to be tailored to a community need and align with each partner’s mission. At the end of 12 months, partners are expected to demonstrate improvements in:

- Access to Health Care so that residents receive timely, high-quality and culturally appropriate medical care when they need it; or,
- Access to Social Determinants of Health Support Services so that residents receive timely, high-quality food, employment, housing, transportation, education, and legal resources to improve daily living when they need it.

To identify strongly suited partners, Wellstar recruits a cohort of internal subject matter experts to review candidate applications through a two-step web-based submission process. Candidate applications featured funding requests, project descriptions, budgets, descriptions of past community health improvement performance, and project sustainability plans.

Figure 5 | Number of Participants Reached Through the Community Transformation Program



**SUCCESS STORY:** Bethesda Community Clinic partnered with law enforcement agencies in three undercover human trafficking stings across Georgia, providing crucial on-site healthcare to 38 victims, primarily young women aged 18–25. Telehealth kits – funded by the Community Transformation Program – played a vital role, enabling multiple providers to offer care despite long hours and limited space. Beyond forensic exams, the clinic provided patient-centered primary care, addressing immediate health needs and offering emotional support. This collaborative effort with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security, and local law enforcement significantly improved the care and support available to victims of human trafficking.

Throughout fiscal years 2022–2024, the following partners received funding:



72%

of participants saw positive changes in biometrics following implementation of a technology-based approach to give diabetic patients access to health and nutrition coaching by **Bethesda Community Clinic** in one funding period.



129

telehealth appointments were conducted by **Must Ministries** during the one-year funding period to provide remote access to behavioral health counseling for individuals in permanent supportive housing and emergency shelters.



200+

patients were served by **Empowerment Resource Center** with telehealth and mHealth technologies to improve outcomes for individuals with substance abuse disorders.



30%

increase in resource utilization after **Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia** increased access to maternal mental health resources for birth givers using a digital platform.



1,300+

telehealth clients were served, and 582 family counseling sessions held over one year. **The Summit Counseling Center** used funding to increase access to telehealth for uninsured and underinsured residents and families.



334

new patients were served, avoiding 246 unnecessary emergency room visits through **Giving Health, Inc.**'s increased access to care for low-income, uninsured residents through telehealth and social service referrals.

#### Additional Partners:



**CaringWorks**

HOUSING • HELP • HOPE



Educating. Engaging. Empowering.



**COBB & DOUGLAS**  
HEALTH FOUNDATION



**LIFETOOLS**





## Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women in Georgia (Georgia Department of Public Health) and the leading cause of cancer death for Black women in Georgia (American Cancer Society). According to The Komen Atlanta 2015 Community Profile, Black women in the greater Atlanta area are 30% more likely than white women to have breast cancer diagnosed at a later stage and are 45% more likely to die of breast cancer. We also know that Latina women and women in rural communities are less likely to be screened for breast cancer, increasing the risk for late-stage diagnosis. As one of the largest providers of care in Georgia serving diverse urban, suburban, and rural communities, Wellstar is committed to addressing the damaging health disparities that impact our communities.

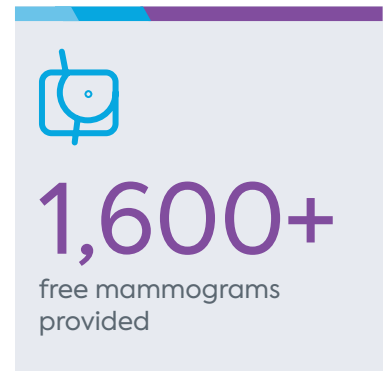
For more than a decade, Wellstar has provided breast screening and diagnostic services to individuals who lack access to or are unable to afford these life-saving services within Wellstar's service areas. By providing these services at no cost to those in need, we seek to eliminate existing breast cancer disparities and decrease the number of late-stage breast cancer diagnoses by providing access to healthcare within the communities we serve. This program increases the number of regular mammogram screenings and diagnostic services provided, particularly within high-risk communities, enabling Wellstar healthcare providers to detect breast cancer at an earlier stage and resulting in better treatment options and improved outcomes for our community members.

To identify patients who need access to these services most, we partner with local health departments, community clinics, and a robust list of other trusted community organizations. The Wellstar physician liaison team and Wellstar Clinical Partners team also works with 2,500+ Wellstar Medical Group physicians and partner physicians throughout our service area to generate referrals to the program.

Many of our community members rely on this program for their annual mammogram, and we continue to reach new patients through new methods of outreach and community and physician partnerships.

This program is fully funded by community partners and individual donors, including Georgia Alliance for Breast Cancer, National Breast Cancer Foundation, Susan G. Komen and Wellstar Team Member Giving donors.

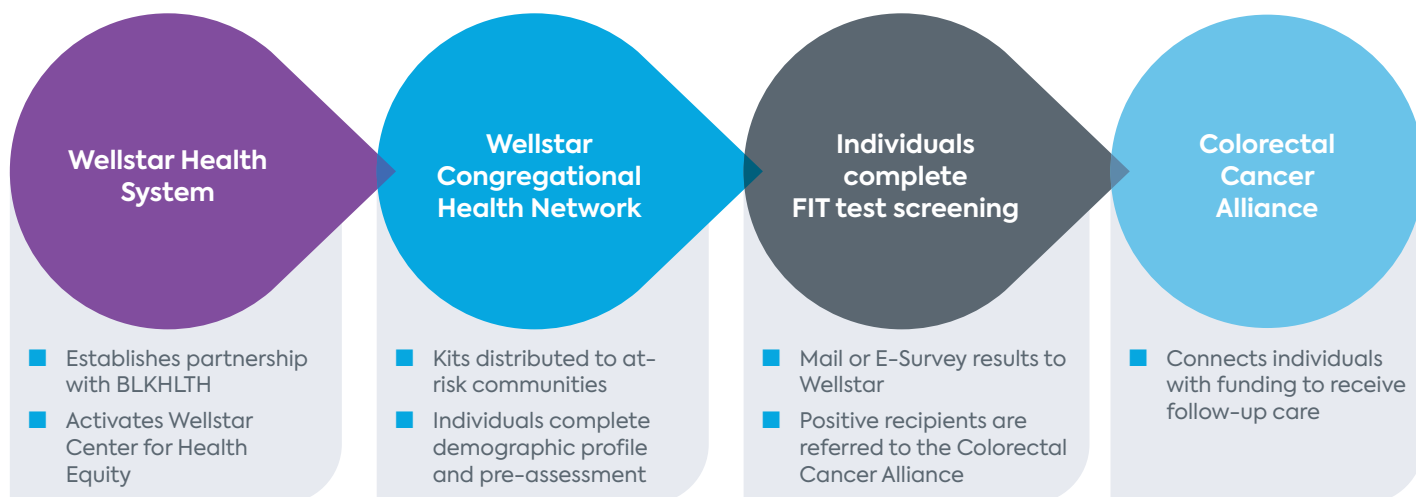
**SUCCESS STORY:** A breast cancer survivor was “lost to follow-up” due to losing Medicaid coverage. When she presented to the ER with concerning symptoms the oncology nurse navigator intervened. Despite the patient’s inability to afford a doctor’s visit, the navigator secured an order for a diagnostic mammogram. This swift action, facilitated by a voucher program, led to a timely diagnosis and the patient is now back on treatment.



## Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer, also called colon or rectal cancer, is the third most common cancer in the United States and the second most common cancer-related death. WCHE partners with BLKHLTH to improve colorectal cancer screening rates among traditionally medically underserved communities. The national #GoodDownThere campaign with Colorectal Cancer Alliance is designed to reduce stigma surrounding colorectal care by providing equity-centric access for colorectal cancer.

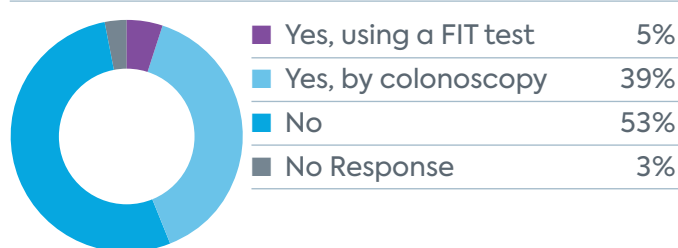




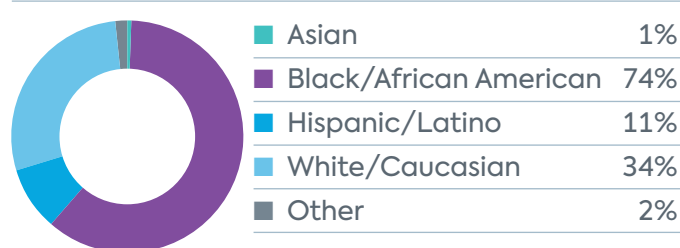
**Colorectal Cancer Screening Kits:** Wellstar activates the Congregational Health Network to host screening kit distribution events. Community participants complete screenings in the privacy of their homes and notify Wellstar if they receive a positive result and need assistance with follow-up care. Wellstar connects participants with the Colorectal Cancer Alliance, which provides support through the continuum of care.

**Figure 6 | Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Screening Kit Distribution Program**

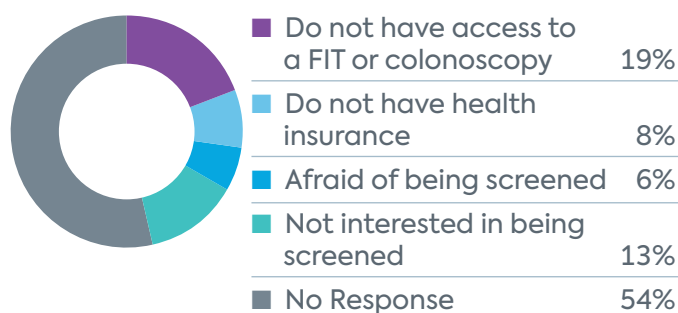
#### Previously screened for CRC?\*



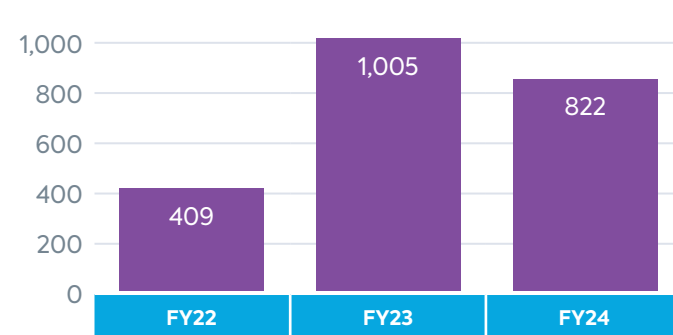
#### Patient Race/Ethnicity\*



#### Reason you have not been previously screened?\*



#### CRC Screening Kits Distributed



\* from 1,474 responses

**2,200+**

screening kits distributed;  
242 participants referred for  
colonoscopy after receiving  
a positive result

**21%**

of colorectal cancer screening participants  
indicate not having a personal doctor or  
personal health care provider, and 21% of  
participants indicate not having any kind of  
health care coverage.

**9.57%**

of kits returned a  
positive result

# 64%

of participants identify as Black or African American

# 22%

of prostate cancer screening participants indicate not having a personal doctor or personal health care provider, and 16% of participants indicate not having any kind of health care coverage.

# 162

tests conducted throughout the Wellstar service areas.

## Prostate Cancer Screening

In partnership with Wellstar Urology & Lab Outreach Services, Community Health provides prostate cancer screening education and free prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing to members of our Congregational Health Network and other community-based organizations serving high-risk communities.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Two men previously in remission for prostate cancer participated in this screening and received abnormal results. The results led to further testing and a resumption of treatment.

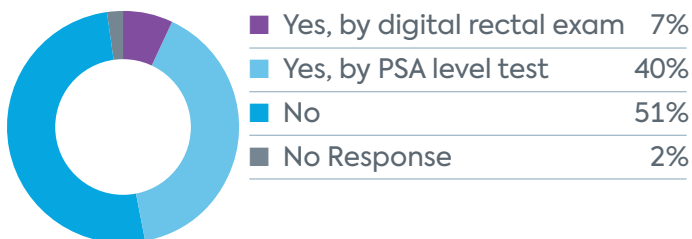
**SUCCESS STORY:** One participant received a new prostate cancer diagnosis. Despite a family history of prostate cancer, he was reluctant to be screened. Community Health team members at the event encouraged him to get screened on the spot.



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about Wellstar cancer screenings initiative.

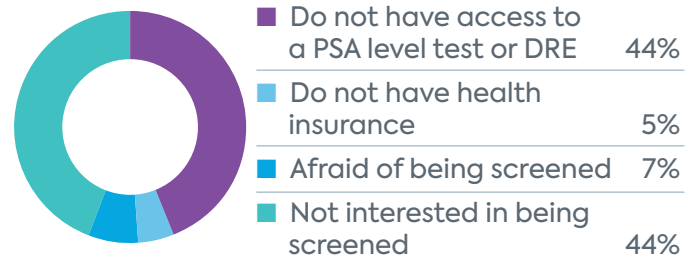
**Figure 7 | Prostate Screening Program**

### Previously screened for prostate cancer?\*



\* from 123 responses

### Reason you have not been previously screened?\*



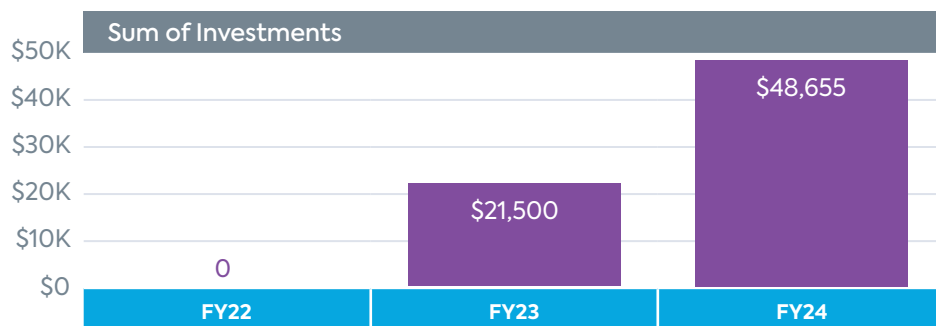


## Wellstar Strategic Community Development

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Strategic Community Development committed to increasing corporate social responsibility investments (*Figure 8*) and providing positive social value through strategic partnerships and sponsorships focused on access to care.

**\$70,155**  
in investments across  
12 community partner  
organizations to support  
access to health care and  
social support services.

**Figure 8 | Community Development Investments - Access to Care**



Community partner organizations included:

- **CareLink of Northwest Georgia, Inc.:** In the fall of 2014, a team of concerned community members embarked on a journey to form what we now know as CareLink: a community-based clinic delivering healthcare to those in need in Paulding County and surrounding areas.
- **Clark Atlanta University:** Building on its social justice history and heritage, Clark Atlanta University is a culturally diverse, research-intensive, liberal arts institution that prepares and transforms the lives of students. Ignited by its history, Clark Atlanta University is committed to delivering education that is accessible, relevant, and transformative.
- **Cobb Public Safety/Safe Kids Cobb County:** Safe Kids Cobb County is one of more than 400 U.S. Coalitions and 30 Member Countries that bring together health and safety experts, educators, corporations, foundations, governments, and volunteers to educate and protect families.
- **Covenant House Georgia:** For more than 20 years, Covenant House Georgia has been the only agency in Metro Atlanta to provide a comprehensive suite of programs, services, and access to resources for youth and young adults ages 16–24 experiencing homelessness and escaping trafficking.
- **Good Samaritan Health Center of Cobb:** Good Samaritan Health Center of Cobb is committed to its founding purpose, to spread the love of Christ and provide a primary medical and dental healthcare to the uninsured and underinsured, working poor and indigent in our community.
- **Harmony House:** Harmony House provides around-the-clock residential shelter and safety to domestic violence victims and their children.
- **Illuminate Justice:** The Illuminate Justice mission is to prevent child trafficking and pursue justice for the vulnerable. We strategically focus on prevention efforts within the child welfare system as youth in foster care and involved in juvenile justice are disproportionately impacted by these types of harms.
- **LiveSafe Resources:** LiveSafe provides safety and support services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.



■ **The Family Health Centers of Georgia:** The Family Health Centers of Georgia, Inc. is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), Federally Qualified Health Center, whose mission is to provide comprehensive, high quality, patient-centered healthcare to the communities we serve, with a commitment to excellence.



■ **Visiting Nurse Health System:** Visiting Nurse Health System is Georgia’s solution for healthcare and aging at home, caring for over 15,000 patients each year throughout 57 counties. Celebrating 75 years as the first and largest nonprofit provider of healthcare, hospice and aging services in the home, Visiting Nurse continues to live its mission, today, by delivering a full care continuum of health care in the home.



## Wellstar Foundation

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Foundation committed to increasing investments from the philanthropic community that support equitable access to care.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Wellstar Foundation supported the implementation of Wellstar Find Help – a system-wide digital tool connecting patients to local resources for food, transportation, housing, and other resources. Wellstar Find Help enables Wellstar to address social determinants of health, the non-medical factors influencing the health and wellbeing of patients and community members.



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about Find Help.

# \$1 million+

in Wellstar Foundation investments to support the partnership with Ser Familia for a Promotora, funding for providers to serve at CareLink of Northwest Georgia, implementation of Wellstar Find Help, and to support LiveSafe Resources.



\$200,000



\$184,500



\$150,000



\$478,200







# Behavioral Health

At Wellstar, we understand that health is more than just the absence of physical illness. True well-being encompasses the health of the mind and spirit, which is why behavioral health care is an absolutely essential component of our commitment to serving our communities.

## Soul Support

Soul Support is a collection of programs offered to the community centered around behavioral health, particularly access to care and education. Over the past 3 years, Soul Support has evolved based on feedback from community partners and participants and remains focused on bringing awareness to mental health challenges as well as available resources. The major components include:

- **Suicide Prevention** – education and awareness, resources for crisis assistance
- **Support** – caregivers and telehealth counseling (equipment provided as needed); local resources
- **Community Advocates** – instructor training/credentialing suicide prevention

### Soul Support Programs

#### PTC

##### Powerful Tools for Caregivers

A 6-week virtual program focused on giving support and resources to those caring for others.

#### QPR

##### Question, Persuade, Refer

Training session focused on suicide prevention through awareness and education. Participants learn how to recognize suicide warning signs, how to intervene, and how to access resources (both crisis and non-crisis related).

#### MHFA

##### Mental Health First Aid

Intensive training focused on mental health challenges and how best to respond. Resources are provided (both crisis and non-crisis related).

# 100%

of QPR participant evaluations indicated “I would recommend this training to others”

# 500+

participants across all Soul Support programs

### Participating Soul Support partner organizations include:

#### Clayton County:

New Morning Light Baptist Church

#### Cobb County:

Acworth UMC

Atlanta GLOW

Bethel AME

Catholic Church of St. Ann

Cobb Collaborative

First Christian of Mableton

Rivers of Hope

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

Turner Chapel AME

Zion Baptist Church

#### Douglas County:

Douglasville First United Methodist Church

Douglasville Seventh-day Adventist

New Mountain Top Baptist Church

#### Fulton County:

First Congregational UCC Atlanta

#### Henry County:

Tabernacle of Praise Church International

#### Paulding County:

Bethany Christian

#### Spalding County:

Tabernacle of Praise Church

#### Troup County:

First Baptist

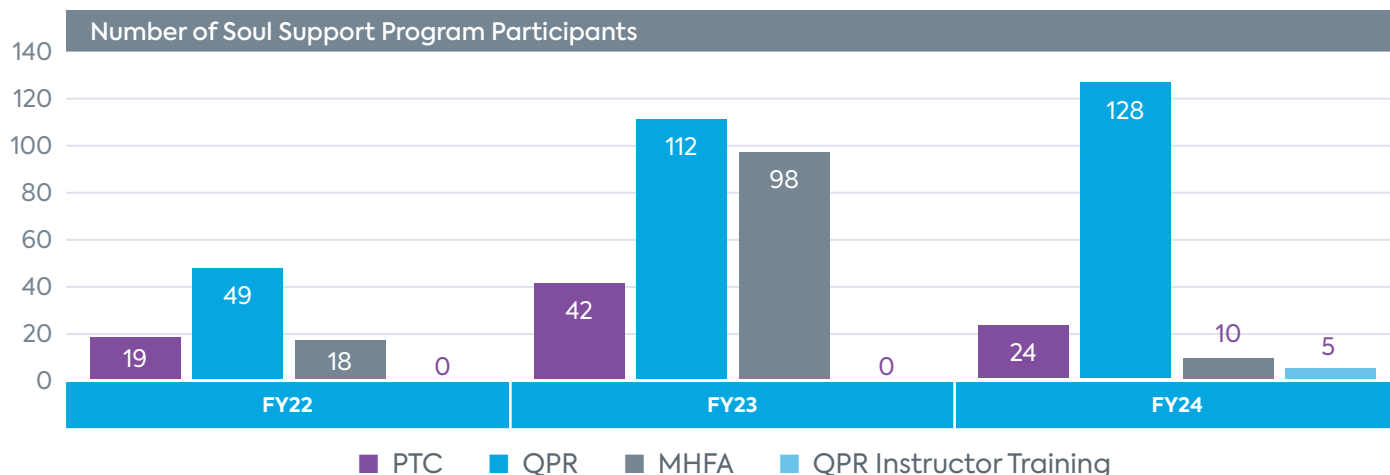
First Presbyterian of LaGrange

LaGrange Housing Authority

St. Mark's Episcopal Church of LaGrange



**Figure 9 | Soul Support Participation**



### What people are saying

“Just this year alone I’ve heard about more young people considering suicide than ever before. I believe [the QPR instructor] training will equip me with the skills to recognize warning signs, offer support, and potentially save lives. I am certain early intervention will make a crucial difference in preventing tragedies.”

“The training was really helpful. Grateful to have these resources to help someone/anyone.”

“I feel so much better on how to engage with someone I’m concerned about their struggles; especially if it could lead to suicide.”

“Very informative and helpful, helps put things in context and how to position conversation to gain trust and to be their advocate and support.”

**SUCCESS STORY:** With support from Wellstar Foundation, Soul Support received a \$25,000 grant award from the MolinaCares Accord to expand its support for virtual health counseling and instructor training.



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about this story.

### Social Work Student Rotation

The Social Work Student Rotation program is supported through collaboration with Clark Atlanta University’s Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work. Master’s level social work students spend an academic year interning with Wellstar Community Health, supporting initiatives of the department as well as patients of Wellstar Graduate Medical Education Internal Medicine.



The rotation ensures student understanding of the influence of social determinants of health with health outcomes. Patients and community members benefit from improved access to social support services to improve their health.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Quiara Sharp, a 2023 social work student, successfully completed QPR instructor training, building her capacity to provide community suicide prevention workshops after graduation. She completed 509 hours and served 15 patients. Quiara showed evidence of stress reduction levels in the patients she served at Wellstar Graduate Medical Education. With her support, patients were connected to resources for financial assistance, transportation, housing and food insecurity. When screened pre- and post for stress due to social determinant of health challenges, 71% of her patient group indicated reduced stress after being connected to supportive resources.

Opioid Steering Committee

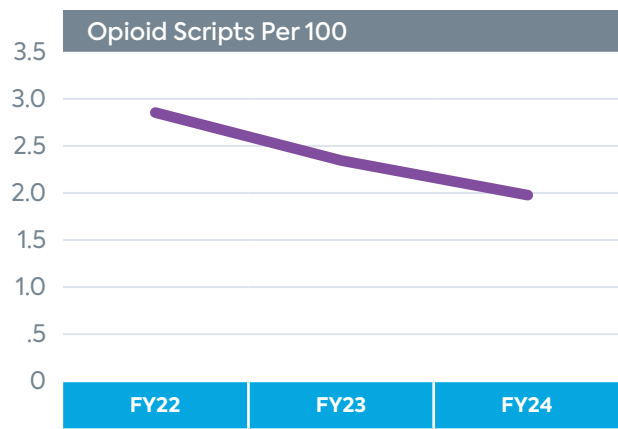
Wellstar Behavioral Health offers a variety of services to assist the unique health needs of our community members. As part of our ongoing efforts, the Wellstar Opioid Steering Committee is focused on planning and implementing a comprehensive response to growing opioid misuse. A collaborative team of Wellstar providers, patients and communities have come together to help reduce opioid misuse, abuse, and addiction. Three physician-led workgroups lead the charge using provider and patient education, clinical initiatives, and community awareness and engagement.

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Behavioral Health committed to the reduction of opioid scripts, reduction of co-prescribed medications (opioids and benzodiazepines) (Figure 10), and the implementation of fentanyl testing across the system.

Achievements:

- With ongoing emphasis on opioid stewardship, opioid prescribing results have improved each fiscal year.
- In recognition of the dangers of combining opioids and benzodiazepines, providers may discover that either class may have been prescribed and filled elsewhere. In each fiscal year, providers utilized prescription drug monitoring program data through individual provider alerts and reviewable reports at the time of prescribing to reduce duplication.
- By the end of fiscal year 2024, fentanyl testing was available in all Wellstar emergency departments.

Figure 10 | Opioid Prescribing Rate



Zero Suicide Initiative

Wellstar’s Suicide Prevention initiative was derived from the national Zero Suicide (ZS) framework, offering a cohesive care model and continuous process improvement to prevent deaths by suicide for patients under active care. Through implementation of the ZS core elements (Lead, Engage, Identify, Treat, Transition, Train, & Improve), Wellstar’s approach includes the routinizing of screening for suicidal thoughts, proactive education about risk factors and warning signs to healthcare clinicians, evidence-based safety planning, suicide-specific care, and stepped-care case management to augment behavioral healthcare and keep our most vulnerable patients safe.

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Behavioral Health committed to the utilization of standardized risk screening in emergency departments (Figure 11), the completion of safety plans for all patients evaluated in the emergency department by a behavioral health team member who discharged to the community (Figure 12), and the application of the stepped-care model for high-risk patients.

Figure 11 | Zero Suicide Initiative Risk Screening

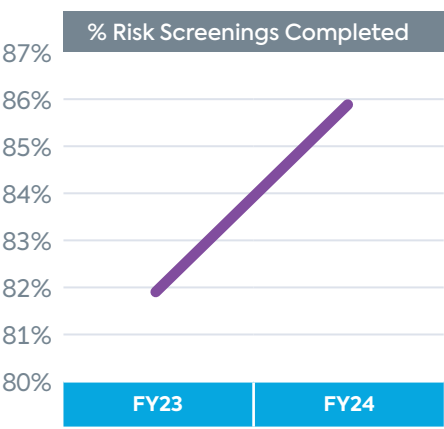
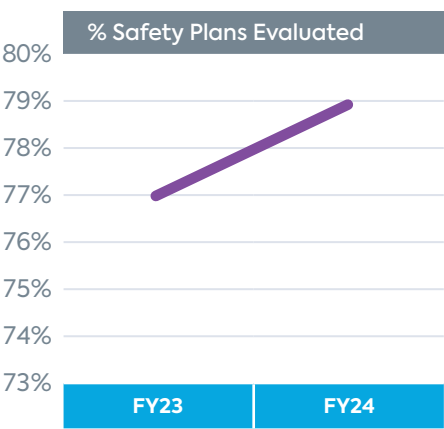


Figure 12 | Zero Suicide Initiative Safety Plan





730,000+

risk screenings completed  
across fiscal years 2023  
and 2024



2,875

total patients engaged in  
stepped-care model across  
fiscal years 2023 and 2024

### What people are saying

“I asked this Wellstar Medical Group patient at the sixth outreach about his thoughts on restarting pathway and he said, ‘sometimes I feel like I’m an island’ and support services calling biweekly was like someone paddling over every two weeks to check on him.”

“I like being committed to having to answer these calls.”

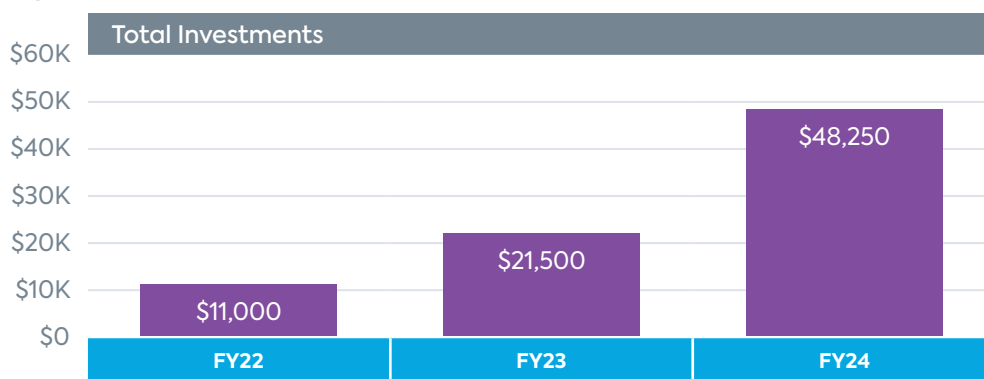
“I think it’s awesome that you guys call and check on people, I’ve never had that before.”

“When I get phone calls like these, it kind of lifts my day.”

### Wellstar Strategic Community Development

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Strategic Community Development committed to increasing corporate social responsibility investments (*Figure 13*) and providing positive social value through strategic partnerships and sponsorships focused on behavioral health.

**Figure 13 | Community Development Investments – Behavioral Health**



\$80,750

in investments across  
14 community partner  
organizations to support  
behavioral health access

# Food Access and Healthy Living

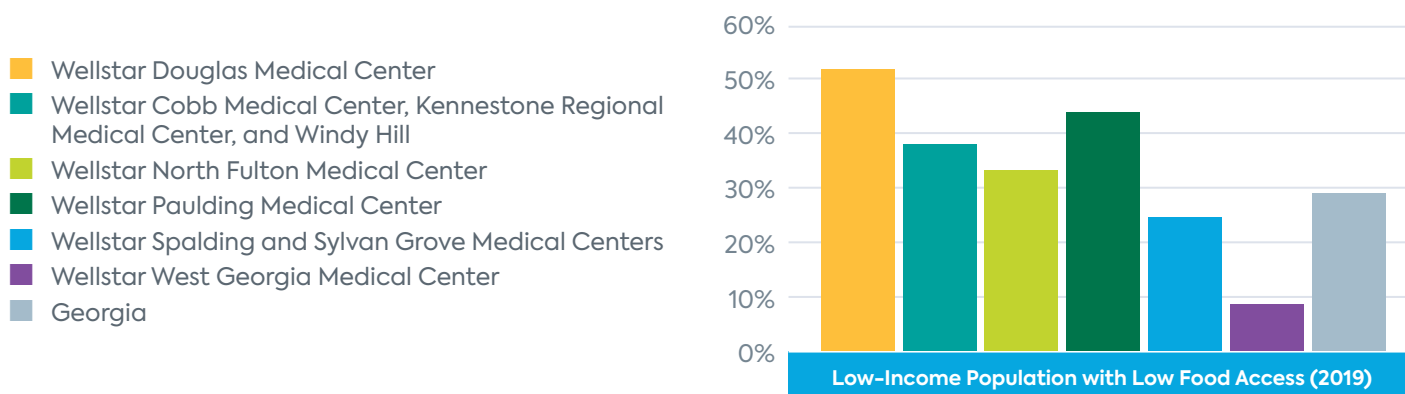
In the 2022 CHNA, Wellstar identified food insecurity and hunger as a key social determinant of health that is impacting the health of communities served. Food insecurity is defined as a household's inability to provide enough food for every person to live an active, healthy life. Some of the most common, yet complex, effects of food insecurity include health complications, especially when families are forced to choose between spending money on food and medicine or medical care, and damage to a child's ability to learn and grow.

Populations at greatest risk of experiencing food insecurity include:

- Children
- Rural communities
- African-American communities
- Hispanic/Latinx communities
- Senior adults

Figure 14 shows that the percentage of the low-income population with low food access is higher than state averages in the communities served by Paulding, North Fulton, Cobb, Kennestone, Windy Hill, and Douglas Medical Centers.

**Figure 14 | Percentage of Low-income Population with Low Food Access**



Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, USDA – Food Access Research Atlas, 2019. Source geography: Tract; Feeding America, 2017.

## Community Partnerships

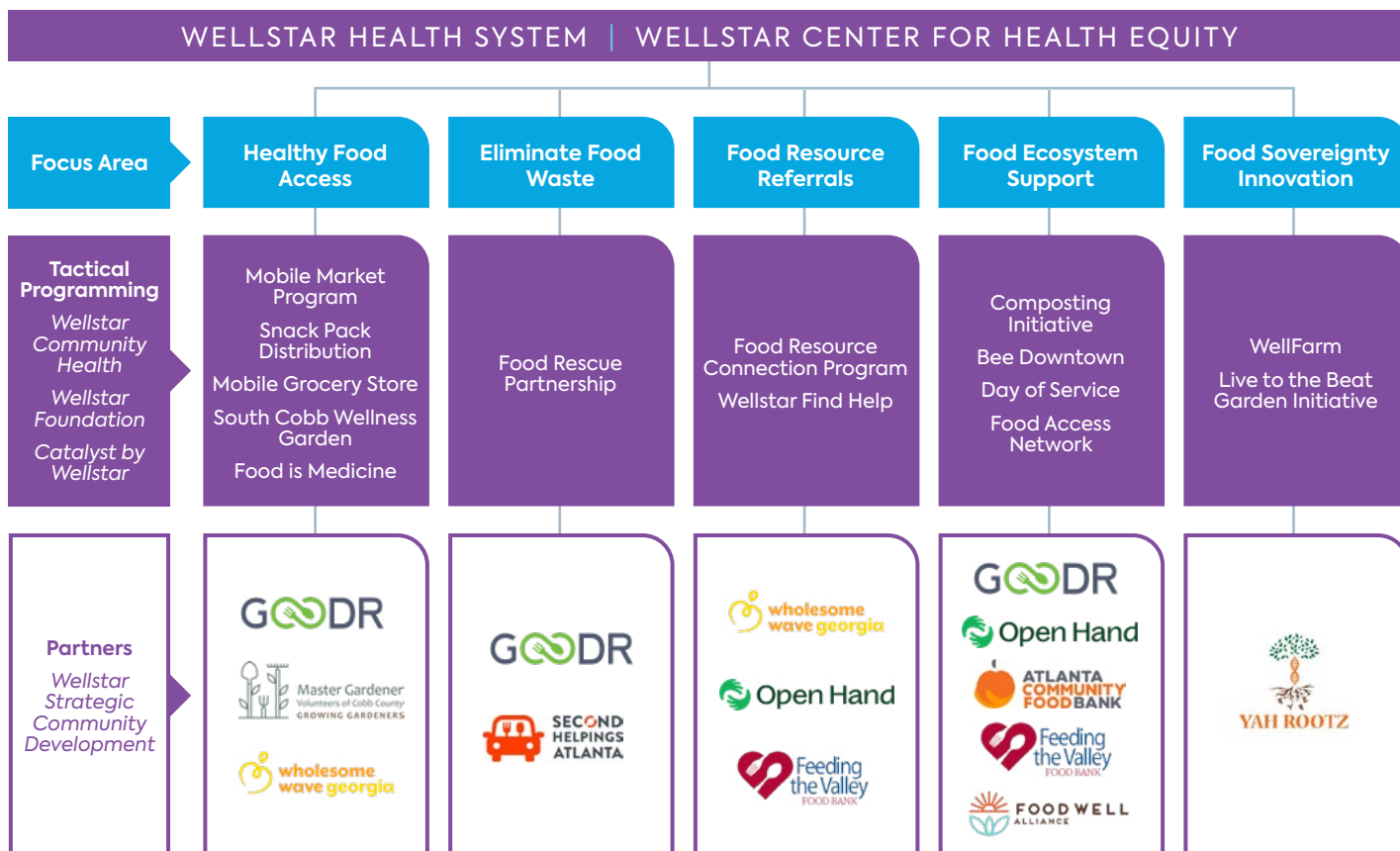
Working with a variety of community partners is essential to successfully address hunger in communities served:





## Wellstar Food Access Strategy Framework

The Wellstar Food Access Strategy Framework is based on the Feeding America Addressing Food Insecurity in Health Care Settings Framework and advisement with community leaders like the Atlanta Community Food Bank. This framework emphasizes a multi-pronged approach, which is reflective of the need for a diversified approach to address food insecurity and hunger in Georgia:



### Mobile Market Program

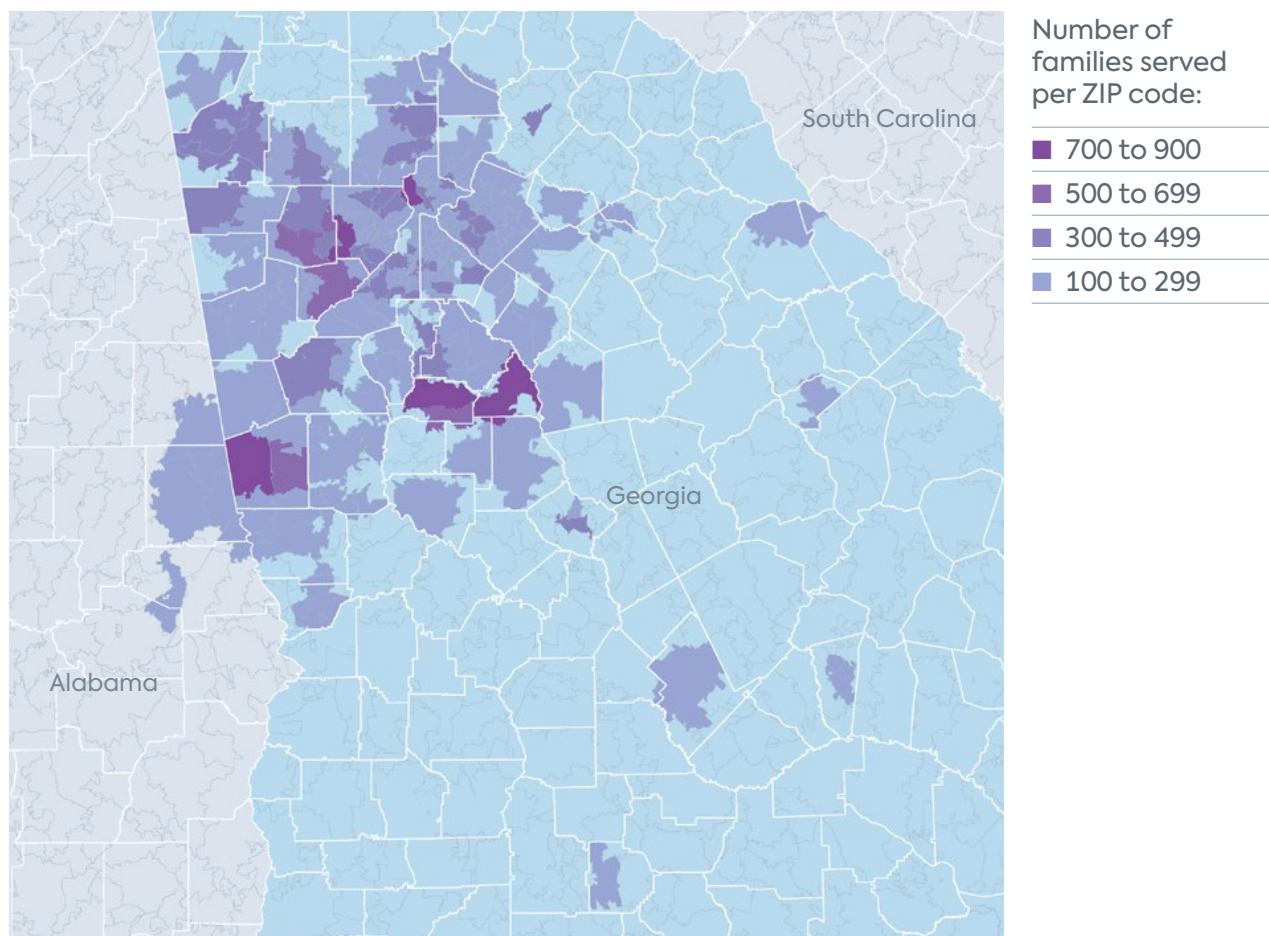
In 2020, Wellstar launched a Mobile Market program to feed metro Atlanta at-risk families across six Georgia counties. In collaboration with Goodr, the joint initiative addresses food access for vulnerable communities in Wellstar's service areas. Through Wellstar Foundation and vital community funding, Goodr provided food and staffing support for this program, registered participants and provided impact reporting each month. Wellstar provided program logistical support, participant incentives and nutrition education. Community partners helped recruit volunteers and set up food distribution sites in key service areas, including Cobb, Troup, Fulton, Spalding, Paulding, and Douglas counties.

The following community organizations have partnered with Wellstar since program inception:

- Butts County Life Enrichment
- Cobb Senior Services
- New Mercy Community Services, Inc.
- C.H.O.I.C.E.S.
- First Presbyterian Church of Douglasville
- Paulding County School System
- Calumet Park Neighborhood Association
- First Presbyterian Church of LaGrange
- Roswell Organization for Community Development
- CareLink of Northwest Georgia, Inc.
- McEachern United Methodist Church
- Cathedral of Faith Church of God in Christ
- New Mercy Baptist Church



**Figure 15 | Mobile Markets Geographic Reach**



Participating Mobile Market households demonstrate high food access need. Wellstar's Mobile Market represents a cost-efficient method for meeting that need.

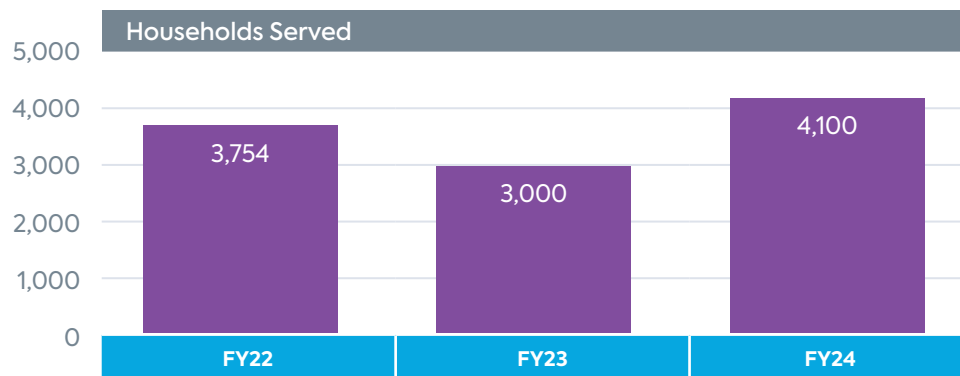
**90%**

of Mobile Market registrants affirm that within the past 12 months they worried that household food would run out and/or that bought food didn't last and there wasn't money to get more.

**40%**

of Mobile Market registrants indicated they have delayed or avoided medical visits or check-ups so that they can afford food.

**Figure 16 | Mobile Market Distributions**



**SUCCESS STORY:** A participant shared that since coming to the Mobile Market they have really tried to improve their food choices to be healthier. They said the example of groceries they received were things they hadn't tried before and were pleasantly surprised that they liked them. She also shared that getting the produce has encouraged her to plant her own garden with vegetables!

### Food Rescue Program

In Georgia, food residuals make up 12% – or more than 800,000 tons – of landfill waste annually. That's nearly 151 pounds of food per Georgian every year, a total of 1.6 billion pounds of trash annually in Georgia. This amount of food waste also wastes \$1.92 billion each year.

In 2021, the Community Health team in partnership with Second Helpings Atlanta launched a food rescue pilot program at the Wellstar Corporate Office (WCO). Through this program, high-quality and nutritious food from WCO was picked up and taken to the James T. Anderson Boys and Girls Club and Feed Marietta. Later that year, the program expanded to Wellstar Cobb Hospital Food and Nutrition Service and in November to Windy Hill Hospital in partnership with Goodr. Today, four Wellstar hospitals have participated in the initiative. Notably, Paulding and Kennestone hospitals have integrated food rescue into their routine operations.

By recapturing fresh food that might otherwise be discarded, we reduce food waste while guaranteeing access to fresh produce and healthy meals for emergency food programs and individuals in need. Our food rescue program provides a triple-win solution by improving an organization's bottom line through charitable tax donations, reducing its greenhouse emissions from landfills, and getting edible surplus food to local communities.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Through this initiative, Wellstar supported environmental sustainability by providing edible and safe meals to 27,515 households from fiscal year 2022 through fiscal year 2024. Rescued foods were packed and delivered to 15 different Community Meal Centers locally to fight food insecurity across Fulton, Cobb, and Paulding counties.



27,515

meals rescued

33,211

pounds of food diverted from landfills (over 16 tons!)



15,875

pounds of carbon dioxide emissions prevented (nearly 8 tons!)



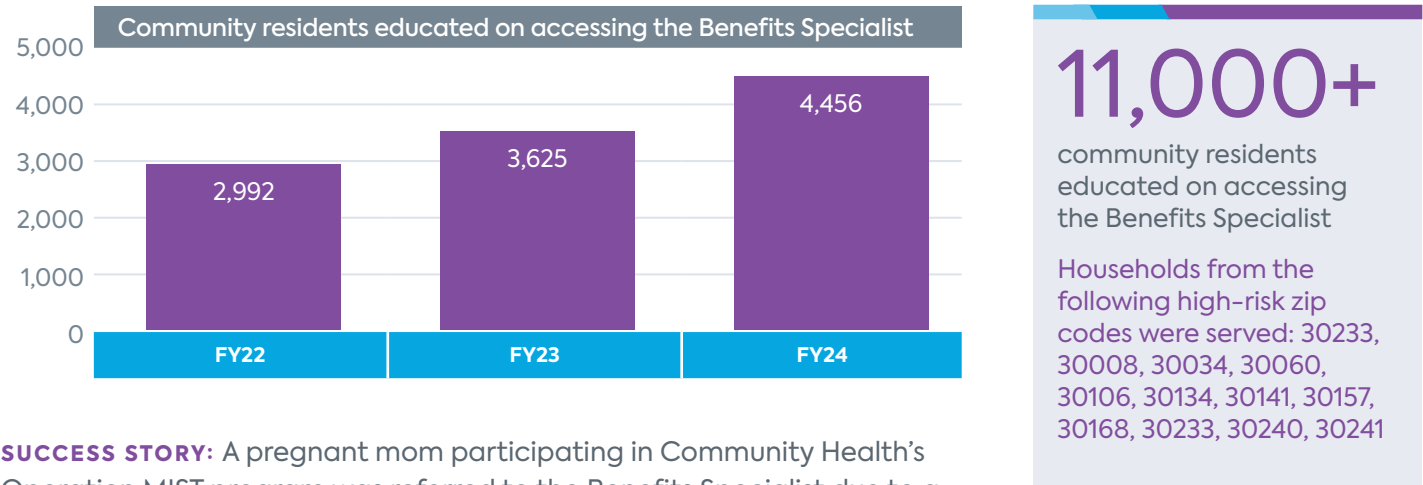
Food Resource Connection: Wholesome Wave Georgia Benefits Specialist

In 2022, Wellstar launched a new partnership with Wholesome Wave Georgia, funded by the Wellstar Foundation. Through this partnership, Wellstar increases its capacity to provide on-site, real-time referrals and registration for the following forms of government assistance:

- Children and Parent Services
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

The bilingual Benefits Specialist integrates their specialized knowledge of governmental assistance programs to support community residents at the “Wellstar on Wheels” Mobile Market and Passport to Health community events. They also share knowledge amongst our Community Clinic Network and the Congregational Health Network.

Figure 17 | Benefits Specialist Impact



**SUCCESS STORY:** A pregnant mom participating in Community Health’s Operation MIST program was referred to the Benefits Specialist due to a lapse in insurance coverage, occurring within weeks of her due date. Mom shared that her medical office was not able to continue seeing her without payment and she did not have the means to pay for out of pocket for visits. As the Benefits Specialist researched eligibility, it was determined that mom did not have a lapse in coverage; rather there was an eligibility error within the system used by the medical office. The Benefits Specialist was able to connect with the medical office and advocate for the acceptance of the client’s Medicaid eligibility, as evidenced by an eligibility determination letter. Because of the Benefits Specialist’s partnership, mom did not miss any of her end of pregnancy appointments and did not have to worry about unexpected medical expenses during the last trimester of her pregnancy.

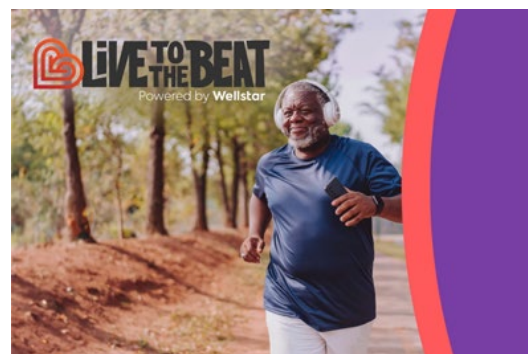
**SUCCESS STORY:** The Benefits Specialist has become a trusted source of assistance. Participants who have successfully obtained benefits through assistance with applications have returned to be assisted with renewals, and for troubleshooting common issues like misplaced cards. One community resident returned to receive support for 4 consecutive renewals in addition to his initial application first completed in 2022. The resident has expressed his desire to continue to seek assistance due to the ease of partnering with the Benefits Specialist.



## Live to the Beat. Powered by Wellstar.

In 2022, the Wellstar CHNA highlighted that the top causes of mortality and hospital use in hospital service areas are largely related to chronic disease and lifestyle factors (i.e., heart disease, stroke, diabetes, COPD, cancer, and substance use).

In 2024, Wellstar launched a new program called “Live to the Beat. Powered by Wellstar.” Wellstar serves as a partner of the Live to the Beat Campaign, a nationally recognized program led by the CDC Foundation and the Million Hearts Initiative, aimed to help adults take steps to prevent heart disease and stroke.



The Live to the Beat pilot utilizes a United Way of Greater Atlanta community health worker to serve as a health coach. The coach empowers 50 individual members of faith communities, identified through Wellstar’s Congregational Health Network, to be advocates in their own health journey. Over a 12-month period, the program supports the members through 8 essential “small steps” to sustainable heart health.

### Live to the Beat Partners:



### Live to the Beat Participant Feedback:



### What people are saying

“Because of this program and the Wellstar urgent care, I will be transferring my health hospital over from Emory to Wellstar.”



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about Wellstar’s Live to the Beat program

## CommunityCare

In 2020, Wellstar team members gave so much of themselves during the pandemic. For team members who wanted to go above and beyond their role at Wellstar serving our neighbors, Wellstar introduced CommunityCare.

CommunityCare connects team members with opportunities to serve Wellstar community partners through acts of service. Opportunities include both ongoing and scheduled events, including Wellstar's Mobile Markets, Passport to Health events, and Day of Service.

Wellstar's Day of Service is an opportunity for team members to volunteer and support community partner organizations who address priority health needs across the communities we serve. On November 9, 2023, Wellstar hosted the second ever Wellstar Day of Service focused on serving community partners who provide access to food and housing, two priority health needs that were identified in Wellstar's 2022 CHNA.

# 350+

team members participated, serving 21 local community-based organizations with 33 unique engagement opportunities.

# 990+

total service hours provided by Wellstar team members to community partner organizations

## Wellstar Day of Service | NOVEMBER 9, 2023

# 351



team members served organizations that address food insecurity and housing access needs



# 21

total organizations served



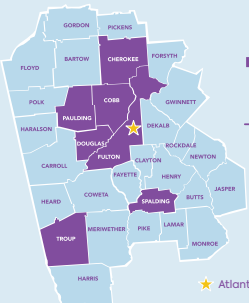
# 33

unique engagement opportunities

# 991



total service hours



# 7

counties served

*Cherokee, Cobb, Douglas, Fulton, Paulding, Spalding & Troup*



# 1,741

families served during Day of Service through meals, warm coat program and other programs



# 41,648

pounds of food were sorted, collected and distributed



# 29,102

meals served to families



# \$1,669.97

raised through the Wellstar Foundation Day of Service Round Up Campaign to support Wellstar Mobile Markets



# 96%

of team members that felt they learned more about food insecurity and housing access needs in our community

### PARTNER & PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

#### MUST Ministries Mobile Pantry

Wellstar team members helped distribute 7,678 pounds of food to 179 families

#### Atlanta Community Food Bank

Wellstar team members participated in collecting, packing and sorting 30,889 pounds of food, equating to 29,857 total meals

#### Food Well Alliance

Wellstar team members cleared 6,000 square feet of growing space in the community garden which consisted of removal of debris, pruning and mulching

#### Five Loaves & Two Fish Food Pantry

Wellstar team members provided 3,040 pounds of food to 49 households serving 120 people including children, adults and senior adults

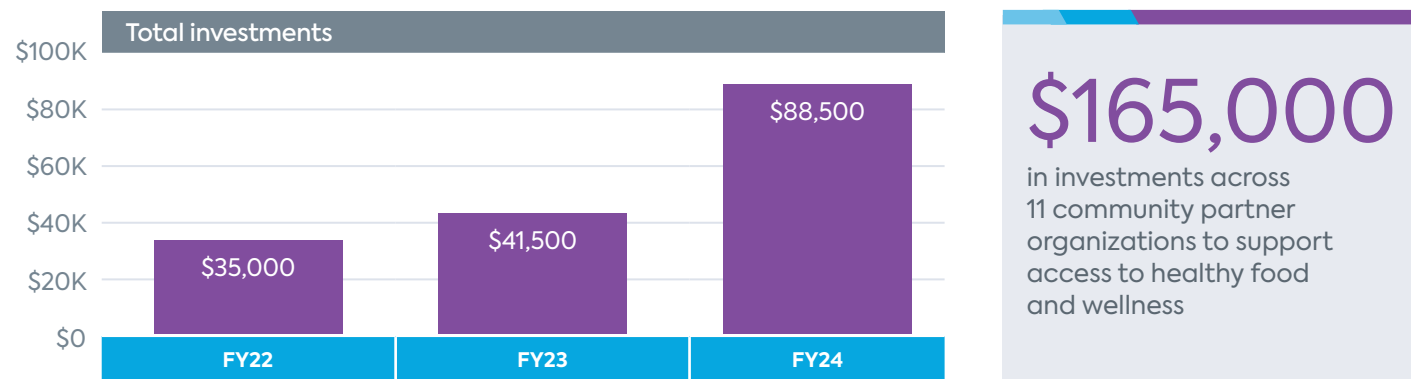
#### Open Hand

Wellstar team members packed over 2,562 meals, feeding 366 people

## Wellstar Strategic Community Development

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Strategic Community Development committed to increasing corporate social responsibility investments and provide positive social value through strategic partnerships and sponsorships focused on food access.

**Figure 18 | Community Development Investments – Food Access**



Community partner organizations included:

- **Atlanta Beltline:** Atlanta Beltline, a groundbreaking urban redevelopment project, connecting Atlanta through a historic 22-mile corridor.
- **Circles Douglas County:** Based on 25 years of working with communities across America, Circles has developed one of the most effective programs to support people out of poverty. Circles also brings together community resources and helps formulate a plan to help reduce a community's poverty rate by at least 10%. Circles Douglas County was started by First Presbyterian Church of Douglasville after a season of speaking with community leaders to determine how the church could work with the community to meet unmet needs in our county.
- **Circles Troup County:** Circles exists to identify and eliminate the causes of poverty and support those wishing to lift themselves out of poverty. We use a relational strategy to support both parents and children moving out of poverty while inspiring and equipping the community to reduce its poverty rate.
- **Food Well Alliance:** Since 2015, Food Well Alliance has engaged thousands of people annually around the issues of local food and has provided more than \$4 million in direct resources to over 300 farms, gardens, and local food organizations across our 5-county service area
- **MUST Ministries:** MUST Ministries mission is to serve our neighbors in need, transforming lives and communities in response to Christ's call. For 53 years, MUST has been a resource for struggling individuals who are experiencing poverty, homelessness or enduring other hardships. Today MUST's comprehensive services not only address immediate basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and healthcare, but also provide the resources and training needed for employment and self-sufficiency.
- **North Fulton Community Charities:** North Fulton Community Charities' mission is to help ease hardship and foster financial stability in our community. We deliver services through five key program areas: Assistance Services, SmartChoice Food Pantry, Clothing Choice, Education and Workforce Development, and Seasonal Programs.
- **Sweetwater Mission, Inc:** Sweetwater Mission works to stabilize families by preventing hunger and homelessness while transforming Lives through education and employment opportunities since 1968.



- **Master Gardener Volunteers of Cobb County:** The mission of the Wellness Garden is to increase access to free, fresh produce in the Cobb area to those in need and to teach recipients healthful ways of incorporating this produce into their diets. They provide local food banks with fresh organic produce on a weekly basis.
- **Our Giving Garden:** OGG is a nonprofit community farm and education space committed to interrupting poverty in the metro-Atlanta community through fresh produce donation, food access programs and nature-based education and green space access for all ages.
- **The Center for Family Resources:** The CFR aims to end childhood homelessness by serving and empowering families through prevention, crisis intervention, housing support, education, and compassionate care management.
- **The Drake House:** The Drake House mission is to empower women and their children experiencing homelessness to achieve economic independence and long-term stability.



## Wellstar Foundation

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Foundation committed to increasing investments from the philanthropic community that support equitable access to healthy food and wellness programs.



**SUCCESS STORY:** With philanthropic leadership, Wellstar drove awareness of food insecurity and hunger as a leading community need. Today, CEO of Goodr, Jasmine Crowe-Houston serves on the Wellstar Foundation Board and continues to keep health and wellness program support a priority. The Foundation also supported engagement of Wellstar Brand Ambassador Dominique Wilkins for public awareness campaigns.

# \$286,639

in Wellstar Foundation investments to support Wellstar on Wheels Mobile Market and the Wholesome Wave Georgia bilingual Benefits Specialist



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about Wellstar's food insecurity outreach, promoted by Dominique Wilkins.









# Housing

Health extends far beyond the walls of our hospitals and practices. Housing insecurity, including homelessness and the constant threat of eviction, creates significant barriers to achieving and maintaining good health, and we believe addressing this issue is crucial to our mission of caring for our communities. At Wellstar, we are committed to working with our community partners to advocate for policies and programs that address the root causes of housing insecurity and provide pathways to stable, affordable housing for all.

## Housing Learning Community

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to engaging in collaborative professional learning to strengthen the working knowledge of the housing crisis in Georgia.

Wellstar assembled a working committee to assess the needs of unhoused patients. The committee implemented an electronic medical record flag to identify patients who frequently use the emergency room, regardless of their ability to pay. Wellstar then assigned two social workers to provide on-site care in the busiest emergency room (at Kennestone Regional Medical Center) to assist these patients.

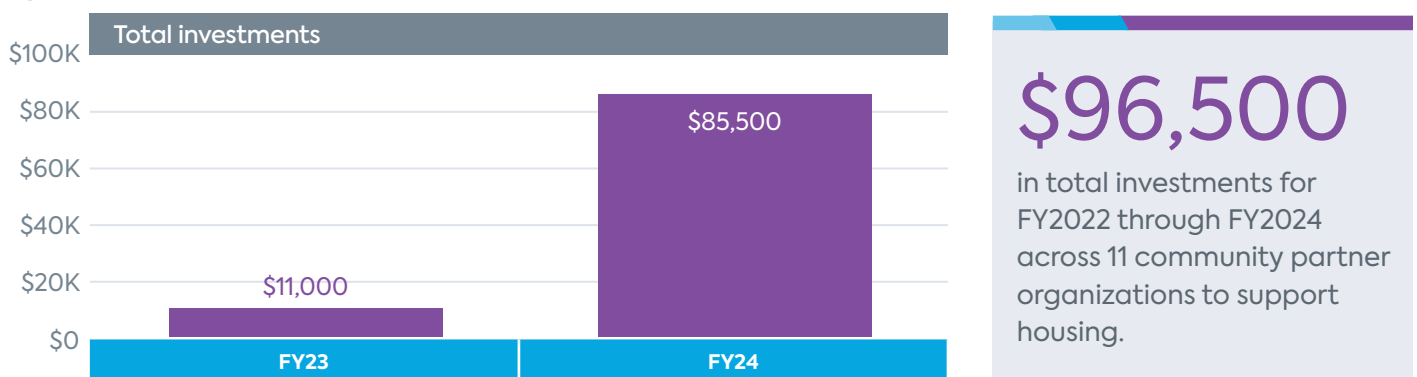
Our work extended beyond Wellstar's walls, as we participated in the Cobb County 2024 Point in Time Count of unhoused residents of our communities. Our community participation also included representation on the Cobb County Continuum of Care, and its accompanying Stella Modeling Program for Housing Resources. As a working member of Project HEAL (Homeless Empowerment through Accessible Living), a regional consortium of governmental, healthcare, housing, and private organization partners, Wellstar accesses a shared housing coordinator committed to helping our health system staff understand local housing resource referral pathways to refer unhoused patients into housing.

Wellstar remains committed to addressing the non-medical social needs of our patients and communities. We know that by addressing needs such as food access, transportation, and housing, we can positively influence the health and wellbeing of every person we serve.

## Community Development

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increasing corporate social responsibility investments and to providing positive social value through strategic partnerships and sponsorships in housing.

**Figure 19 | Community Development Investments – Housing**



Community partner organizations included:

- **Bullock Foundation, Inc.:** The Bullock Foundation, Inc. (aka Bullock Hope House) provides complimentary housing to the patient and their family/caregiver, receiving medical treatment.
- **Cobb Moms Helping Cobb:** Cobb Moms Helping Cobb is a group that crowdfunds resources for families with children in Cobb County to help with basic needs. The group assists with housing, utilities, food, and other needs to support Cobb parents in providing stability for their family.
- **Covenant House Georgia:** For more than 20 years, Covenant House Georgia has been the only agency in Metro Atlanta to provide a comprehensive suite of programs, services, and access to resources for youth and young adults ages 16-24 experiencing homelessness and escaping trafficking.
- **Harmony House Domestic Violence Shelter:** Harmony House provides around-the-clock residential shelter and safety to domestic violence victims and their children.
- **MUST Ministries:** MUST Ministries mission is to serve our neighbors in need, transforming lives and communities in response to Christ's call. For 53 years, MUST has been a resource for struggling individuals who are experiencing poverty, homelessness or enduring other hardships. Today MUST's comprehensive services not only address immediate basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and healthcare, but also provide the resources and training needed for employment and self-sufficiency.
- **North Fulton Community Charities:** North Fulton Community Charities' mission is to help ease hardship and foster financial stability in our community. We deliver services through five key program areas: Assistance Services, SmartChoice Food Pantry, Clothing Choice, Education and Workforce Development, and Seasonal Programs.
- **North Fulton Improvement Network:** The North Fulton Improvement Network is a think tank made up of community leaders from a variety of sectors, including business, nonprofit, faith, government, and citizens. These leaders address the widespread, yet still little-known housing crisis across the region.
- **The Center for Family Resources:** The CFR aims to end childhood homelessness by serving and empowering families through prevention, crisis intervention, housing support, education, and compassionate care management.
- **The Drake House:** The Drake House mission is to empower women and their children experiencing homelessness to achieve economic independence and long-term stability.
- **The Extension:** The Extension, Inc. is a semi-independent residential, CARF-accredited, THOR-approved, ASAM Level 3.1 substance use disorder treatment program for individuals, aged 25 and older. The organization has an 80-bed campus for men and a 24-bed campus for women.
- **Urban League of Greater Atlanta:** The Urban League of Greater Atlanta is a dedicated, person-to-person organization invested in the economic success of African Americans, coaching them to a better life.





# Pediatrics

Being responsive to the unique health needs of children is not just a medical imperative, it's a vital investment in the future of our communities. Ensuring children have access to comprehensive, age-appropriate care is crucial for their healthy development and long-term well-being. This includes addressing not only physical health needs but also mental and emotional health. At Wellstar, we partner with families and community organizations so that every child has an opportunity to thrive.

## Child Health Screening

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to provide comprehensive screening of pediatric patients to gain valuable insight into the child's family life, safety, education and social capital, and opportunities for physical activity.

Wellstar Pediatrics cares for the physical, mental, and social health of children from birth to young adulthood throughout surrounding communities. From preventive health care to the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses, pediatric care encompasses a broad spectrum of health services, including newborn nursery and neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) services, primary care pediatrics, urgent care/after hours and emergency care pediatric services, inpatient pediatrics, pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) services, pediatric surgical services, and various pediatric subspecialty services.

### Achievements:

- Increased pediatric subspecialty services available to patients/ families, such as Pediatric Cardiology, Pediatric ENT, Pediatric General Surgery, Pediatric Neurology, Pediatric Orthopedics, and Pediatric Urology.
- Opened the Wellstar Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Wellstar Kennestone Regional Medical Center in April 2024, allowing care for pediatric patients with more severe illnesses closer to home.
- Integrated Behavioral Health resources/services at certain pediatric offices in conjunction with the Behavioral Health Service Line.

## Childhood Lipid Screening

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increase childhood lipid screening to prevent early childhood heart disease and enhance the education towards healthy lifestyle modifications.

Wellstar established the need for lipid screening to be performed on patients initially between the ages of 9-11 years old and again between 17-21 years old or as risk warrants. If a patient is identified as high risk due to a lipid screening, they will be referred to subspecialty for follow-up care.

## Depression Screening in Adolescents

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increasing depression screening to identify early symptoms of clinical depression and identify need for referral.

# 59%

of patients ages 9-11 years old received lipid screenings in FY2022, and 58% of patients ages 9-11 years old received lipid screenings in both FY2023 & FY2024.

# 70%

of patients ages 12 and older were screened for depression in FY2024.



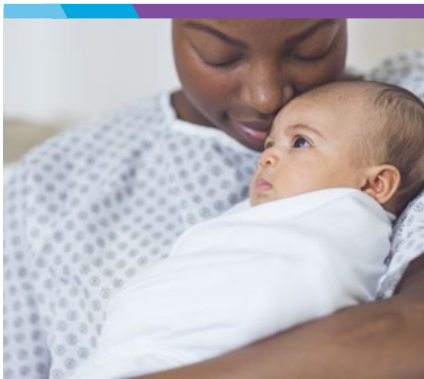
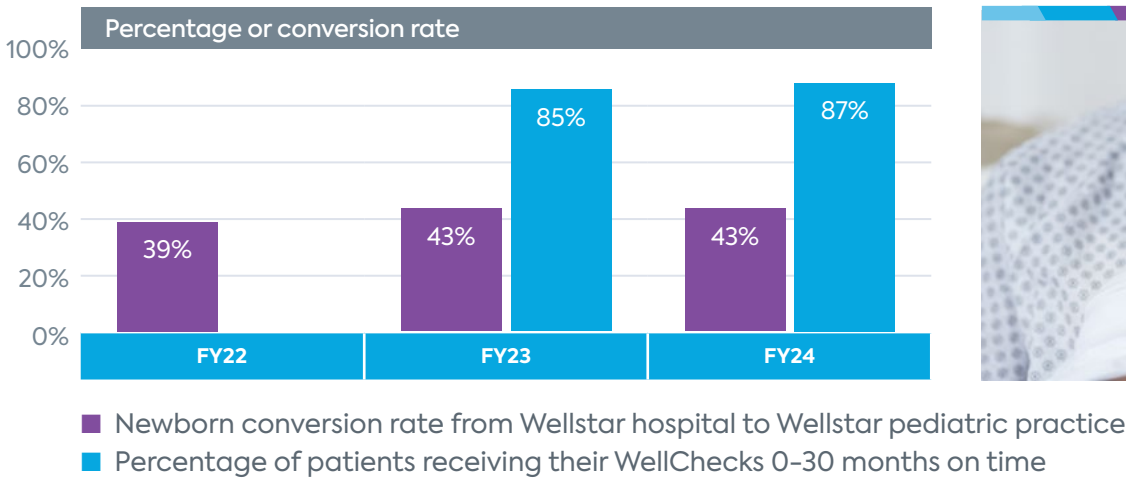
Patients identified as having depression are referred to a behavioral health specialist. Behavioral Health Specialists are being embedded in the Wellstar pediatric practices over time to increase access. In fiscal year 2024, Wellstar embedded a behavioral health specialist at Wellstar Towne Lake Pediatrics.

Medical Home Access

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to guaranteeing that every newborn born at a Wellstar facility has a Pediatric Medical Home, is seen within 24-48 hours, and receives timely completion of 0-30 months well visits.

All newborns born at a Wellstar Hospital can be seen at any Wellstar Pediatric Practice if the parent chooses. All Wellstar Pediatric Practices monitor WellChecks to ensure that patients are seen timely and receive appropriate vaccines. If a patient misses an appointment, the staff will contact the parent to attempt to get the child in for the missed appointment.

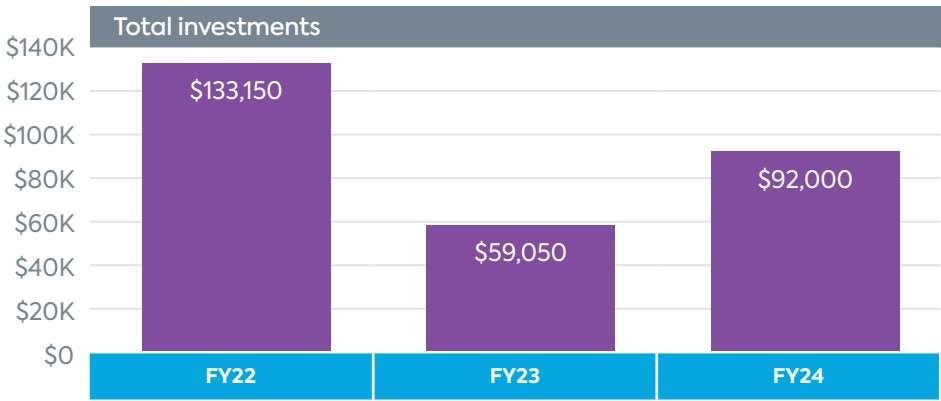
Figure 20 | Pediatric Medical Home Access



Community Development

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increasing corporate social responsibility investments and to providing positive social value through strategic partnerships and sponsorships in pediatrics.

Figure 21 | Community Development Investments – Pediatrics



**\$284,200**

in total investments for FY2022 through FY2024 across 16 community partner organizations to support pediatrics.

Community partner organizations included:

- **American Academy of Pediatrics–Georgia Chapter:** The AAP-GA aims to improve the health and welfare of all the infants, children, and adolescents in the State of Georgia
- **Camp Kudzu:** Camp Kudzu’s mission is to educate, empower, and inspire children, teens, and families living with type 1 diabetes.
- **Cobb Public Safety/Safe Kids of Cobb County:** Safe Kids Cobb County is one of more than 400 U.S. Coalitions and 30 Member Countries that bring together health and safety experts, educators, corporations, foundations, governments, and volunteers to educate and protect families.
- **Griffin–Spalding Partners in Education:** Griffin–Spalding Partners in Education serves as the bridge between the students of Spalding County and the business and civic community.
- **Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia:** HMHBGA works to improve maternal and infant health through our collective advocacy, education, and access to vital resources.
- **Illuminate Justice:** The Illuminate Justice mission is to prevent child trafficking and pursue justice for the vulnerable. We strategically focus on prevention efforts within the child welfare system as youth in foster care and involved in juvenile justice are disproportionately impacted by these types of harms.
- **Kids Chance of Georgia:** Kids Chance of Georgia provides educational scholarships to the children of Georgia workers who have been seriously or fatally injured in work-related accidents.
- **Lutzie Foundation:** The Lutzie 43 Foundation aims to end distracted, impaired, and unsafe driving by encouraging and empowering all drivers to be positive ambassadors for safe driving through character development, mentorship, and real-world application.
- **March of Dimes:** The March of Dimes mission is to lead the fight for the health of all moms and babies. Our goals are to end the preventable maternal health risks and deaths, end preventable preterm birth and infant death, and close the health equity gap. Wellstar partners with MOD on the NICU Family Support program, and the annual March for Babies events.
- **McKenna Farms Therapy Services:** McKenna Farms is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing therapeutic services for children and young adults with special needs.
- **Paulding Cops for Kids, Inc.:** All proceeds from the “Cops for Kids” program are used to provide Christmas and other needs throughout the year for less fortunate children of Paulding County.
- **SafePath Children’s Advocacy Center:** SafePath is committed to reducing trauma to children and families and providing them with the resources and assistance they need to begin to heal and go on to live happy, healthy lives in the future.
- **Stepping Stones Educational Therapy Center:** Stepping Stones seeks to educate children, challenging each child to reach his or her fullest potential academically, physically, and emotionally.



- **The Children's Haven:** The Children's Haven exists to promote the health and happiness of children impacted by abuse.
- **The Cobb County Safety Village Foundation:** The Cobb County Safety Village Foundation works to build safer communities through advocacy and education.
- **Twin Cedars Youth and Family Services:** The agency provides safe housing for children and teens via foster care homes and the three residential homes.

The Children's  
**HAVEN**



**Twin Cedars**  
YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES, INC.

## Wellstar Foundation

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increasing investments from the philanthropic community that support equitable child health.

Wellstar Foundation leveraged relationships that align with an interest in child health for the purpose of philanthropy, and brought awareness and funding for child health by focusing on Wellstar Pediatrics and our new partnership with the Children's Hospital of Georgia.

# \$2,225,000+

in Wellstar Foundation investments to support pediatrics from FY2022 to FY2024.



## \$225,000

to Cobb and Douglas Public Health  
"Babies Born Healthy" program

**Wellstar**  
Foundation

## \$1 million

raised through the Wellstar  
Foundation Gala



**CALLAWAY**  
FOUNDATION, INC.  
EST. 1943

## \$1 million

received from the  
Callaway Foundation

**SUCCESS STORY:** In November 2022, with the support of philanthropy and partners through the Literacy and Justice for All initiative, Wellstar launched Small TALK at 13 of its pediatric offices in Cobb County. In February 2024, Small TALK received a \$1.1 million donation from the Callaway Foundation to expand to OB/GYN and pediatric offices in West Georgia and Wellstar West Georgia Medical Center's Mother-Baby Unit and NICU in LaGrange. Today, Wellstar uses its internal and community partnerships to help build a bridge and close gaps in healthcare and education. The Small TALK team attends community events with Marietta City Schools and Cobb Collaborative, among others. Wellstar is building a literacy ecosystem representing healthcare's involvement in the broader literacy space.



Click or scan the QR Code to  
learn more about Small TALK.



# Women's Health

**“Quality care for every woman, every time.” At Wellstar, we know that women’s health is not just a matter of individual well-being, it’s a cornerstone of community health. Wellstar is committed to providing comprehensive, compassionate care tailored to the specific needs of women. By prioritizing women’s health, we are ensuring a healthier Georgia for all people.**

## Doula Program

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increasing the availability of community doula programs and services.

The Wellstar Doula Program began in April 2023 with seed funding from a grant awarded by Cobb and Douglas Public Health and additional funds from the Wellstar Foundation and MolinaCares Accord. The mission of the doula program is to provide emotional and physical support to birthing families during pregnancy, labor, and postpartum. Program participants receive free comprehensive perinatal education including Childbirth, Newborn Care, and Breastfeeding classes. Birth partners are included in care and education from the very beginning, encouraging the building of strong families.

Additionally, expectant families in need receive resource support by way of referrals and assistance with housing, food and medication, monitoring equipment (blood pressure cuffs), and needed supplies for the newborn. Doulas build relationships with families and provide a consistent presence to support expectant mothers during doctor visits, birthing in the hospital, and home visits upon delivery.

Presently, the Wellstar Doula program has assisted more than 150 families deliver healthy infants since inception and there are more than 300 families enrolled in the program. Through this innovative relationship and support service, hundreds of families have been educated and provided doula support without the burden of cost and insurance.

Doula assisted patients report increased customer satisfaction, increased trust index and healthy outcomes for families. Noteworthy accomplishments include providing food resources for families living with food insecurity, housing resources for families facing eviction, and coordinated care for families needing disability support services. Additionally, there have been multiple safe catches for expectant mothers with high-risk conditions ensuring they received just-in-time care and education, decreased c-section rates, referrals supporting maternal mental health, and increased breastfeeding rates which have lasting effects for the future health of mothers and babies.



112

doula-assisted deliveries  
from FY2023 to FY2024



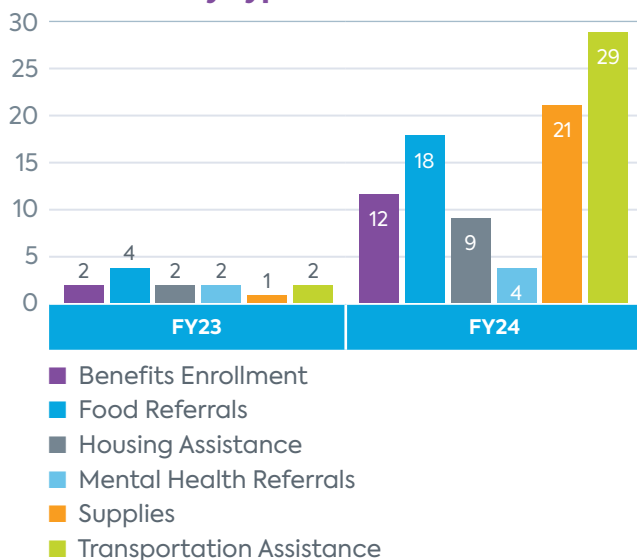
210

families provided with  
perinatal education from  
FY2023 to FY2024

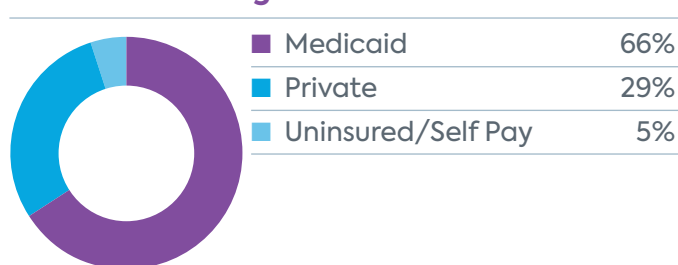


**Figure 22 | Women's Health Doula Program**

### Doula Referrals by Type



### Insurance Coverage of Doula Patients\*



\* percentages are an average for FY2023 and FY2024

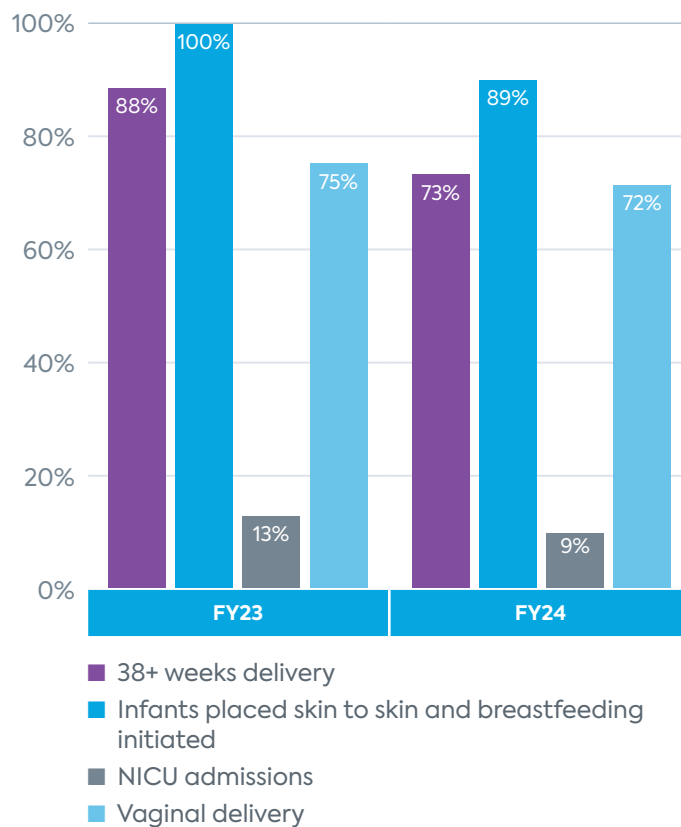
### Perinatal Education Program

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increasing skills, knowledge, and abilities through patient education.

The Perinatal Education Program provides community pre- and postnatal in-person, virtual, e-class, maternity tours, and support groups across Wellstar's six birthing locations. All other local health systems, and some private practices provide these offerings, rendering these services as a patient satisfaction, education, and quality expectation. Our program supports six Wellstar birthing hospitals and over 1,600 families with pre- and postnatal community education classes.

The Perinatal Education Program provides written Wellstar Medical Group (WMG) OB and GYN patient education and support services across Wellstar's footprint. The evidence-based education has also been proven to improve quality outcomes, patient satisfaction, and overall market perception. Our program supports more than 12,000 delivering patients with discharge education. The department also provides over 32,000 WMG patients with OB specific patient education for each obstetric WMG visit, as well as high-risk education based upon patient diagnosis.

### Clinical Outcomes of Doula Clients



**98,797**

total educational materials distributed from FY2022 to FY2024



**3,833**

patients and families served from FY2022 to FY2024

**SUCCESS STORY:** “I would say the most beneficial thing for us from the class was understanding how to breathe and what works for you during active labor. You really don’t know until that time comes but knowing how to breathe during those contractions was helpful. I would also recommend the peanut ball with an epidural as well as the wonderful educational materials you gave us. They really helped me a lot. Also just understanding the whole process of what is going to happen was beneficial because when they were telling us I could visualize what we went through during the class.”

**SUCCESS STORY:** A patient expressed gratitude to her childbirth educator, Ginnene, for the valuable knowledge gained in her class. Despite facing complications similar to her previous pregnancy, including a C-section after a long labor, she felt more in control and remained calm due to the understanding she acquired in Ginnene’s class. The patient emphasized the importance of the class in navigating the unexpected and acknowledged that the health of both mother and baby ultimately defines a successful birth.

**Perinatal Kit Program with Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies**

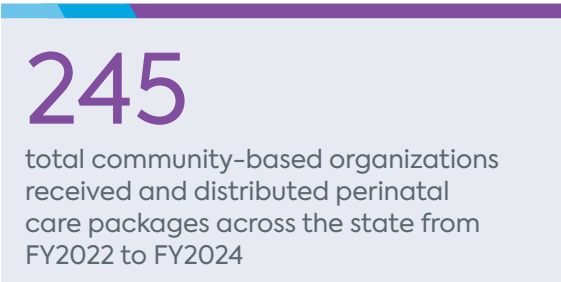
In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to distributing perinatal care packages monthly during the prenatal and postpartum period as an early intervention to maternal mortality and the effects of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, and other key drivers of maternal morbidity.

In 2022, Wellstar Community Health established a partnership with Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia (HMBGGA) to assist HMBGGA in expanding its Perinatal Care Package Project. Currently, the Wellstar Community Health and HMBGGA partnership distributes up to 200 care packages each month across the state of Georgia to people in need. Perinatal Care Packages provide the following essential items and education to package recipients:

- blood pressure monitoring device
- breast feeding storage bags
- compression stockings
- education surrounding maternal mental health, postpartum care planning, and accessing support groups and classes through the digital platform offered by HMBGGA known as Pickles and Ice Cream



Click or scan the QR Code for more information on how to access HMBGGA perinatal care packages.



**SUCCESS STORY:** In fiscal year 2024, a doula of the Wellstar Doula Program distributed one of the HMBGGA perinatal kit packages to a family receiving care at Wellstar. The mother delivered over the weekend and was discharged but began feeling sick soon after. She used the blood pressure cuff within her care package and found her pressure to be quite elevated. The doula advised that she return to the hospital for a check-up. Douglas Hospital readmitted the mother for several days over Thanksgiving due to postpartum preeclampsia. Thankfully, she was also able to have her baby remain with her during the stay. Wellstar takes pride in providing a perinatal care package, alongside a trusted relationship with a doula to guide quality care and safe health outcomes for families.

Women’s Health Safety & Quality Program

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to improving maternal outcomes related to key focus areas each year utilizing a process improvement cycle-based framework. The Women’s Health Safety & Quality Program is a structured initiative aimed at improving the safety, quality, and overall outcomes for our maternal population to ensure that patients receive the best possible care at all seven of our Wellstar birthing facilities. Our team is focused on leading efforts to reduce identified risks of complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

Reaching a goal to provide high-quality care is based on implementation of best practices, clinical guidelines, and evidence-based approaches. This includes implementing standardized treatment protocols, nursing and OB provider education, monthly quality audits, and hardwiring for sustainability. Our OB clinical teams attend state-of-the-art simulation training annually to reinforce collaborative teamwork in the clinical setting in response to a maternal event.

Achievements:

As a member of the Georgia Perinatal Quality Collaborative (GaPQC), Wellstar has successfully implemented components of three Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) patient safety bundles at all birthing facilities addressing the leading known causes of preventable severe maternal morbidity (SMM) and mortality: Obstetric Hemorrhage, Severe Hypertension in Pregnancy, and Safe Reduction of Primary Cesarean Birth. Recognized for the work being done in the maternal space, Wellstar received two Georgia Hospital Association awards in 2022, and 2023. Currently, through GaPQC, Wellstar Kennestone Hospital and Wellstar Medical College of Georgia partake in the nation’s first cohort implementing a focus on AIM’s Cardiac Conditions in Obstetrical Care patient care bundle, leading to the planned implementation of a system-wide Cardio Obstetrics Program in 2025.

**SUCCESS STORY:** As part of the obstetric hemorrhage bundle focus, the 2023 implementation of a standardized process to measure quantitative blood loss (QBL) in the birthing process ensures appropriate staging and clinical response to care for a patient experiencing an obstetrical hemorrhage. The QBL process is now hardwired with a more than 95% sustained monthly rate of compliance system wide.

From FY2022 to FY2024, Wellstar Health System has averaged an impressive

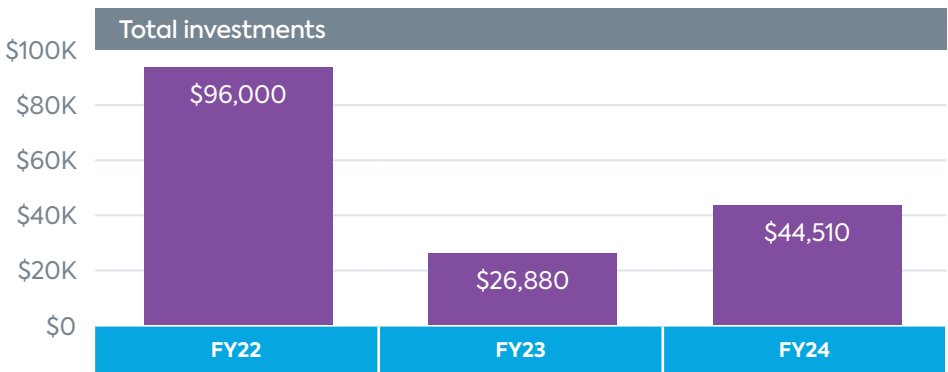
0.32%

SSM rate from a total of 121 cases of obstetric hemorrhage well below the 1.5% to 2% SMM benchmark set by the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists and Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine.

Community Development

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar committed to increasing corporate social responsibility investments (Figure 23) and to providing positive social value through strategic partnerships and sponsorships in women’s health.

Figure 23 | Community Development Investments – Women’s Health



\$167,390

in investments across 16 community partner organizations to support women’s health.

Community partner organizations included:

- **Butts County Pregnancy Center & Butts County Life Enrichment Team:** Butts County Pregnancy Center exists to help men and women through pregnancy, parenting, and sexual integrity that lead them to hope. Butts County Life Enrichment Team serves as the local decision-making body, bringing community partners together to develop, implement, and evaluate plans.
- **Cobb County Board of Commissioners:** The BOC is primarily responsible for the establishment of tax levies and service fees; approval of planning and zoning requests; amendment and adoption of county codes and ordinances; and the creation and adoption of a balanced budget.
- **Cobb County Government & Scrub Life Cares:** Scrub Life Cares is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization dedicated to serving women and youths in underserved communities by promoting Health & Education.
- **Cobb Moms Helping Cobb:** Cobb Moms Helping Cobb is a group that crowdfunds resources for families with children in Cobb County to help with basic needs. The group assists with housing, utilities, food, and other needs to support Cobb parents in providing stability for their family.
- **Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia:** HMHBGA works to improve maternal and infant health through our collective advocacy, education, and access to vital resources.
- **It's The Journey (Now known as GAABC):** Georgia Alliance for Breast Cancer's mission is to engage with Georgia's breast cancer community to increase access to care and reduce disparities in cancer outcomes. Wellstar supports the GAABC'S Giving Gala, the Celebrating Survivors Breakfast, and Georgia 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer each year.
- **The Links Incorporated, Magnolia Chapter:** The Magnolia (GA) Chapter of The Links Incorporated are accomplished and dedicated women who aim to spread friendship and service throughout Metro Atlanta.
- **LiveSafe Resources:** LiveSafe provides safety and support services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- **March of Dimes:** The March of Dimes (MOD) mission is to lead the fight for the health of all moms and babies. Our goals are to end the preventable maternal health risks and deaths, end preventable preterm birth and infant death, and close the health equity gap. Wellstar partners with MOD on the NICU Family Support program, and the annual March for Babies events.
- **Postpartum Support International (PSI), Georgia Chapter:** PSI increases awareness among public and professional communities about the emotional changes that women experience during pregnancy and postpartum. Wellstar supports the Black Maternal Mental Health Summit every year.
- **Rachel's Gift:** Rachel's Gift, Inc. collaborates with hospitals to provide specialized bereavement care for parents who lose a child to miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death.
- **The Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary:** The purpose of The Women's Auxiliary is to assist The Salvation Army Metro Atlanta Area Command in all its activities in the community and to provide volunteer workers for the many projects connected with its religious and humanitarian endeavors.





- **Wellstar West Georgia Enoch Callaway Cancer Center and Breast Friends for Life:** Breast Friends For Life is an organization that holds support groups and events on local, regional, and large scales throughout the year. The biggest event being Paint the Town Pink on the square in LaGrange.



## Wellstar Foundation

In the 2022 CHNA Implementation Plan, Wellstar Foundation committed to increasing investments from the philanthropic community that support women's health.

The Foundation leveraged relationships that align with an interest in women's health for the purpose of philanthropy, and raised funding through events, grants, and individual gifts.

# \$11,925,000

in Wellstar Foundation investments to support women's health from FY2022 to FY2024.



## \$225,000

donated to Cobb and Douglas Public Health "Babies Born Healthy" program



## \$1.2 million

raised through the Wellstar Foundation Gala



## \$5.5 million

awarded from the Health Resources and Services Administration to support Healthy Start

## \$5 million

donated by an anonymous individual donor

**SUCCESS STORY:** Wellstar Foundation hosted an Innovation Series event focused on Women's Health to bring together community leaders, government officials, corporations and other women's health organizations to discuss challenges and opportunities across the state. The first-of-its-kind event will shape Wellstar's collaborative approach to women's health improvement through innovative care models supported by philanthropy.

**SUCCESS STORY:** In 2024, with spearheading from Wellstar Foundation and Women's Health Service Line, Wellstar became the recipient of a 5-year, \$5.5 million, Healthy Start award from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Wellstar Healthy Start program integrates the OB/GYN care delivery model at Wellstar to directly impact the communities with the greatest need, including Spalding, Butts, and Troup counties. In fact, Troup County ranks among the worst maternal and infant mortality rates in the state.



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about Wellstar's Healthy Start Award.



# SAFEHANDS-ONCARE

PROVIDING TRUSTED, QUALITY CARE

# COVID-19 RESPONSE AND SUPPORT

Wellstar led an all-hands-on-deck effort to protect the communities that needed us the most through a historic pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic represented an unprecedented time for our community, state and nation. Amid the pandemic, Wellstar served as a trusted community anchor to keep our community members safe. The information below reflects key outcomes from our work from 2020 to 2023.

## Goal 1. Reduce Misinformation

Reduce misinformation through the distribution of health education for communities experiencing more than their fair share of the impact of COVID-19.

### Key Activities:

- Activated two nurses to support the Wellstar COVID-19 Call Center
- Served as a participating member of the Morehouse School of Medicine National COVID-19 Resiliency Network (NCRN)\*, facilitating virtual English-language and Spanish-language townhalls, and two community-based events (valued at \$5,000±) with faith partners in the Wellstar Congregational Health Network (CHN)
- Held a COVID-19 Vaccine Town Hall in Collaboration with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. centered on reaching the African-American community
- Held weekly COVID-19 briefings for the community at-large and faith partners within our CHN, in collaboration with Wellstar Spiritual Health, to communicate COVID-19 risk factors and current Wellstar Health System policies
- With support from Wellstar Foundation, partnered with the Center for Global Health Innovation (CGHI) to deploy Community Health Workers, and partnered with Ser Familia for two “Promotoras”
- Disseminated COVID-19 information through our “Wellstar on Wheels” Mobile Market, and within our sponsored “Perinatal Care Packages” partnership with Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia (HMHBGA)



### Virtual Health Education

- 1,190 local participants
- 14,000 national participants



### Outreach

- 1,300 encounters by Community Health Workers
- 45,000+ responsive calls in the call center



### Improved Accessibility

- Among a sample of events conducted in our Cobb and Douglas footprint, 63% (276 of 441) participants required translation services delivered by our Promotora.

## Outcomes:

### Goal 2. Improve Access

Improve access to care through the distribution of prevention resources for communities experiencing more than their fair share of the impact of COVID-19.

#### Key Activities:

- Partnered with Wellstar Supply Chain to distribute \$13,500± worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) to community clinics
- Dispersed \$50,000± to community clinics through the Wellstar Foundation-funded “Virtual Health Initiative” to build telehealth capacity
- Conducted walk-up, pop-up COVID-19 testing at churches and school lunch pick-up sites
- Co-labored with local public health and Wellstar Graduate Medical Education clinics to administer COVID-19 vaccinations at drive-up events, private homes, clinic sites, and at faith partner locations
- Distributed “COVID Care Bags” – featuring culturally and linguistically appropriate COVID safety information, at-home test kits, masks, and hand sanitizer – were through clinical and faith partners, and at community events facilitated by Wellstar Community Health



#### Testing Reach

- 3,635 COVID-19 tests completed
- Population data indicate 32.6% of Georgians identify as Black or African American. Community Health outperformed population expectations by testing 44.8% Black or African-American Georgians in their sample.
- Population data indicate 9.9% of Georgians identify as Hispanic or Latino. Community Health outperformed population expectations by testing 15.2% Hispanic or Latino Georgians in their sample.



#### Vaccination Reach

- 10,434 Vaccinations Administered
- Among a sample of Congregational Pop-Up events and one Wellstar Graduate Medical Education clinic event, Community Health experienced an average vaccine completion rate of 96.4%.
- 28% vaccination conversion at January 2023 “Health Day” event

## Achievements:

Wellstar’s engagement with the National COVID-19 Resiliency Network (NCRN) contributed to a national reach of over 1 million people. Wellstar was the first Georgia-based health system to become an NCRN partner.



Click or scan the QR Code to learn more about NCRN.

**SUCCESS STORY:** At Wellstar, we understand that reaching vulnerable populations requires more than just offering services – it involves building trust, breaking down barriers, and meeting people where they are. One of our most successful initiatives has been our partnership with faith communities through the Wellstar Congregational Health Network. This network plays a pivotal role in reaching underserved populations, particularly the Black, Brown, and undocumented worker communities.



One standout partnership was with a local church that hosted three separate COVID vaccination events with Wellstar. The church provided Spanish interpreters at each event, ensuring that Spanish-speaking community members could understand every step of the vaccination process. This service significantly reduced the language barrier that often prevents many from accessing healthcare.

The church members themselves played a key role in encouraging hesitant individuals. Their reassurance and trust in the Wellstar team allowed community members to feel more comfortable with the process. One church member, a young man, went above and beyond by going home to bring back his mother and aunt so they could also get vaccinated. This personal gesture highlights the deep trust fostered during this outreach.

As a result, Wellstar successfully vaccinated 138 Spanish-speaking community members at this church alone. Through a combination of language support, transportation assistance, and a focus on reducing fear, Wellstar made a real impact in a traditionally medically underserved community. This success demonstrates the importance of culturally responsive healthcare interventions and community partnerships in achieving health equity.



