

State of the Piedmont Clinic:

Value Report

Increasing clinical innovation and expanding access across Georgia
Physician-led programs drive quality and safety outcomes



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Piedmont 2024©

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Increasing clinical innovation and expanding access

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Catherine Dekle, M.D., PPG Midtown and Carla Kelly



A message from Piedmont Clinic leadership

What began as an Atlanta-based physician hospital organization over 20 years ago has evolved into a clinically integrated, physician-led, health care delivery organization that works collaboratively to better serve patients and expand access to communities across Georgia.

This past year, the Piedmont Clinic continued to innovate, grow, develop and strive beyond that initial vision, now providing access to physician services in communities comprising 80% of all Georgians.

Physician leaders from throughout the footprint worked together to increase quality of treatment, track progress toward Zero Harm and improve overall health care for Georgians, no matter their Zip code. Clinical Governance Councils (CGCs) and task forces, spearheaded by passionate physicians, continued providing leadership and guidance while navigating new

treatment protocols and care complexities, empowering physicians with the knowledge to continue delivering the highest quality, safety, service and standard of care.

As it has developed, the Piedmont Clinic's culture of looking for a better way has only grown stronger, encouraging physicians to continually innovate, collaborate and use the power of an integrated system to serve patients beyond the capabilities of any one practice.

Now, as the Piedmont Clinic looks forward, we are reimagining the way we can strategically lead such an enterprise by shifting our leadership structure to match the diversity of geographies and specialties of the Piedmont Clinic. We will continue in our steadfast pursuit of Zero Harm and our efforts to rethink and standardize the overall patient experience.

We know the Piedmont Clinic's continued and future success would not be possible without our members, board of directors, Clinical Governance Councils, multidisciplinary and administrative support team members, various committees and leadership. Thank you for your tireless commitment to innovation and improvement, your fervent belief in your work, your colleagues and the Piedmont Clinic, and your unwavering dedication to the patients and communities we serve.

Chris Lloyd
President
Piedmont Clinic

Archie Roberts, M.D.
Chairman
Piedmont Clinic Board of Directors



Piedmont Clinic quality and safety

For several years now, clinicians across the Piedmont system have taken a critical look at quality metrics, shifting their view from broad, sweeping health care safety and quality scores, to look deeper and more specialty-specific.

Physician leaders considered their own specialties and the most common issues they face and established quality scorecards to measure and improve care and outcomes at every stage. Now, each Clinical Governance Council (CGC) has its own customized set of quality metrics — in addition to Piedmont’s overarching quality and safety goals. These metrics have also been incorporated systemwide into hospital scorecards, leading to further standardization and systemization that allows the clinically integrated network to fulfill its highest function.

Established by the same physicians who will be measured, these metrics have instilled both a new methodology and culture around quality measurement and improvement, ensuring personal investment and buy-in at every level.

“We have continued to see an incredible cultural shift among physicians to embrace quality measurement and safety programs like never before and collaborate across the CGCs to solve more complex health care problems. Physician leaders are empowered to set new standards and to measure what matters most to patients.”

Leigh Hamby, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer, Executive Vice President
and Chief Quality Officer



The old adage stands — you can’t move what you can’t measure. The CGC structure has empowered physicians to set their own quality goals and standards, making the collected data more meaningful and accurate than ever. With focused, deliberately collected metrics, performance improvement has become easier to track and strategically support.

Piedmont’s plan on a page



With specialty-specific, yet standardized quality metrics, the Piedmont Clinic has realized efficiencies in treatment and empowered physicians to better identify and close gaps in patient care.

As physicians continue to analyze metrics in their scorecards, the quality goals continue to iterate and develop. The CGCs are also finding opportunities to learn from one another, establishing relevant metrics across specialties to better measure patient care.

Every six months, with each new scorecard, physicians are learning new information, tracking improvements and further developing the scorecards to measure the most crucial data and ensure patients are receiving the highest possible standard of care — no matter their Zip code, all at a lower cost.

This year, Total Recall has been a billboard safety initiative. As part of the Total Recall program, Piedmont Clinic members systemwide have challenged themselves on their ability to recite the 11 Piedmont error prevention tools, which are designed to mitigate errors in care at every step of care delivery.

This initiative is intended to set a baseline culture of patient safety that is ingrained in the Piedmont Clinic. This culture centers the patient in every medical decision, no matter the caregiver or type of care.



“Over the last two years, we’ve redoubled our efforts to train Piedmont Clinic members on error prevention tools, improving safety for patients at each and every stage of care. Industrywide, 80% of errors can be eliminated just by using the 11 tools we’ve created, and we’ve seen tremendous physician engagement on internalizing and implementing these tools at the CGC and service line level.”

Moiz Master, M.D.
Chair, Multispecialty
Clinical Governance Council



Expanding access while deepening specialty and community care

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Keith Zimmerman, M.D.,
PPG Oconee Health Center Family Practice

Care close to home

Physicians from communities around Georgia have been introduced to the Piedmont Way, seen the efficiencies of a physician-led, clinically integrated network and increasingly joined the Piedmont Clinic, bringing new perspective and expertise to the Piedmont family.

The addition of Piedmont Clinic members in our newest communities is helping Piedmont better meet the health care needs of patients across Georgia, increasing the total number of covered lives and giving more patients access to the right care, at the right level, close to home.

The Piedmont Clinic has also aimed to reduce costs and increase efficiency through expanded access to care, enabling greater reach and providing communities with deeper services over time. As an example, many patients enter the Piedmont system through the retail and urgent care network, which helps decrease the number of unnecessary emergency department visits, streamlining care and saving costs for both patients and providers.

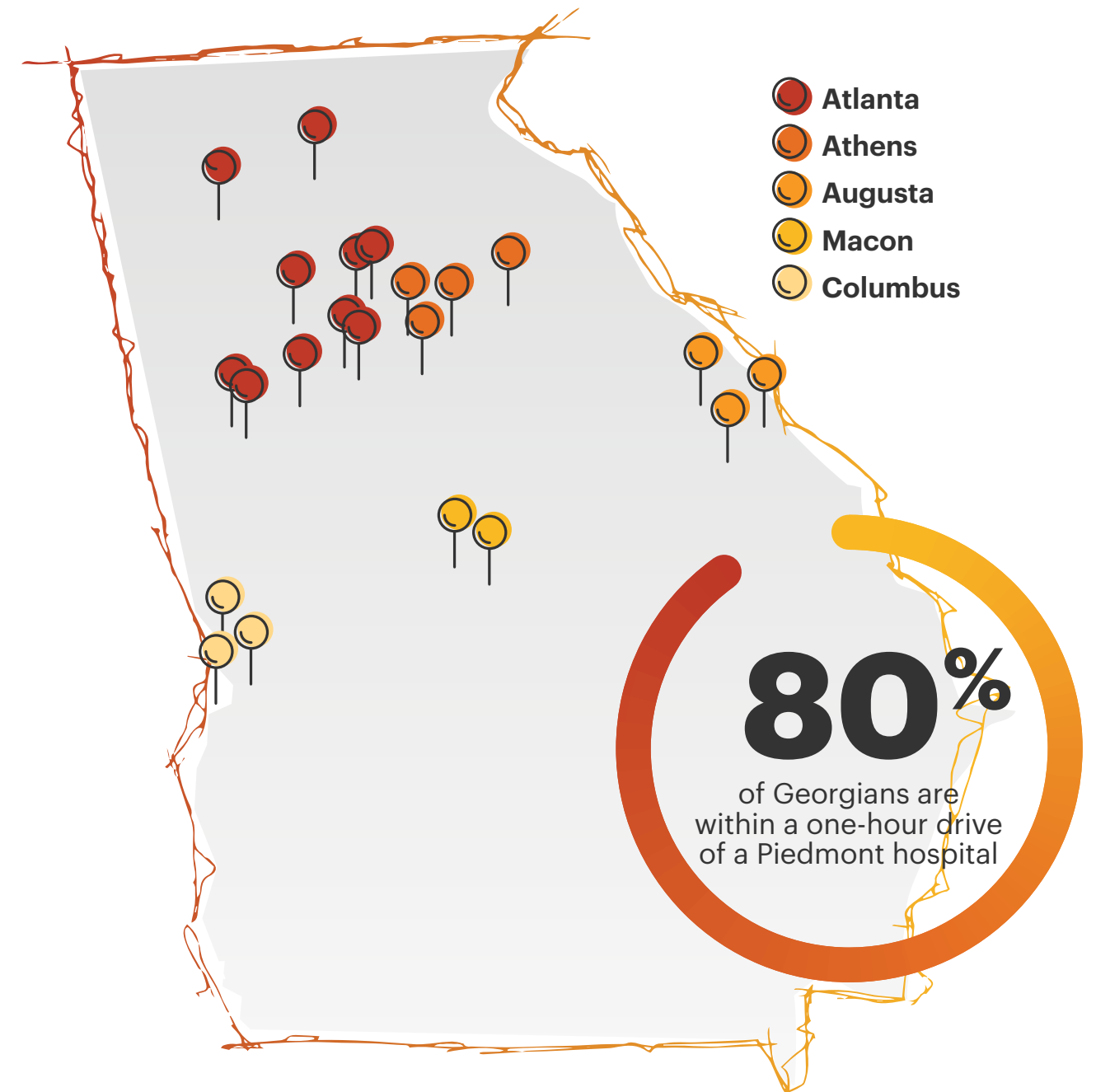
Amid a turbulent health care market, providers continue to be drawn to the Piedmont Clinic — now 3,200 physicians strong — by the physician-led structure that empowers involvement and ownership of quality at all levels of the system.

Piedmont Urgent Care

Over 1.3 million
patients were seen by Piedmont Urgent Care
between September 2022 and August 2023

In the trailing 12 months (September 2022-August 2023), Piedmont Urgent Care saw roughly 1.3 million patients with 312,000 patients activated into the Piedmont network within 120 days of the Urgent Care visit.

Piedmont facilities statewide





Engaging and partnering with communities

As the Piedmont Clinic has expanded within communities across the state, Piedmont Clinic members have redoubled efforts to improve health care access and decrease the costs of care, as well as focus intentionally and meaningfully on areas of health needs specific to the individual communities served.

Outside of the clinical setting, social determinants of health, including food and housing insecurity, impact the health needs of individuals and communities.

Empowering You



This year, Piedmont launched a new social care platform to connect patients and clinicians with free and reduced-cost community resources. In line with Piedmont's efforts to bring the right level of care to patients where they need it most, Empowering You creates connections to resources that address social determinants of health barriers, such as access to food, housing, transportation, financial support and more for patients, the public, Piedmont clinical staff and providers.

Since the pilot launched in January 2023, Piedmont has screened over 35,000 patients for social determinants of health barriers across all entities, both inpatient and ambulatory. With data and insights from the platform, Piedmont will be better able to serve all Georgians through community impact efforts across the system. To date, staff and patients have performed over 28,000 searches on the sites, resulting in nearly 6,500 connections and over 3,000 referrals.



A STARS-studded year

Piedmont continues to carry forward the practice of operational efficiency through Strategic Transformation and Resource Stewardship (STARS). The combined initiatives are deliberate steps Piedmont is taking across the system to reduce costs, eliminate waste, improve processes, expand market relevance and protect revenues.

Stewardship is at the center of all nonprofits — including Piedmont — because nonprofits rely on community assets or donations and must demonstrate that they use resources wisely. At Piedmont, exercising good stewardship means maximizing return on every dollar invested, while aligning efforts to support the Piedmont mission.

“The Piedmont Clinic is always looking to be prepared and ready for the next thing, the next innovation. Instead of being reactionary, we’re looking around corners for new ways to be effective.”

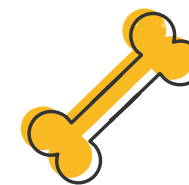
Katie Moore, M.D.
Piedmont Clinic Board Member



STARS in Clinical Governance Councils (CGCs)



Several CGCs started working closely with supply chain partners to help support Piedmont STARS initiatives this year. The Neurosciences, Orthopedics and Surgical Services CGCs have multiple projects underway to standardize the use of specific supplies that are intended to decrease variation, increase quality and result in standardized clinical outcomes, and subsequent cost savings, across the system.

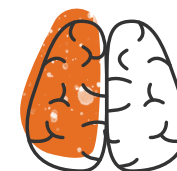


The Orthopedics CGC is partnering with supply chain to renegotiate several contracts, including total shoulder joint reconstruction surgery and sports medicine surgery.

Piedmont Orthopedics also achieved significant monetary savings for DePuy Synthes products due to product standardization efforts.



The Surgical Services and Orthopedic CGCs are both working to standardize the use of Mölnlycke postoperative dressings across the system which leads to increased quality and improved clinical outcomes.



The Neurosciences CGC is partnering with supply chain to renegotiate several contracts related to spinal surgery to lower overall patient costs and improve clinical outcomes by standardizing and consolidating vendors and implantation devices.

Comprehensive care across specialties

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Aloice Aluoch, M.D.,
Piedmont Eastside Rheumatology



Comprehensive care across specialties

Piedmont maintains an unwavering dedication to improving access to specialty care for all Georgians, no matter their Zip code. As the specialty service lines continue to grow across the statewide footprint, the Piedmont Clinic has seen significant growth in the number of patients as physicians have been better equipped with cross-specialty resources, support and treatment protocols to provide highly complex and comprehensive clinical care to every life touched.

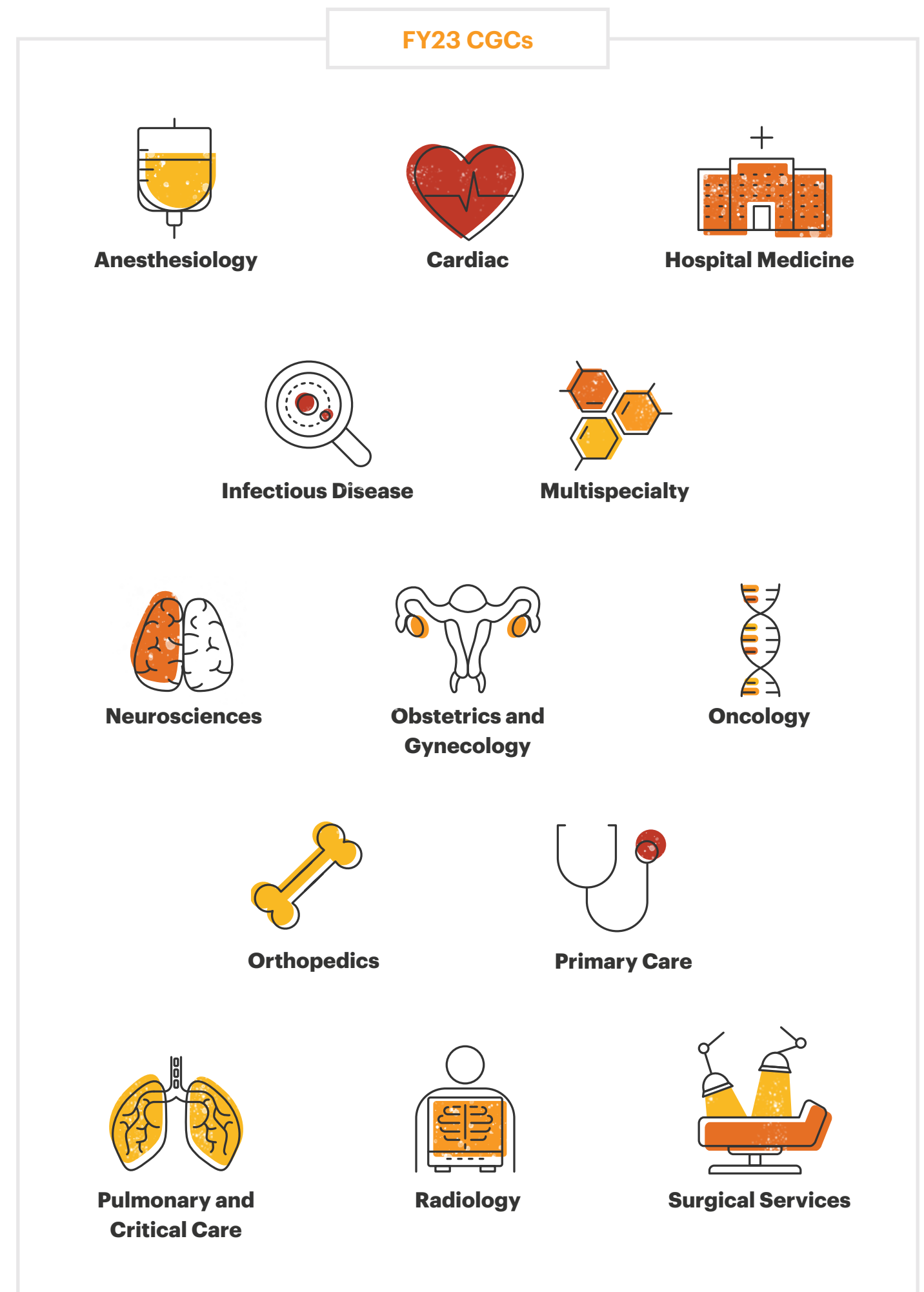
Patients with unique and complex health care needs can access the entire continuum of care through the Piedmont Clinic wherever they live in the state. Coordinating this care within the clinically integrated network of the Piedmont Clinic is critical to Piedmont's promise of expanding community reach to patients at the right level of care, when and where they need it most.

"As the Piedmont Clinic continues to grow and mature, it's been incredible to see the increasing collaboration across specialties and Clinical Governance Councils (CGCs). We've moved beyond the initial stage of building out the CGC structure and are now realizing what a truly clinically integrated network can provide for patients, and we've done this all with patient safety at the center."



Hindia Tahir, M.D.

Chair, Hospital Medicine Clinical Governance Council



Primary Care

Patients remain at the center of every decision made by primary and retail care physicians in the Piedmont Clinic. Over the past year, physician leaders in the Primary Care service line have maintained their quality standards and continued to collaborate and take an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving, all while expanding access to care across the state — including 12 new urgent care centers, making Piedmont the largest urgent care and primary care network in the state.

As patients increasingly enter the Piedmont network through urgent and retail care locations, this year, Primary Care is taking steps to further the integration of those locations with the larger service line, empowering acute care physicians to take a more holistic care approach

and improving care coordination between Primary Care and urgent and retail care providers.

With all 13 Clinical Governance Councils (CGCs) firmly established, Primary Care has functioned as a convener of physician leaders to establish wide-reaching programs that improve care delivery across the entire continuum of care — taking advantage of the clinically integrated network.

Primary Care physicians have spearheaded a task force to improve processes for colorectal screening in a partnership with Oncology and Gastrointestinal physicians. The task force is rolling out technological solutions to improve patient experience by eliminating redundant office visits and providing test results more efficiently. Primary Care is also leading a task force focused on improving hypertension and diabetic care, which has begun reaching out to additional



“It has been an incredible experience to watch and participate in the transformation of day-to-day practice brought about by the CGCs. Physicians and APPs on the ground are driven to practice high-quality medicine by the CGC committee work that leads to easy-to-follow Best Practice Advisories on the main electronic medical record. Interdisciplinary relationships built through in-person and virtual meetings facilitate communication outside of formal committee meetings to continue to drive excellence. For example, my ability to call up independent gastroenterologist Dr. Chokshi to discuss his practice’s quality and efficiency improvements in patient care was made possible by having met and worked with him at our primary care CGC Colorectal Cancer screening task force.”

Loida Bonney, M.D.
MPH, Piedmont Clinic Board Member

specialty physicians, including endocrinologists and population health scientists, to make further progress on goals to lower A1C levels.

Looking ahead, Piedmont is evaluating a retail imaging network to complement existing Primary Care and specialty practices in our communities and is launching an Executive Health Program, which will be rolled out as part of executive benefits programs in 2024.

Reconciling reconciliation

Primary Care has recently led the way on an initiative that will impact patients and physicians in all specialties across the Piedmont Clinic. Medication reconciliation — the practice of confirming and aligning a patient’s known prescriptions with actual prescriptions — is a crucial, but often overlooked, step in the health care process. When medications interact unknowingly, they can negatively impact patient outcomes and cause unnecessary delays in proper diagnoses. But collecting the prescription data from a patient’s physicians and pharmacists poses many administrative hurdles, that is, unless each of those roles are part of the same clinically integrated network. As the most common entry point for patients to the Piedmont Clinic, Primary Care has taken the lead in the effort to operationalize and improve medication reconciliation across the Piedmont Clinic in collaboration with five other CGCs — an initiative first launched by the Hospital Medicine CGC. This group is implementing technological, quality-focused solutions with the electronic medical record system, Epic, that will help patients and physicians alike.

“It’s amazing the problems we can solve together when we work as a system, as an integrated network. We get the best minds together, we brainstorm and then we work together to determine a path forward. The success we have seen — the achievements of the CGCs, the quality metrics we have reached — are proof of concept.”

Patrick Railey, M.D.
Primary Care, Medical Director, Piedmont Clinic



Primary care by the numbers



Oncology

Over the past year, the oncology service line has expanded patient access across the Piedmont footprint, entering new corners of the state, leading to changes in practice and continued innovations all while underscoring a paramount focus on safety.

Piedmont Oncology is expanding oncological offerings by recruiting top physicians, optimizing care coordination, strengthening interactions with other specialties and taking full advantage of the clinically integrated network with patients experiencing these improvements first-hand.

Over the past year, the service line adopted shorter breast hypofractionation periods for postlumpectomy radiotherapy. Implementing this new standardized treatment plan across oncology in the Piedmont Clinic reduced recurrence rates in breast tissue, while lowering care delivery costs by 25% to 30%.

Cancer risk management has been another area of focus during the past year for the service line. Piedmont has invested in a robust team of genetic counselors to offer genetic counseling and testing services across the Piedmont system. Genetic testing — especially in oncology — holds immense value to patients as it empowers them to proactively manage their cancer risk by identifying potential genetic predispositions. Through the Piedmont Clinic, counselors can work alongside medical oncologists to tailor individual care plans informed by data to the benefit of patients and their families.

In partnership with the Neurosciences service line, physician leaders have expanded their bench and brought an additional neuro-oncologist who is now leading more than a dozen clinical trials that offer cutting-edge treatments for patients. Oncology has



“We continue to make significant strides in cross-specialty interactions with all of our work directed toward driving research that offers the highest-quality and most advanced treatments to our patients.”

Andrew Pippas, M.D.
Chief of Oncology



also collaborated with Pulmonary and Critical Care to restructure and expand the systemwide lung cancer screening program that aids in early detection of lung cancer.

Piedmont Clinic oncologists remain focused on improving patient outcomes, innovating with new research and fostering an integrated approach to cancer treatment.

Knowledge is power: Genetic testing in cancer care



“As a medical oncologist, although I see a lot of cancer patients, only about 5% to 10% of all cancers are hereditary, meaning that they are caused by an inherited gene mutation that can run in a family. An example is the association of BRCA1/2 mutations with an increased risk of not only breast cancer, but also ovarian, prostate and pancreatic cancer. However, as our knowledge has grown, we have now identified even more hereditary cancer genes. Thus, genetic testing is helpful to identify individuals at increased risk for certain cancer and can help them make a personalized plan for cancer treatment, screening and prevention.

The Piedmont Cancer Genetic Program has a team that specializes in genetics and interpretation of genetic test results. While not everyone with cancer requires genetic testing, genetic risk assessment or testing can lead to changes in your medical management, such as increased screening or consideration of risk-reducing options. Additionally, genetic test results can sometimes guide a patient and their physician in determining what treatment is the best for them, thus providing truly personalized care. This information has been shown to be a game-changer in improving the survival of many cancer patients such as what we see in lung cancer, a cancer previously felt to truly be a death sentence. Now, because of targeted therapy, we have some stage IV lung cancer patients living for over two years — something that was unheard of a decade ago. So genetic testing can really save lives.”

Windy Dean-Colomb, M.D.
Piedmont Oncology

Neurosciences

The Neurosciences service line has continued making significant strides in creating awareness, driving expansion and garnering philanthropic support for the program over the past year.

Recruitment efforts to attract neurosurgeons and neurologists have been successful, leading to expanded neuroscience offerings across the Piedmont Clinic footprint and meeting growing patient needs in communities across the state.

Furthermore, 2023 marks the second year Piedmont Atlanta has been a DNV health care accredited Comprehensive Stroke Center, a recognition that clinicians at Piedmont Atlanta have met and exceeded all requirements needed to diagnose, treat and support stroke emergencies. This means that patients from across Georgia can access the highest standard of stroke care, regardless of zip code.

As Neurosciences continues to grow, Piedmont has become a preferred site for clinical trials in stroke and neuro-oncology, contributing to groundbreaking research and treatment options that directly benefit patients. These efforts have also led to increased collaboration between the neuroscience and oncology service lines, which will lead to further advances.

The reinvigoration of the Neurosciences CGC has also played an integral role in the standardization of the practice beginning with implementation of collaborative opportunities, such as stroke medical director meetings to better align on the goals of the program across the Piedmont Clinic footprint.

Philanthropy has played a pivotal role in Neurosciences' evolution, with a strategic plan in the works focused on expanding services beyond Atlanta as well as outreach and recruitment efforts and advanced technology, including robots for spine and cranial surgery and laser intracranial thermotherapy (LITT) for brain tumors and epilepsy.

As demand increases for neurological care systemwide, Neurosciences continues to innovate cutting-edge treatments for patients, and collaborate with other physician leaders to implement and standardize best practices with the ultimate goal of providing the most advanced neurological care to Georgians.



"Our success in recruiting neurosurgeons and neurologists has allowed us to expand our services and meet the growing needs of patients across the state, all while continuing to innovate new treatments and research."

Andrew Sloan, M.D.
Chief of Neuroscience,
FACS, Chief of Neurosciences Service Line



A blessing

Piedmont Clinic physicians are committed to caring for patients in their communities, treating emergent or life-threatening concerns as well as helping patients address issues impacting overall quality of life. Ms. Lucille is a Piedmont patient who was seen by **Kimberly Walpert, M.D.**, a neurosurgeon with Piedmont physicians in Athens, who helped her get back to doing what she loves.

Ms. Lucille is a feisty 68-year-old woman with a history of cervical myelopathy that was treated surgically in the past. She made a great recovery from her initial surgery and was back exercising and living an active lifestyle when she developed back and leg pain. She tried to treat the symptoms with her exercise and injections, but the pain soon prevented her from doing her favorite activities and the exercise she considered her "lifeline." Her pain doctor sent her back to Piedmont Athens, and she was found to have severe stenosis and spondylolisthesis, which physicians treated with a decompression and fusion.

She was back in the gym in three months, teaching her aerobics classes, busy and reminding her adult children to stay active so they could have a life like hers.

"The pain was so bad... Dr. Walpert, you and your team at Piedmont Athens are a blessing from God," Lucille said.

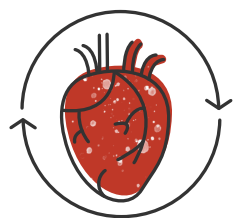
Cardiovascular

The Piedmont Clinic's Cardiovascular service line has received increased attention and accolades over the last year. Physician leaders are focused on growing and innovating as part of the Piedmont Heart Institute (PHI), making advancements in cardiac and valve transplants, all while increasingly performing and publishing more research.

The Piedmont Clinic and Cardiovascular leadership strive to provide physicians with the tools necessary to foster innovation, leading in first-in-human research, journal publications and international collaborations. The heart transplant program has thrived, performing over 70 transplants in the last year — a 564% increase in volume growth for the program. In addition to massive growth in transplantation, Piedmont is the second-highest volume LVAD center in the United States. Additionally, Piedmont Atlanta is a center of excellence for ECMO support and critical cardiac patient care. The structural heart program has continued to gain national prominence as a top three highest volume centers for transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) and leading national site for early feasibility studies.

Amid rising patient needs, the Cardiovascular service line will continue to innovate new treatments and therapies, collaborate with clinicians across the Piedmont Clinic footprint and bring the highest standard of cardiac care to Georgians where they need it most.

It takes a village



Gerald Robinson, suffering from heart failure, faced an uncertain wait on the national transplant list. Despite a rising number of organ transplants, he had not reached the top of the list. Finally, in the middle of the night on New Year's Day, a donor heart became available. The challenge was reaching the Robinsons in time — they were in Athens, while the donor heart was in Atlanta and the window for surgery needed to happen within four hours of the heart's arrival to the hospital. The Piedmont heart transplant coordinator enlisted local police and EMS for help finding and notifying the Robinsons. With their support, the Robinsons were notified and rushed to Piedmont Atlanta, where the surgery was successfully completed.

"As a national center for cardiovascular care and internationally recognized for research, we integrate leading science with clinical expertise to offer the broadest treatment options to our patients."

David Kandzari, M.D.

*Chief, Piedmont Heart Institute and Cardiovascular Service Line;
Director, Interventional Cardiology of the Piedmont Heart Institute*



The Piedmont Clinic's Cardiovascular service line has received national recognition for work improving access and deepening specialty cardiac care across the state, all while recognizing the highest-ever clinical volumes for inpatient and outpatient care. In fiscal year 2023, Cardiovascular has only continued this progress, realizing some of the highest transplant volumes in the country.

Piedmont Heart Institute earns national accolades

- Piedmont Heart Institute set a new organizational record by performing more than 70 transplants in the past year, a **564%** increase in volume growth for the program.
- Piedmont Atlanta has earned a **three-star rating** and Piedmont Athens a strong two-star rating from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) and the American College of Cardiology (ACC) for patient care and outcomes in TAVR in the national TVT Registry. Only 3% of institutions in the country earn the three-star rating.
- Piedmont received **14 American Heart Association Get With The Guidelines and Mission: Lifeline achievement awards** for demonstrating commitment to following up-to-date, research-based guidelines for the treatment of heart disease and stroke, ultimately leading to more lives saved, shorter recovery times and fewer readmissions to the hospital.
- U.S. News ranked Piedmont Heart at Piedmont Atlanta as **the top hospital in Georgia for cardiology and heart surgery** in 2022-23.
- Piedmont physicians serve as thought leaders at global scientific sessions and in 2023 have published **more than 20 manuscripts** in the highest-tier medical journals.
- Piedmont Women's Heart Program celebrated **10 years of serving more than 12,000 patients** and expanded women's heart screenings to the Rockdale community.

Orthopedics

In the last year, Piedmont Orthopedics has doubled in size, providing integrated care to a greater number of patients and locations. Presently, with 69 orthopedic physicians across the state, the Piedmont Clinic is collaborating closely with its Piedmont Orthopedics partners, including OrthoAtlanta and Georgia Hand, to enhance musculoskeletal care.

In the midst of this rapid expansion, the service line has implemented a mentorship program for all physicians aimed at streamlining the integration and onboarding process, all the while actively seeking opportunities to introduce new subspecialties.

“As the Orthopedics service line has continued to grow, we’ve realized a success story as good, if not better, than people expected. The partnership between Piedmont and OrthoAtlanta has provided incredible opportunities to improve patient care even after they’ve completed their treatment in the Orthopedics specialty. The experience of being part of a health system like Piedmont makes all the difference.”

Mike Behr, M.D.
Orthopedics, OrthoAtlanta



In order to better serve patients, the Piedmont Clinic has expanded its orthopedic oncology care by welcoming two orthopedic oncologists who specialize in treating bone and soft tissue tumors. As a result, the Piedmont Clinic now has the greatest number of specialty providers in orthopedic oncology in Georgia.

Piedmont Orthopedics remains dedicated to its mission of expanding access to orthopedic services for patients throughout the network.

Expansion in athletics support

Robert Hancock, M.D., has cared for University of Georgia (UGA) athletics for over 25 years. Alongside **Eric Gordon, M.D.**, and **Stephen White, M.D.**, who also care for UGA’s orthopedic needs, the practice consists of nine surgeons, 12 physician assistants and nurse practitioners. They also provide care to 15 local high schools without athletic trainers, offering extended hours for over a year. The practice also provides care to local patients in the market.



“The relationship with UGA has helped us grow our high school outreach. The same providers taking care of UGA athletes are taking care of local high school athletes. This, in turn, helps grow our overall practice. We continue to do this by adding providers and plan to add another hand surgeon and sports medicine surgeon.”

Robert Hancock, M.D.
*Piedmont Physicians
Athens Orthopedics
and Sports Medicine*



“Piedmont Healthcare has been an excellent partner in patient care, research and education for Georgia Hand, Shoulder & Elbow. For over 30 years our like-minded goals to provide the best quality care that can be provided have fostered an ever-closer relationship. The partnership has worked to benefit patients with complex upper extremity problems and will continue to serve that mission going forward.”

John Seiler, M.D.
*Vice Chair, Orthopedics,
Georgia Hand, Shoulder & Elbow*

Orthopedics Locations Map



Transplant

Transplant physicians in the Piedmont Clinic continue to innovate and expand to meet the needs of Georgia patients. In the past year, the Transplant Institute implemented standardized organ acceptance criteria to better support patients in need of transplants and ensure that good organs are accepted consistently, setting the Piedmont Clinic apart. As a result, Piedmont transplant rates have consistently exceeded national averages, offering patients a better chance at receiving life-saving transplants. For example, Piedmont kidney recipients are now experiencing an average wait time of less than a year, a drastic improvement from the previous seven-to eight-year wait. Moreover, the expansion of the program to satellite clinics in Augusta, Columbus, Savannah, Dalton, Macon and Athens has improved patient access to care closer to home, and internal Piedmont lab work has decreased result wait times and improved care efficiencies.

In the last calendar year, Piedmont Clinic physicians performed over 500 transplants, supporting hundreds of patients systemwide and positioning the Piedmont Clinic as a top 10 institution for abdominal transplants in the country. Along with the success of Piedmont's rapidly growing heart transplant program, Piedmont has become an important Southeastern destination for transplant care.

Additionally, Life Link's Organ Recovery Center (ORC) at Piedmont Atlanta has seen record increases in the number of donors and organs per donor, further enhancing transplant access across the Southeastern United States. Within the Multispecialty CGC, physicians from the Transplant service line have worked with clinicians from other service lines to improve electronic care coordination processes within the Piedmont Clinic, ensuring patients are contacted more quickly and receive care within the clinically integrated network, eliminating redundancies and reducing costs.

Looking to the future, the Transplant service line will continue to find ways to standardize treatment protocols to further improve patient care and expand access across the Piedmont Clinic footprint.

Leading in transplantation



With more than 500 liver, kidney and pancreas transplants, Piedmont remains one of the top 10 abdominal transplant programs in the country all while keeping patients at the center of care by providing direct access to coordinators and hepatology physicians, weekend options for living donor kidney transplants, access to the Piedmont guest center for out-of-town families and satellite clinics close to home.

Kidney and pancreas transplantation

- Piedmont is **29%** more likely to accept a donor kidney for transplant compared to national acceptance behavior
- 50% of waitlist Piedmont patients received a kidney transplant **within 2.7 years**, compared to the state average wait time of more than 5.5 years
- 75% of Piedmont patients received a kidney/pancreas transplant within 14 months of listing with **100% patient survival (post-transplant)**, compared to 28 months to transplant at other regional transplant centers
- Designated Center of Excellence with the National Kidney Registry Paired Donor Exchange Program

Liver transplantation

- Piedmont is **20%** more likely to accept a liver for transplant compared to national acceptance behavior
- Highest transplant rate in the state, and **44% higher than the national average**
- **Lowest liver pretransplant mortality rate in Georgia** and lower than the national average
- Best post-transplant patient survival at one year in the state
- **Top five** Transjugular Intrahepatic Portosystemic Shunt (TIPS) Center in the nation by volume

Piedmont transplant data is measured and updated every six months by the Scientific Research of Transplant Recipients (SRTR), a nonprofit that measures all pertinent transplant metrics.

"The implementation of standardized organ acceptance criteria has set us apart, ensuring that we consistently accept quality organs, surpassing national averages in transplant rates. We are dedicated to being smartly aggressive for our patients, always looking to provide the highest standard of care."

Eric Gibney, M.D.

Program Director, Piedmont Transplant Institute





Pulmonary and Critical Care

Physicians within the Pulmonary and Critical Care service line support patients through long-term treatment programs and acute illness.

This year saw further expansion of programs across the state, with new physicians bringing critical care services to patients where they need it most. The past year also saw the establishment of new quality metrics by the Pulmonary CGC, finding alignment between clinicians and solidifying standards for quality care in the specialty.

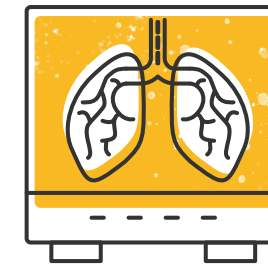
The Pulmonary CGC delved deeper into the CGC structure, building out leadership and increasing awareness among Piedmont Clinic physicians of the connectivity of the system and platforms in place to raise ideas about opportunities to standardize care throughout the Piedmont Clinic.

The CGC also rolled out seven major initiatives and performance measures to direct the clinicians' focus, including an emphasis on reducing central line-associated blood stream

infections (CLABSI) by implementing new insertion notes and maintenance order sets, with the goal of reducing hospital-acquired infections.

Leaders from across specialties, including Medical Oncology, Radiation Oncology and Thoracic Surgery, have also partnered with Pulmonary on efforts to implement best practices across treatment for thoracic oncology.

Collaborating on early detection



In the last year, leaders in the Pulmonary and Oncology CGCs have partnered to improve lung cancer screening across the Piedmont Clinic network. Through a collaborative effort, the CGCs have taken a holistic, programmatic approach to screening and managing pulmonary nodules deemed to be cancerous, further standardizing and improving patient care throughout the diagnostic and treatment process.

Going forward, leaders from the Pulmonary CGC remain focused on nurturing new relationships amid the service line's expansion and improving patient experience at every turn, including improvements to care coordination. The Piedmont Clinic intends, through changes like these, to identify and integrate best practices into navigated patient care to improve patient outcomes and experiences.

"Our physicians in the Pulmonary and Critical Care CGC have found new ways to work across the system, learning from one another in ways we wouldn't have otherwise — all in pursuit of improving the patient experience. I'm excited to see where we will go next."

Jermaine. M. Jackson, M.D.

Chair, Pulmonary and Critical Care Clinical Governance Council





Raising the standard of care

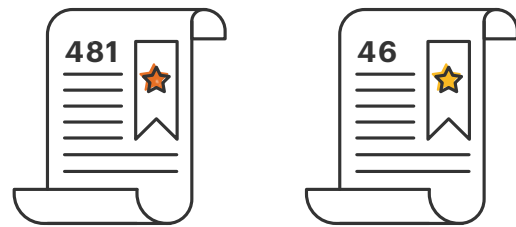
 **Piedmont** *Real change lives here*

Belinda Brown-Saddler, M.D., PPG Atlantic Station

Clinical Governance Councils (CGCs) and physician-driven care

Physician leadership and clinical integration continues to attract new physicians to the Piedmont Clinic each year. The 13 Clinical Governance Councils (CGCs), comprising employed and independent physicians from every corner of the Piedmont Clinic's footprint, work to establish and measure quality goals while innovating new treatments and processes to improve patient care. Through CGCs, physicians can tap a vast, integrated network of deep experience, knowledge and expertise across wide-ranging specialties to gain insights and guidance to manage the ever-changing world of medicine.

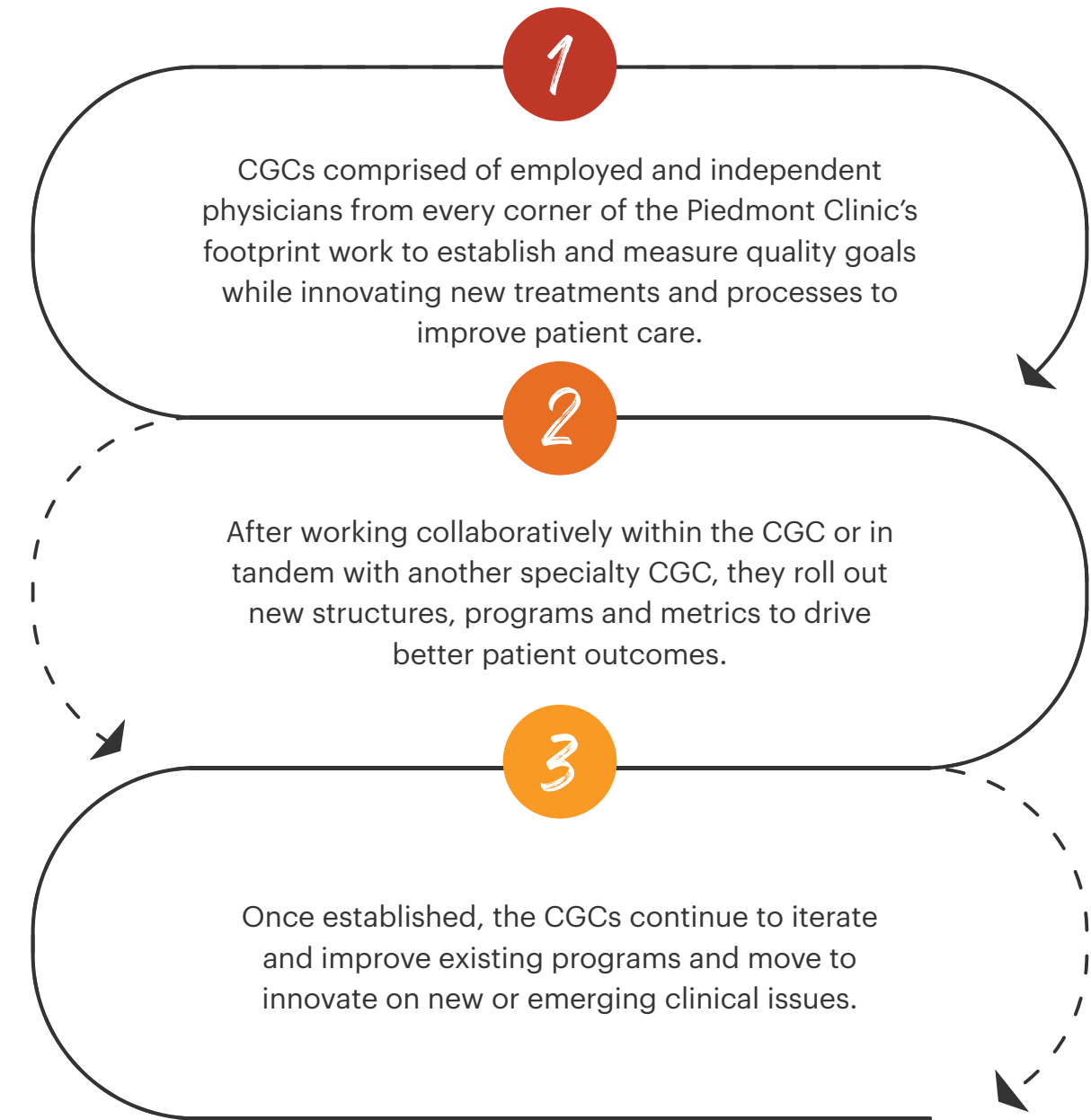
Navigating new legislative complexity



In 2022, two new laws regarding obstetric and gynecological care took effect in Georgia – House Bill 481 and Senate Bill 46. Empowered by the structure of the Piedmont Clinic, physician leaders from the OBGYN CGC established a task force to review the legislation and develop a standardized course for physicians across the system to ensure the highest standard of patient care. Leaders from the CGC worked alongside legal and ethics representatives, as well as Piedmont Clinic leadership, to interpret new regulatory requirements and understand implications for care. The task force worked rapidly to establish guidelines and treatment protocols for providers across the Piedmont Clinic to facilitate compliance with the new legislation and uphold the highest standard of care for patients.



How the CGCs operate



Improved outcomes systemwide

This year, the Piedmont Clinic achieved greater integration and standardization than ever before.

The data speaks for itself: standardized medical practice leads to less harm, better quality and improved patient outcomes. Through the CGCs, Piedmont physicians have developed and implemented specialty-specific best practices and quality scorecards systemwide, with the goals of streamlining care and eliminating unnecessary procedures — all while saving costs for patients and providers.

But standardized treatment protocols and order sets are only two pieces of the puzzle. Tracking and measuring those practices is essential to determine their success for patient care and outcomes.

“Our physician leaders are dedicated to improving the health care of all Georgians in treatment and patient experience. As the Piedmont Clinic continues to expand across the state, we are better able to efficiently care for patients across the communities we serve.”

Mike Mandl

Executive Vice President, Piedmont Healthcare



To efficiently and accurately measure care quality and effectively take advantage of the clinically integrated network of physicians through care coordination and uniform patient data, it helps if physicians are a part of a unified electronic medical record (EMR) system. This year saw record progress toward a unified EMR system for the Piedmont Clinic, with the majority of all Piedmont Clinic physicians now on one of three EMRs, with 80% of all primary care physicians utilizing Epic.

With electronic records stored in the same location, physicians can more effectively reconcile medications, analyze patient history and clearly diagnose and coordinate care for patients within the clinically integrated network of care for specialized treatments, improving patient experience across the entire continuum of care.

This year, the Piedmont informatics team worked to improve the alert system of the EMR systems, seeking to make alerts less distracting and more meaningful. So far, the team is already tracking success in prescription refill alerts, with physicians seeing a noticeable improvement in their user experience.

Piedmont continues to look for innovative ways to find efficiencies, including the piloted rollout of a single sign-on system wherein physicians will be automatically logged into mobile workstations, eliminating tedious login times and increasing bedside care. The Piedmont Clinic is also planning to launch a program that will streamline appointment finding for patients — eliminating one of the most common pain points in health care.

Zero Harm



In 2016, Piedmont launched a 10-year goal to reach Zero Harm for patients across the system. Now, just three years away, the Piedmont Clinic is continuing to see reductions in harm each year, across every specialty. Piedmont measures harm in four areas — hospital-acquired infections, patient safety indicators, serious safety events and hospital-acquired conditions — all of which have seen measurable decreases across the Piedmont Clinic due to increased use of Error Prevention Tools and a growing culture of safety. Piedmont is tracking toward the ultimate goal of a Zero Harm environment for every patient and every life touched.

Quality patient care is essential to being rated the leading health care system in Georgia. For many years, Piedmont has used a composite score that includes over 20 quality metrics as a quality indicator. This composite score and a corresponding letter grade are calculated by an external quality benchmarking organization. In Spring 2023, six Piedmont hospitals achieved a hospital quality ‘A’ rating or better, outperforming Georgia hospitals by 15% overall.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, the Piedmont Clinic Accountable Care Organization (ACO) saved the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) \$38.5 million and earned \$15 million in shared savings — the fourth consecutive year of achieving consistent shared savings through the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP). Piedmont takes a significant portion of the dollars saved and invests them back into programs that improve care for Medicare recipients.



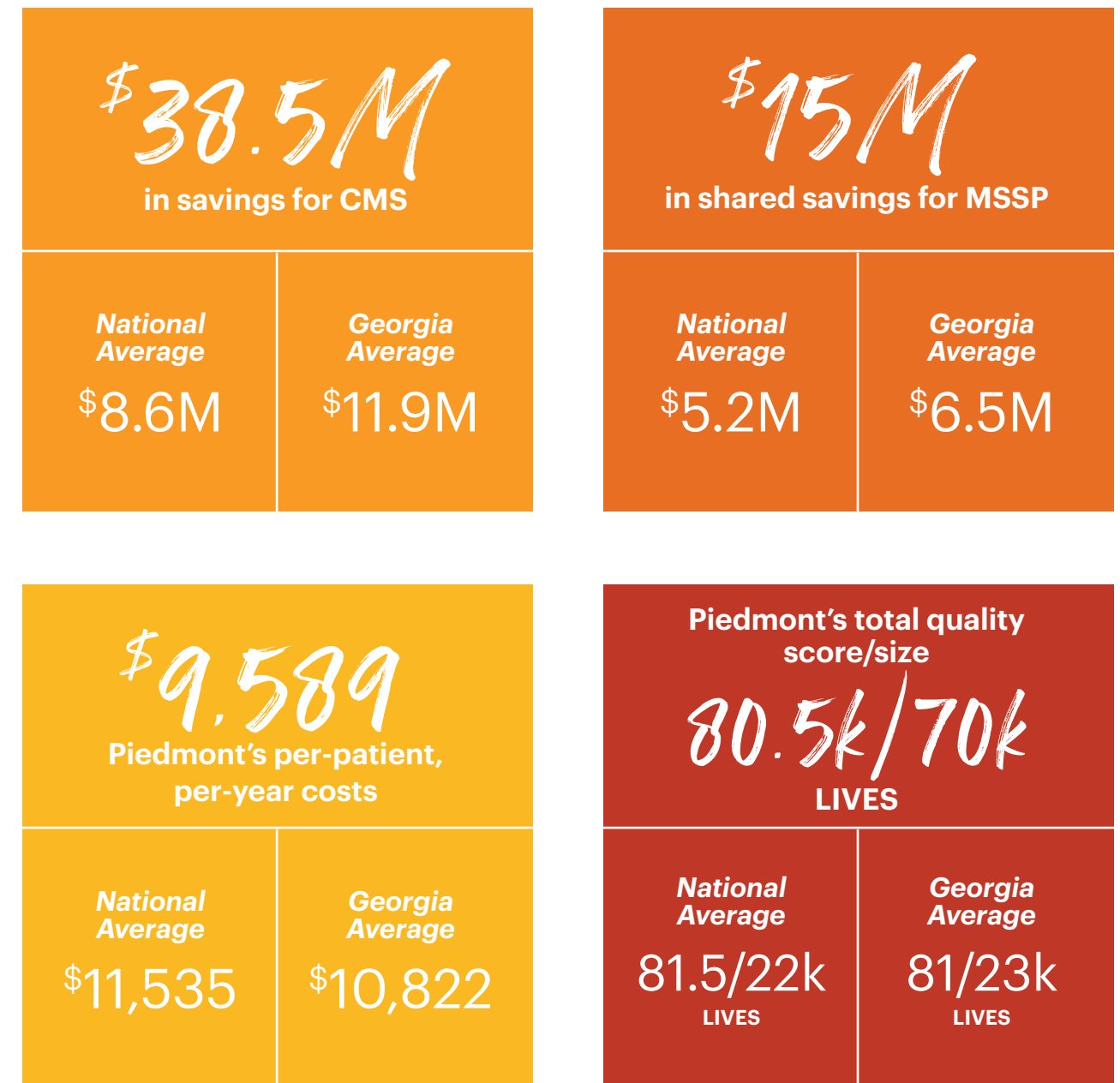
The power of integrated care

For both payers and patients, the ultimate cost of care is less when patients receive care as part of a clinically integrated network like the Piedmont Clinic. Physicians are empowered to perform appropriate and high-quality medicine while still delivering care at a lower cost, due to the efficiencies found through coordination among physicians at various levels within the Piedmont Clinic footprint, often starting with primary care.

Portions of shared savings are then reinvested to improve patient care and provider experience. This year, shared savings were dedicated toward the expansion and consolidation of an electronic medical records system, Epic, and funding various clinical informatics resources, including single sign-on.

Driving quality while lowering costs

Piedmont has continued to use shared savings to enhance connectivity within the clinically integrated network, reduce redundancy and administrative time, and grant physicians more time to spend directly with patients.





Leadership evolution

 **Piedmont** *Real change lives here*

Ben Harbin and Krupal Hari, M.D.,
Piedmont Athens Regional



Leadership evolution

The Piedmont Clinic is a testament to each individual board member, executive and Clinical Governance Council (CGC) member's investment in the Piedmont mission to make a positive impact on every life touched. Without their support and vision, the Piedmont Clinic would not be what it is today.

Increasing collaboration and celebrating excellence



This year, CGCs began gathering in-person twice a year to promote interconnectedness, networking and alignment of quality initiatives across different specialties. CGC participants welcomed the opportunity to engage with their colleagues face to face, all while building relationships with fellow Piedmont Clinic members. In January, the Piedmont Clinic Board of Directors hosted its first Annual Physician Leadership Event (PLE) which served to bring together all physician leaders and executive teams including Piedmont Clinic Board members and administrative leaders, CGC chairs and vice chairs, Hospital CEOs and CMOs, and Piedmont's quality and safety team. This event served to engage our physician leaders across the system around a priority initiative on PHC's strategic plan: The Journey toward Zero Harm. Piedmont is dedicated to making a positive difference in every life touched by striving to ensure safe patient care for all. Our Zero Harm initiatives drives toward that mission. Every day, clinicians work tirelessly to prevent errors and improve patient safety to the point of perfection. January's event re-aligned and re-centered our physician leaders across the system on important safety efforts to help physicians step up as leaders in achieving safe patient care.

During the January gathering, Piedmont Clinic leadership unveiled the first-ever, annual CGC Awards. These four awards highlight the significant achievements in patient care outcomes of CGCs illustrated through specific criteria. The categories awarded include: Quality Performance, Community and System Impact, System Alignment and the CGC Choice Award. The Choice Award is the pinnacle award presented to the CGC that is recognized for its exemplary performance, continued excellence, integrity and demonstration of a strong commitment to the mission and values of Piedmont. This year, these accolades were awarded to the Radiology, Hospital Medicine, Primary Care and Multi-specialty CGCs.

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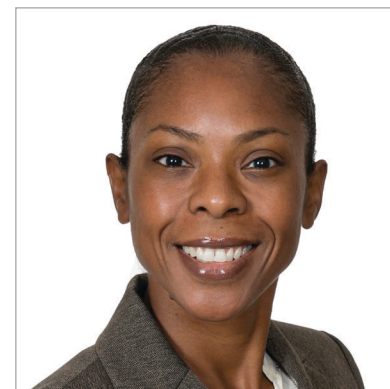
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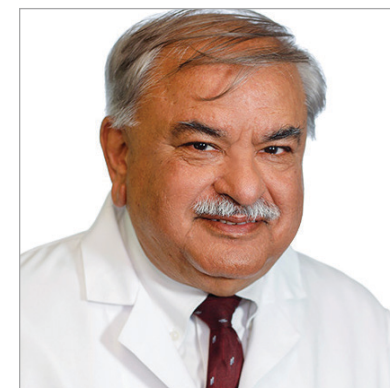
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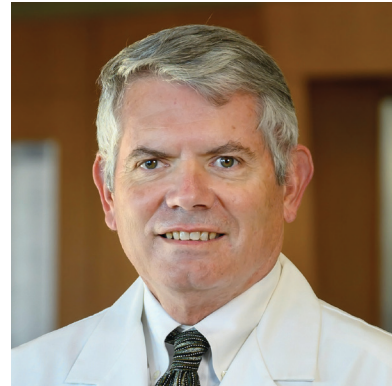


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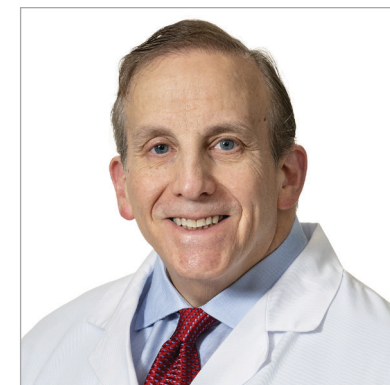
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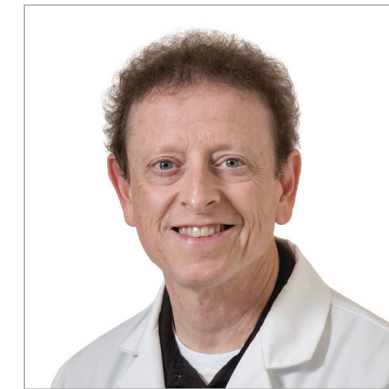
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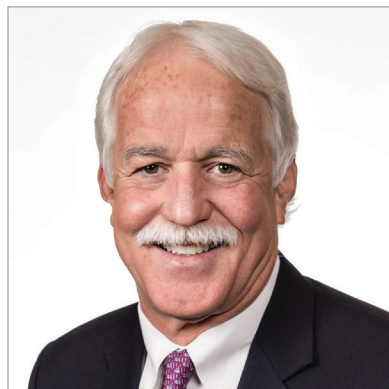
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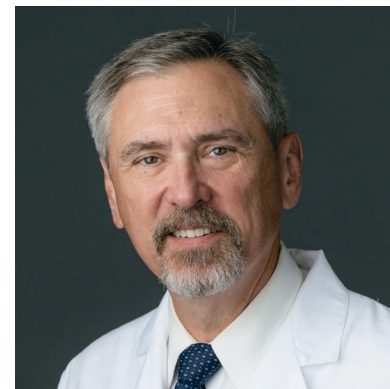
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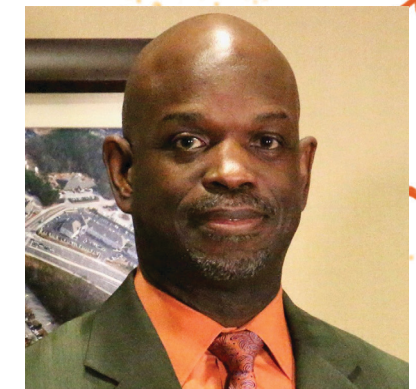
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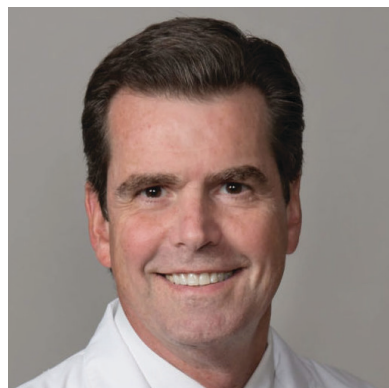
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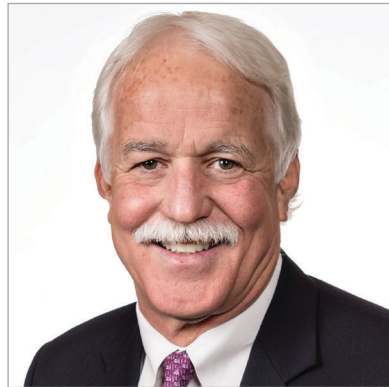
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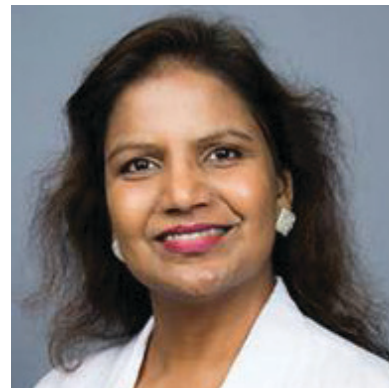
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“Piedmont Clinic is integral to our health system. Guided by the visionary Clinical Governance Councils, we relentlessly advance the quality, service and efficiency of our care delivery model. The Clinic not only raises the bar for community standards in quality but also takes pride in being the most cost-effective network in the state and a top-tier performer nationally. I am sincerely grateful to our steadfast leaders and the exemplary Clinic physicians, whose unwavering dedication breathes life into our purpose daily of making a positive difference in every life we touch.”

Kevin Brown
*President and CEO
Piedmont Healthcare*



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