



Preeminent Wellstar Leaders Join Inaugural Class of Georgia Nursing Hall of Fame™

Wellstar's first female CEO and its longest-tenured employee recognized for contributions to Georgia nursing and patient care

Marietta, Ga. (February 14, 2022) – [Wellstar Health System](#) is proud to announce that two extraordinary women have been inducted into the Georgia Nursing Hall of Fame™, produced by Georgia Nurses Foundation (GNF). Candice L. Saunders, FACHE, president and CEO of Wellstar, and Joyce McMurrain, MSN, RN, a nurse manager and coordinator of the Student Nurse Extern Program at Wellstar Kennestone Hospital, were honored along with eight additional nurses at a recent inaugural inductee ceremony. The 10 inductees are exemplary registered nurses who made or are making improvements to advance the nursing profession locally, nationally, and internationally.

Wellstar Kennestone Hospital's longest-serving team member, McMurrain, has been a nurse for nearly 60 years, with 56 years—and counting—served at Kennestone Hospital. For many years McMurrain was the nursing director/executive nursing director for Women's Services at Kennestone, and she also served in that position systemwide. She later transitioned to director of special projects and is now cultivating the next generation of nurses through her role as nurse manager and student nurse extern program coordinator. She uses her vast experience to guide new nurses and helps nearly 100 nursing students each year gain invaluable hands-on experience in preparation for nursing careers.

“Joyce has a natural ability to develop others and is committed to equipping students with the education and opportunities to excel in patient care and gain confidence in their job. She has been indispensable throughout Wellstar's extraordinary growth and change and has contributed to its evolution to become one of Georgia's largest and most integrated health systems,” says Saunders.

Saunders has served as a trustee of the American Hospital Association, chair of the American Hospital Association's Regional Policy Board for Region 4, and past chair of the Georgia Hospital Association. She was named one of Modern Healthcare's Top 25 Women Leaders and among Georgia Trend Magazine's 100 Most Influential Georgians. A strong patient advocate who began her healthcare journey as a critical care nurse decades ago, Saunders has become a nationally recognized leader in improving community access to vital healthcare needs and enhancing the patient care experience. Saunders joined Wellstar in May 2007 as president of Wellstar Kennestone Hospital. She assumed the role of president and CEO in 2015, becoming the health system's first female CEO.

“Candice's impact on the nursing profession is evident through her continued commitment to attract and retain top nursing talent. Candice began her career as a critical care nurse, and she remains passionate about investing in programs and supporting the growth and development of nurses at every stage in their career to ensure our patients and communities have access to high-quality, compassionate care for generations to come,” says Dr. O. Scott Swayze, Chair, Wellstar Health System Board of Trustees.

ABOUT WELLSTAR HEALTH SYSTEM

At Wellstar, people are at the center of everything we do. By listening actively to what people want, need and expect from their healthcare, Wellstar is able to provide “More than Healthcare.”

PeopleCare.” — at every age and stage. Nationally ranked and locally recognized for our personal, high-quality care, inclusive culture, and exceptional doctors and team members, Wellstar provides access to compassionate, high-quality care through our: 11 hospitals; 300+ medical office locations; 9 cancer centers; 74 rehabilitation centers; 3 hospice facilities; 1 retirement village; 34 imaging centers; 17 urgent care locations; and 5 health parks. As one of the largest and most integrated healthcare systems in Georgia, Wellstar is growing our services, footprint, capabilities, and ability to meet evolving patient needs. Our passion for people extends into the communities we serve. As a not-for-profit health system, we thoughtfully reinvest annually in prevention and wellness programs, as well as charity care for eligible patients. Our Wellstar Foundation also supports our mission to enhance the health and well-being of every person we serve with funding for equipment, services, and programs that provide more than healthcare. To learn more about how Wellstar is always listening, learning, and tailoring care to meet patients’ individual needs, visit [Wellstar.org](https://www.wellstar.org).

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