WELLSTAR HEALTH SERVICES CONTRIBUTES NEARLY $9 MILLION TO EXPAND KSU NURSING PROGRAM

Partnership Includes $2.5 Million for Student Scholarships and a $6.2 Million Grant for New Faculty and Staff

MARIETTA, Ga. (Feb. 14, 2020) — Building on their longstanding relationship, Kennesaw State and WellStar Health Systems are partnering to address Georgia’s nursing shortage.

In support of the University’s goal of doubling enrollment in its nursing program, WellStar will provide a $2.5 million gift to create an endowment that will fund annual nursing scholarships in perpetuity, and a grant worth $6.2 million over five years to fund the hiring of new nursing faculty and support staff. The partnership also includes a grant to fund the hiring of up to 32 faculty members and 20 new staff positions by 2025 to support the increase in student enrollment. Additionally, WellStar will seek to increase its clinical nurse training capacity on an annual basis to proportionally accommodate the projected growth in nursing student enrollment.

It is estimated that by 2030 Georgia will have the sixth worst nursing shortfall in the country. Some analysts predict the shortfall will result in several thousand fewer nurses than can meet the healthcare need in Georgia.

“Kennesaw State is fortunate to have a partner like WellStar Health System who shares our commitment to excellence and community service, who believes in the potential of our students, and who supports the work of our faculty and staff,” said KSU President Pamela Whitten. “We appreciate their generosity, and we look forward to partnering with them to address this critical issue facing our state and country.”

The WellStar Excellence in Nursing Scholarship will fund at least 50 scholarships annually to eligible KSU students. Currently, there are approximately 500 students in the WellStar School of Nursing, and the plan is to increase that number by 20 percent each year, with an ultimate goal of increasing enrollment to more than 1,000 future nurses over a five-year period.

“We are excited about expanding our long-standing partnership with Kennesaw State University and the WellStar School of Nursing though this scholarship and grant,” said Candice Saunders, president and CEO of Wellstar Health System. “Proactively working together to address the nursing shortage aligns with our vision of delivering world-class healthcare to every person, every time. Wellstar and KSU have a shared commitment to educating and training nurses who provide high-quality, compassionate care for the people and communities we serve.”

Kennesaw State nursing students consistently outpace the national figures for first-time pass rates on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, in January 2019, 100% of Kennesaw State Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates passed the NCLEX, well above the 89 percent figure nationwide.

Kennesaw State and WellStar have been collaborating for more than 40 years, formalizing their partnership in 2003 when the University added the WellStar moniker to its College of Health and Human Services and School of Nursing in recognition of an agreement that strengthened the relationship between Georgia’s third-largest university and one of the top producers of nurses in the state. Most recently, the National Institutes of Health awarded KSU and WellStar a grant to jointly address the
bioethical issues faced by individuals experiencing social and/or economic hardships when trying to manage their healthcare needs.

ABOUT WELLSTAR HEALTH SYSTEM
At Wellstar, people are at the center of everything we do, and we are focused on **More than healthcare. PeopleCare.** Nationally ranked and locally recognized for our high-quality care, inclusive culture, and exceptional doctors and caregivers, Wellstar Health system is one of the largest and one of the most integrated healthcare systems in Georgia. Our state-of-the-art facilities include: 11 hospitals; 300+ medical office locations; 9 cancer centers; 55 rehabilitation centers; 3 hospice facilities; 1 retirement village; 21 imaging centers; 15 urgent care locations; and 5 health parks. Every day, our team of 24,000+ healthcare professionals provides personalized care for patients at every age and stage of life. As a not-for-profit health system, our passion for people extends beyond our system and into the communities we serve. Each year, Wellstar thoughtfully reinvests in the creation of healthier communities through prevention and wellness programs, and charity care for eligible patients. The Wellstar Foundation supports our mission with funding for equipment, services, programs, and more. To learn more about Wellstar, visit wellstar.org.

ABOUT KENNESAW STATE
A leader in innovative teaching and learning, Kennesaw State University offers more than 150 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees to its approximately 38,000 students. With 13 colleges on two metro Atlanta campuses, Kennesaw State is a member of the University System of Georgia and the third-largest university in the state. The university’s vibrant campus culture, diverse population, strong global ties and entrepreneurial spirit draw students from throughout the region and from 92 countries across the globe. Kennesaw State is a Carnegie-designated doctoral research institution (R2), placing it among an elite group of only 6 percent of U.S. colleges and universities with an R1 or R2 status, and one of the 50 largest public institutions in the country. For more information, visit kennesaw.edu.

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