

Dear Valued Patient,

Welcome to the Northeast Georgia Physicians Group (NGPG). NGPG is an affiliate of the Northeast Georgia Health System, and the Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC). NGMC is the only hospital in Georgia to be named one of **America's 50 Best Hospitals™** - a Healthgrades designation based on clinical quality. The designation represents the top 1% of hospitals in the nation for providing overall clinical excellence across a broad spectrum of conditions and procedures consistently for at least six years in a row. As an NGPG patient, you'll have access to one of the best health systems in the nation, including top rated specialists and ancillary services. Our Primary Care services include preventive care, effective management and treatment of chronic and acute conditions, tools to help you make decisions about your health care options, and coordination of all aspects of your care, including referrals to specialists if the need arises.

Our primary care providers practice the *patient-centered medical home* model of care that puts you, the patient, at the forefront of care, and strives to build better relationships between people and their clinical care teams. Please see the additional information on this model of care that we have provided to you in this packet. Please let us know the provider you choose as your primary care practitioner. We will do everything we can to be sure your choice is honored for your appointments. Should you ever need or want to change providers, just let us know and we will help you with that process. We are passionate about primary care medicine because it focuses on preventing a disease as a healthier option than trying to overcome a disease. This supports our belief that we are your *partner* in your wellness as a whole person – body, mind and spirit. We offer tools and resources to help you learn about health. If you have a long term chronic condition that needs to be managed, we can help you find peer support, group classes, and self-management tools. Each clinic has a Community Resource Guide available for your use. You may also access the guide online at: <http://www.nghs.com/community-resource-guide>.

Don't be surprised if we talk with you about your oral health also! Problems in your mouth can affect the rest of your body, and we know that certain medications (such as decongestants, antihistamines, painkillers, diuretics and antidepressants) can all reduce saliva flow. Saliva is important to neutralize acids produced by bacteria in your mouth, which helps protect you from too much bacteria that can lead to disease. Oral bacteria and inflammation of your gums may play a role in some diseases (such as endocarditis, cardiovascular disease, premature birth). If you have diabetes, HIV or AIDS, these diseases can lower your body's ability to resist infection, making any oral health problems worse. Be sure to share your concerns about your oral health with your provider. You can find more resources at: <https://www.my-emmi.com/SelfReg/NGHS>.

The ability to listen carefully is at the heart of all we do. We consider it a privilege to get to know you and your family well. Understanding how your medical history impacts your health helps us to tailor a treatment plan specifically for you. You can also count on us to recommend specialists, when needed, and to advocate for the best, cost-effective, high quality care. Where they exist, we follow evidence-based guidelines to ensure that you get the care that is supported by current research for maximum health outcomes.

Thank you for allowing us to participate in your health care. If at any time you feel we could have done better, please let us know.

*Your Healthcare Team*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What are the office hours?

Our typical office hours throughout primary care are Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If needed, extended hours outside of regular office hours, and even some Saturday appointments, are available. These hours vary from practice to practice. You can find the office hours of each practice at [www.ngpg.org](http://www.ngpg.org).

In the event of an emergency when the office is closed, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. If you need something urgently, you can call the office phone number and choose to be transferred to the answering service. The answering service can contact the physician on call for you.

### 2. How will I be reminded of appointments?

We use an automatic reminder system that can call a number you provide about 48 hours prior to your scheduled appointment. If you prefer, you can receive a text message instead. We do understand that situations may come up beyond your control that prevent you from keeping your appointment. We ask that you tell us at least 24 hours ahead of time if you are unable to keep your appointment. If you can provide this notice, it helps us continue to run the clinic efficiently and schedule others who are in need who are waiting for an opening to be seen. If you fail to tell us that you can't make an appointment, and this happens 3 times within a 3-month period, we may not be able to continue to see you.

### 3. What health insurance plans do you accept?

We have agreements with most major health plans. Please check your benefits booklet or contact your insurer to be sure our providers are included in your covered network and to determine your exact benefits. As part of our agreement with the insurance companies, we must collect any and all co-pays at the time we provide you with service. Please be prepared to pay this when you come.

### 4. What if I don't have health insurance?

If you do not have health insurance, we will be happy to provide care for you. We offer a discount to uninsured patients on those services that would typically be billed to an insurance company. In order to qualify for this discount, we require a minimum of \$75.00 to be paid at check-in. This payment will be applied towards any charges for your visit. If you are not able to make the minimum payment at check-in, you will be asked to reschedule your appointment unless you have an urgent need to be seen.

If you need financial assistance, you can apply for our Charity Care Program by completing a financial assistance application. Charity discounts are based on your ability to pay and discounted fees up to 100% are available when warranted. Feel free to ask our staff for more details about our Charity Care Program.

**5. How will I get notified of my test results?**

If you have tests ordered or blood drawn at our office, we will contact you with the results as soon as we receive them. If your results are normal, you will hear from our office staff within 10 business days. If your results are abnormal, you will be contacted as soon as possible. It is very important that we have your most recent “best” phone number or contact information.

***If you would like to obtain your test results electronically, you can access the patient portal, My Chart.***

**6. How will I get my medications refilled?**

Please check your medication supply prior to your office visits so we take care of all your refill requests during your visit. If a refill is required sooner, please **call your pharmacy** and ask them to send us a request. Refill requests will only be performed during normal office hours and will require a 48-hour turnaround time. If you need to call our office, please have the following information ready: 1) patient’s name and date of birth; 2) prescription name and quantity; and 3) pharmacy name and telephone number.

Please check with the pharmacy after 48 hours – **please do not call our office again**. We will call you back if there is a problem with refilling your request.

It is important that we have a complete list of all the medications you are taking. Please bring your medications with you to your first visit. At each visit, we will provide you with a current list of medications for your review. Our front office staff will ask you to confirm your address and insurance information at each visit. This helps us ensure that we have your correct information on file and allows us to refill prescriptions in a timely manner.

***If you would like to obtain your test results electronically, you can access the patient portal (My Chart).***

**7. How can I give feedback or make suggestions to the practice?**

We are very interested in your experience during your time with us. Patient satisfaction surveys will be sent to your email. We truly value this important feedback and hope you will complete these surveys for us.

**8. How can I get forms completed by my provider?**

Please be aware that many forms needing completion require an office visit. There is a fee for any form completion, including FMLA. This amount is for each form and is due at the time the form is submitted. If the form does not require an office visit, please allow 5-7 working days for the completion of any forms, prior authorizations, or letters. We will never charge you for obtaining prior authorizations.

**9. How will you handle my personal and private health information?**

Your medical records are strictly confidential. The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) restricts us from releasing any information without your written permission. We hold your privacy to be sacred. We will never release information to anyone whom you have not previously approved on our HIPAA Consent form, unless we are required by law.

**Please read over our payment policy below and initial where required.**  
**Your initials tell us that you agree to comply with these parts of the policy.**

**Payment Policy**\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial**

1. In compliance with new Federal law, we will ask you for photo identification and proof of health insurance *at every visit*. We may also take your picture the first time you visit our office.
2. It is not feasible for our staff be to fully aware of each health insurance plan's specific requirements or coverages. We will do everything we can to help you; however, it is your responsibility to verify that NGPG is part of your insurance plan's covered providers, and to know what your plan does and doesn't cover.
3. It is your responsibility to know what limitations your insurance plan may place on the number of times you can be seen in the office, have treatments performed, when referrals are required to receive care, or receive other types of health care.
4. Any charges you incur with us that are not paid by your health insurance according to our existing agreements will be your responsibility to pay. We will bill your insurance plan as a courtesy to you.
5. If you do not have health insurance, we will be happy to provide care for you. We offer a discount to uninsured patients on those services that would typically be billed to an insurance company. In order to qualify for this discount, we require a minimum of \$75.00 to be paid at check-in. This payment will be applied towards any charges for your visit. If you are not able to make the minimum payment at check-in, you will be asked to reschedule your appointment unless you have an urgent need to be seen.
6. We will continue to provide care for you while you are paying off any outstanding balances owed. You will need to pay in full any charges you incur at the time of service while you are paying off outstanding balances. An exception may be made if your provider determines your visit is urgently needed. If you are unable to pay in full at the time of service, please ask about our payment options.
7. We do use a collection agency for accounts that fail to make a good faith effort to pay for the medical services we provide.

**Prescription Refill Policy**\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial**

Please allow 48 hours for all prescription refills. To speed up the process, please ask your pharmacy to send a refill request to the clinic.

**Medical Records Policy**\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial**

We are happy to provide you with a copy of your medical records. You must first provide a properly verified signed release of information for copies provided via email, CD, or on paper. A cost may be associated depending on the number of pages requested.

**Changes in Your Personal Information**\_\_\_\_\_ **Initial**

You are responsible for informing us of any changes to your name, address, telephone number, email address, or health insurance coverage. A failure to do so may affect your insurance coverage and/or our ability to provide you with important information about your health.

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# NCQA Recognition as a Patient Centered Medical Home

NCQA is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality that certifies a wide range of health care organizations. Most of our primary care clinics are recognized by NCQA as a patient-centered medical home. Our offices that have recently joined NGPG will be applying soon.

What does having a patient-centered medical home as your place to receive primary health care services mean to you? The patient-centered medical home is a model of care that emphasizes care coordination and communication to transform primary care into “what patients want it to be.”

Patients in medical homes receive the right care, in the right amount, at the right time. This more modern model of care:

- leads to safer and better care,
- empowers patients, and
- renews the patient-provider relationship.

Research confirms that medical homes can lead to higher quality and lower costs, and can improve patient and provider experiences of care.

*See the other side of this page for what we're committed to offering you in order to be recognized as your patient-centered medical home.*



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*Improving the health of our community in all we do.*

# Practices must meet required elements in each of these 6 standards

- Patient-Centered Access
  - Accommodate patients' needs during and after hours, provide medical home information, and offer team-based care
- Performance Measurement and Quality Improvement
  - Use performance and experience data for continuous improvement
- Population Health Management
  - Collect and use data for population management
- Care Management and Support:
  - Use evidence-based guidelines for acute, chronic care, and preventive management
- Care Coordination and Care Transitions
  - Track and coordinate tests, referrals and care transitions
- Team-Based Care
  - Engage all practice team members by providing medical home information, meet cultural and linguistic needs of patients and offer team-based care



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## **Patient-Centered Medical Home Patient Compact**

A Patient-Centered Medical Home is a trusting partnership between a *Physician-Led Healthcare Team* and an *Informed Patient*. It includes an agreement between the healthcare provider and the patient that acknowledges the role of each in the total care program.

### **As Your Healthcare Provider I Pledge to:**

- ✚ Include you as a member of the healthcare team, and include your family or advocate, when you prefer
- ✚ Learn about you, your family, your life situation, and your health goals, and treat you with respect, honesty, and compassion
- ✚ Communicate openly about the benefits and risks of any treatments to help you understand your conditions and all your options for treatment
- ✚ Connect with other members of your healthcare team, including specialists and educators, and coordinate your care with them
- ✚ Listen to you, answer your questions in a way you can understand, and help you make the best decisions for your care
- ✚ Be available after hours for urgent needs through myself, my partners who share telephone call with me, and our Urgent Care offices
- ✚ Be responsive and timely with care and information, such as test results
- ✚ Hold myself to the highest standard of quality and safety, and hold my staff to the same standard
- ✚ Always respect your right to privacy about your medical information, and provide that information to you upon request

### **As a Patient I Pledge to:**

- ✚ Be an active member of my healthcare team and let my team know if I have family, friends or an advocate to help me
- ✚ Treat my healthcare team with respect, consideration, and honesty
- ✚ Learn all I can about my medical condition from respected sources and what I can do to stay as healthy as possible
- ✚ Tell my healthcare team if something about my health changes or if I am seeing another healthcare provider
- ✚ Understand my health conditions, ask questions about my care and tell my healthcare team if I don't understand something
- ✚ Come to each visit with knowledge of my medications and an update on any medication changes
- ✚ Follow the plan we have agreed is best for my health and take my medications as prescribed
- ✚ Contact my healthcare team after hours only if my issue cannot wait until the next business day
- ✚ Keep my contact information updated in the event I need to be reached regarding my care needs