



Wellstar MCG Health Transition FAQs

Fall 2023

Welcome to Wellstar MCG Health

This partnership stems from our shared mission of creating a healthier future for Georgians and solving healthcare challenges across the state. Together, we will make a transformational impact on improving the health and well-being of every patient we serve.

This document was created to help answer your questions. We realize change can be difficult, but we aim to make this transition as smooth and seamless as possible. We may not always have the answers right away, but we'll do our best to give you what you need to plan and prepare well in advance. As always, we welcome your thoughts and any additional questions you might have.

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General Transition

Why are AUHS, Wellstar and MCG partnering? And why now?

AUHS, Augusta University and Wellstar share a mission to solve Georgia’s healthcare challenges. The partnership will improve the quality and safety of community care while driving world-class care to patients.

Our vision is to bring the most advanced clinical care, innovative academic teaching models and life-saving research to all corners of the state. The model will bring together community-based healthcare systems and academic medical expertise, allowing us to deliver the best capabilities, access to care and innovation—all in pursuit of advancing healthcare across the state.

Growing the pipeline of physicians and other healthcare providers serving Georgia and developing innovative care models and offerings will benefit the state’s patients and communities. The partnership will result in significant investments to improve existing healthcare facilities and expand access to care across the state.

Can patients still use the same doctors and care facilities?

Yes. Nothing is changing in how patients receive care. Patients will continue to access care as they currently do.

Will patient care be impacted?

For now, it is business as usual for both health systems, and patients will continue to access care as they currently do. We are excited that this partnership will provide significant benefits for Georgians. The partnership will focus on expanding innovative health offerings, growing the pipeline of physicians and other healthcare providers serving Georgia, and developing new care models and digital healthcare offerings that benefit patients and communities across the state. The partnership will create significant investments to improve existing healthcare facilities and expand access to care.

Who will lead AUHS and MCG?

The partnership will bring new leadership to AUHS, and there will be no leadership changes at MCG. AUHS is currently led by an interim leader; Wellstar will work with AUHS to align on the right leadership structure to support the needs of AUHS and the community.

What does it mean when we say that Augusta University Health System and Wellstar have a “partnership” or that Wellstar is becoming “the parent” of Augusta University Health System?

When the transaction is completed, AUHS will be a subsidiary of Wellstar, just like all the other hospitals, health parks and medical offices that make up Wellstar Health System today.

What does this mean for Augusta University Health System operationally?

AUHS will operate locally under the name Wellstar MCG Health upon Day One. The marketing teams at both organizations are finalizing plans now for all the ways we can introduce the new brand to the community. Otherwise, operationally it will be business as usual.

What is in the AUHS deal for Wellstar?

This is not about what's in it for Wellstar; this partnership is about what's in it for all of Georgia. As a nonprofit health system, our partnership is about:

Access to Expertise, Expanding the Pipeline of Clinicians, Care Innovation, Pediatric Care and Digital Health.

We are excited for the benefits this partnership provides, including investments in facilities and infrastructure to improve AUHS and make its care sites world-class, growth of the number of digital health sites and rural hospital partnerships to power even greater access to the care patients need, expansion of opportunities for health professionals and staff, and the training of more health professionals at MCG.

Together, AUHS and Wellstar—along with MCG, one of the best public medical schools in the nation—will bring innovations to clinical care, academic teaching and research to every corner of Georgia.

We have heard rumors that a few hospital systems may be in the early stages of disputes with Anthem regarding rate increases. Is Wellstar having those conversations?

Wellstar recently reached a new agreement with Anthem, which will include Wellstar MCG Health care sites and health professionals. We are pleased to report that we will be in network with Anthem in 2024.

What specific investments has Wellstar agreed to fund?

Wellstar will invest nearly \$800 million over a decade in AUHS facilities and infrastructure, including in support of AUHS capital plan. This includes more than \$200 million allocated to Augusta University Medical Center, a more-than-600-bed safety net and teaching hospital. Additionally, capital for a new hospital and medical office buildings in Columbia County will be funded.

We are excited for the benefits that this partnership will provide, including investments in facilities and infrastructure to improve AUHS and make its care sites world-class, growth of the number of digital health sites and rural hospital partnerships to power even greater access to the care patients need, expansion of opportunities for health professionals and team members and the training of more health professionals at MCG.

These investments will result in strengthened and expanded community programs, economic activity and jobs across our region.

Will there be layoffs or efficiencies?

No. Wellstar has agreed to retain all AUHS team members who are in good standing for a minimum of nine months. While it is too soon to know the full impacts, the partnership intends to grow and expand care, providing new opportunities for our health professionals and team members.

Benefits

What are the major benefit changes and when are they expected to be implemented?

There will be no material changes to AUHS team member benefits and most AUMA team member benefits for at least 12 months.

Current in- and out-of-network offerings will remain the same. Your current list of community providers (those who are in-network within your medical plan) will remain the same. Open enrollment will follow your current process for one year. New hires will continue to follow the process that AUHS currently has in place for electing benefits.

Physicians will experience changes to their benefits following the transaction close. These individuals have already received direct communications on changes to their benefits and actions needed to enroll in new WHS and/or AUHS benefits.

We are committed to delivering programs that are designed to retain, recognize, motivate and incentivize colleagues to do their best in support of our company and our mission. We will offer a competitive mix of compensation, benefits and other programs designed to support the well-being of our workforce.

Please see your HR team with any questions or for information regarding local benefits programs.

What will happen to my Health Savings Account (HSA) or Flexible Spending Account (FSA)?

At this time, no changes are expected to your HSA or FSA. This may change at a later date when we fully integrate our benefits. Any changes will be communicated to you once we have more information.

Will our current list of community providers (those who are in-network within our medical plan) remain?

At this time, yes.

Does Wellstar write off charges above what the insurance company pays?

Wellstar has in-network and out-of-network health benefit plans. All plans have a patient responsibility according to the plans.

If AU-employed physicians or APPs receive healthcare from Wellstar, is there any financial benefit for the patient?

Wellstar does not write off patient responsibility for care provided to Wellstar team members.

Paid Time Off & Leave

What will happen to my paid time off (PTO) balance?

You will remain on your existing PTO plan and accrual rates for 12 months. After that time, you will be converted to the Wellstar PTO plan. Your accrued balance will transfer over, and your accrual rates will be based on your years of service with AUHS.

Physicians have already received direct COMMUNICATIONS on changes.

Are PTO accruals based on years of service at Wellstar?

Yes, PTO accrual rates are based on years of service and increase with time.

Physicians have already received direct COMMUNICATIONS on changes.

Will my years of service with AUHS be honored?

Yes, your years of service will be honored, using legacy date-of-hire (DOH) for purposes of eligibility for Wellstar benefits and employment years of service.

What holiday schedule will I follow?

You will follow your current holiday policy on Day One. This may change at a later date when we fully integrate our benefits. Any changes will be communicated to you once we have more information.

Physicians have already received direct COMMUNICATIONS on changes.

AUHS currently has donation and emergency payout programs available. Does Wellstar have any type of PTO donation programs?

Yes, Wellstar has a donation option available.

Short-Term & Long-Term Disability

Does Wellstar pay a portion or all of the short-term disability (STD)/long-term disability (LTD) benefits?

Wellstar covers the full cost of life insurance and short-term disability (STD)/long-term disability (LTD) insurance. LTD applies to full-time team members only.

How will I apply for short-term and long-term disability upon close?

At this time, there are no changes for how you should request STD or LTD. The eligibility for these benefits that you have today will remain in place for a period of one year after the transaction close.

Compensation

Will my compensation change?

Compensation practices and programs will not change for a period of at least nine months after the transaction closes. We are committed to communicating with you in a timely manner if there are ever significant changes. If there is a point when we expect compensation to change, we will inform you.

Does Wellstar provide annual merit increases based on performance? If so, what criteria/guidelines are used?

Yes, Wellstar has historically offered performance-based merit increases for team members in eligible classifications. Job specific competencies, alignment to organizational values and performance on goals are all factors that determine the outcome of the performance evaluation.

Is base pay at Wellstar determined by Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) community and/or academic benchmarks?

We use a blend of three market data surveys—SullivanCotter Physician Comp and Productivity Survey, SullivanCotter Medical Group Compensation and Productivity Survey, and MGMA Provider Comp and Productivity Survey.

Base salary for physicians on a production plan is recalculated annually based on their prior year's production. Additionally, market data is reviewed annually for any necessary market adjustments. Additional details regarding the WMG Physician Compensation Plan design for the Wellstar MCG Health market will be made available post-closing after compensation and market assessments are completed.

Will team members still have access to the Health Center Credit Union?

No changes are expected on Day One but may change at a later date.

Payroll

Does Wellstar use the same payroll system? If not the case, what will the timeline for the change look like and will there be any outage time during the transition?

Wellstar uses different systems for payroll. At this time, there will be no changes in how you will be paid. As we integrate our back-end systems, you will be updated with more information.

Will there be a change in pay periods and the payroll schedule?

As of now, there will be no changes to pay periods or the payroll schedule.

Learning & Development

What learning management system does Wellstar MCG Health use?

Wellstar MCG Health currently uses HealthStream as our LMS platform and provides access to LinkedIn Learning. Leveraging both HealthStream and LinkedIn Learning, team members can seek learning that matters to them and their individual growth. Whether earning a new certification or developing digital knowledge, there are countless skills to be gained through the learning platforms at Wellstar MCG Health.

When will the learning management system start to be utilized for AUHS and its team members?

All team members will be given access to HealthStream and LinkedIn Learning on Day One. Here are [step-by-step instructions](#) on how to access HealthStream.

What leadership and professional development programs does Wellstar offer?

At Wellstar, we appreciate what our team members do—for our patients, the community and one another. We want to offer that same support in return, and one way we do that is by offering various paths and opportunities to grow—no matter where you are in your career. Your personal and professional development are important to us. Wellstar offers Team Member and Leader Development opportunities for each and every person in the organization. Wellstar continually creates new opportunities for leadership and professional development, with plans to expand our offerings more broadly in early 2024. You can find more information at welcometowellstar.com/mcg.

Is clinical orientation offered weekly?

There are no changes to Clinical Orientation. Clinical Orientation for Patient Care Services is offered biweekly. This is the same as the cadence at which AUHS is currently facilitating these orientations.

Does Wellstar have a different orientation for non-benefits eligible new hires, contractors, etc.?

No, we will not have different orientations for these groups. Please check the welcometowellstar.com/mcg site for more information on orientation.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

What are Wellstar's DEI commitments?

Wellstar is committed to providing culturally competent and equitable care to every person, every time. We embrace our patients, communities and team members for who they are and encourage everyone to bring their authentic self into our facilities. At Wellstar, you are valued and will be treated with respect—regardless of your race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Does Wellstar have any programs specifically related to supporting our veteran team members?

Wellstar has a Business Resource Group dedicated to military veterans called WellStars and Stripes. Wellstar currently employs over 880 veterans. WellStars and Stripes has launched a support group for military service members, veterans, spouses, children, family members, care providers and community associates. This group offers a safe space and support to anyone reacclimating, looking for a mentor, and the group offers mental health resources, financial resources, grief support, spiritual support and more. They meet once a month at different locations throughout the year.

What is Wellstar's commitment to a diverse executive leadership team and health system board?

We believe that diversity in leadership leads to a workplace culture where all team members can thrive. We are incredibly proud of the diversity we have on our executive leadership team, which is composed of 44% women. Our board has been nationally ranked for its diversity makeup, being 44% ethnically diverse and 21% female. At Wellstar, we honor every voice. It matters to us that our leadership is reflective of our thousands of team members.

Does Wellstar have Inclusion Councils? What about Business Resource Groups?

We have multiple dedicated outlets that work together to ensure our mission is woven into our culture: The Wellstar Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Council, Business Resource Groups and our facility-based Inclusion Councils. The Advisory Council has been established to work alongside our established Inclusion Councils to ensure that the voices of our team members are reflected in all the work we do and to enable a connected cycle of feedback across our system. Our Inclusion Councils focus on diversity, equity, including and belonging (DEIB) initiatives at each Wellstar location and are composed of physicians and team members, including a wide variety of job functions, life experiences, races, genders and cultural backgrounds. We currently have over 250 members engaged in an Inclusion Council.

Similar to the Inclusion Councils, the Business Resource Groups are supported by senior leaders and various team members as DEIB ambassadors and culture changers. As of August 2023, we have deployed eight BRGs, with three more coming in the following months. Currently we have over 650 members engaged in a Business Resource Group.

Wellstar Inclusion Councils

Wellstar Post Acute

Wellstar Cobb Medical Center

Wellstar Douglas Medical Center

Wellstar Enterprise System

Wellstar Kennestone Regional Medical Center

Wellstar Medical Group

Wellstar North Fulton Medical Center

Wellstar Paulding Medical Center

Wellstar Spalding Regional & Sylvan Grove Medical Center

Wellstar West Georgia Medical Center

Wellstar Windy Hill

Wellstar Business Resource Groups

CURRENTLY DEPLOYED

B.R.A.V.E.

(Black Resources Activating Value & Equity)

DiverseAbility

Unidos (Hispanic/Latino)

United in Faith

The PRIDE Collective (LGBTQIA)

WellStars and Stripes (Military/Veterans)

UP (Underrepresented Physicians)

PowHerful Women

COMING SOON

Young Professionals

Asian/Pacific Islander

Native American/Indigenous

What is a community initiative related to DEI that Wellstar has embraced?

Through the Wellstar Center for Health Equity (WCHE), we strive to address health inequities and make lasting change right where we live. By putting systemwide initiatives and programs into action, WCHE helps to enhance the health and well-being of the people and communities we serve. Using a collaborative approach, Wellstar has created strategic partnerships with government agencies, businesses, philanthropies, nonprofit organizations and citizens to make a meaningful difference in our community. By adopting a shared vision, we hope to achieve significant and lasting change. Together, we address health inequities, including access to care, behavioral health, food access and healthy living, housing, pediatrics and women's health.

General Human Resources (HR)

What Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will AUHS team members be eligible for on Day One?

The EAP benefits you have in place today will remain for a period of one year. This may change at a later date when we fully integrate our benefits. Any changes will be communicated to you once we have more information.

What team member care and wellness offerings does Wellstar have for its team members?

Wellstar offers a robust suite of family-friendly work life programs like childcare and family support, concierge services, adoption assistance, financial wellness and many more.

Does Wellstar have any team member discount programs?

Yes. These are offered through Perks at Work.

Will Wellstar reimburse or aid in the cost of certifications and education for team members?

Currently the Wellstar tuition assistance policy only covers eligible degree programs and does not include payment of required certifications.

Will day-to-day responsibilities change?

You should expect no change to your day-to-day responsibilities for at least nine months following the transaction close.

Will AUHS adopt the policies of Wellstar, or will we keep our current policies?

Most policies will remain the same on Day One. After Day One, there will be a thorough review of AUHS and Wellstar policies, and leadership will integrate policies and procedures across both organizations. More to come on this in the coming months.

Will job title and descriptions change?

Job titles and descriptions will be evaluated further after Day One.

Will my team member pharmacy still be in place on Day One? Is pharmacy management through a separate Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM) carrier?

Yes, the team member pharmacy will be open on Day One. Wellstar pharmacy benefits are managed through a PBM.

Will scrub uniforms be changing? If so, what is the timeline for the changes, and will there be a stipend for new uniforms?

At this time there has not been a decision made on scrub uniforms, so please continue wearing what you have been. Once a decision has been made, we will communicate with all impacted staff.

Who should I contact if I have an HR related question?

We recommend that you utilize your current HR channels and direct leadership.

Will anyone from Wellstar call me to ask for my home address, social security number or any other private information?

No. You will never receive a call from Wellstar asking for private information.

Branding

Will I need to update my email signature to include the Wellstar MCG Health logo or verbiage?

Your current email signature will remain as-is for Day One. You will receive further communication on when an update is required.

Should I update my LinkedIn account to Wellstar MCG Health?

You will not need to update your LinkedIn profile. The marketing teams at both organizations are working to merge the AUHS and Wellstar LinkedIn pages—a change that will be automatically updated on your profiles.

Should I continue to use my current business cards?

Please continue to use your current business cards on Day One.

Where can I go to access Wellstar MCG Health branding?

As we work on creating Wellstar MCG Health-branded materials, you can utilize the current Wellstar [Brand Resource Center](#) for all of your branding needs.

Information Technology (IT)

Will my network access change on Day One?

No, you will continue to access the AUHS network as you do today.

Will my email, calendar and address book be changed to what Wellstar uses?

No, your email, Teams, calendar and address book will remain the same on Day One.

Do I need a new phone or computer?

You will continue to use your existing laptops and mobile devices, such as phones and iPads. There will be no changes to your desk phones or telephone numbers at this time.

How do I reserve rooms?

You will continue to reserve conference rooms the same way you do today. If you need to reserve a room at a Wellstar facility, please work with the Wellstar team members you are meeting with to complete the room reservation process.

Will I be required to transfer any data on Day One?

No, you will continue to use your current systems and hardware.

Will I need to leverage any new or different applications starting Day One?

No additional application is needed. Your required computer-based training will continue through HealthStream. As technological changes are planned over the next 12 months, additional communication will be shared.

Will I continue to use the same clinical and revenue cycle systems to support our patients?

Yes, there are no changes to the clinical and revenue cycle systems on Day One. As technological changes are planned over the next 12 months, additional communication will be shared.

Where do I go with IT questions?

For any IT related questions, call the IT Help Desk at (706) 721-7500 or open a ticket through the [ServiceNow](#) portal.

How do I report cybersecurity concerns?

To report cybersecurity concerns, call 72Cyber or email 72CYBER at 72cyber@augusta.edu.

How do I make IT requests?

For any IT requests, continue to submit your tickets through [ServiceNow](#) or call the IT Help Desk at (706) 721-7500.

Will my current projects be suspended or canceled?

No, all active IT projects will continue according to their schedule on Day One. Any changes to active IT projects will be communicated through an assigned project manager.

Will my Cerner Badge Access (Imprivata) change?

No, your Cerner badge access will continue to work the same way after Day One. As technology changes are planned over the next 12 months, additional communication will be shared.

Will I be able to continue to use my VPN?

Yes, there are no changes to the way you use and access VPN on Day One. As technological changes are planned over the next 12 months, additional communication will be shared.

Will I still receive my operational reports and dashboards?

Yes, there are no changes to how you receive and find your operational reports and dashboards on Day One. As technological changes are planned over the next 12 months, additional communication will be shared.

Facilities

Will my badge work to access AUHS and Wellstar facilities?

There will be no change to badging for Day One. Continue to use your current badge for access.

Where do I work from?

There won't be any changes to where you work. You'll work from wherever you do today (remote, office, hospital). Your badge will still work. You will notice new signs and banners across your hospitals and buildings with the updated Wellstar MCG Health logo.