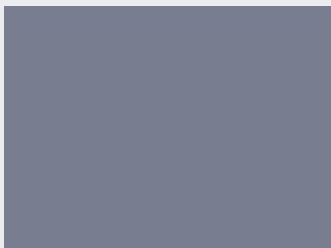


# Emory x Georgia Tech: IHI Case Competition

The Future of Healthcare in Atlanta



*This document presents a fictional scenario for use in a student case competition. The parties in the case should not be interpreted as a commentary or an endorsement of any particular company or policy.*

### Background Information

One of the ongoing concerns in the Atlanta community is the recent closure of Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center (AMC) and Atlanta Medical Center South (AMC South). AMC was an urban, academic teaching hospital with a Level 1 trauma center, while AMC South was located in East Point, Georgia and served patients as a community-based hospital. In 2013, AMC South merged with Wellstar Atlanta Medical Center, forming one hospital with two campuses. Their combined campuses made AMC the second-largest hospital in Georgia with 762 beds and a care service area that extended across 74 zip codes, with most patients residing in Fulton, Dekalb, and Clayton counties.

Founded in 1901, Wellstar AMC serviced Georgia's patient populations for over 100 years. AMC specialized in acute-care, particularly in stroke management, while AMC South had one of the busiest 24-hour emergency departments in the Atlanta-metro area. Of the patients served, AMC's service region cared for a higher patient population density (per square mile) than the average for the state of Georgia and the nation. When compared to Georgia's population, the community served by AMC and AMC South was more racially diverse, experienced greater limited English proficiency, and had average income earnings. In fact, more than two-thirds (67.3%) of the 4,281 emergency room patients that AMC saw in its downtown and East Point locations in 2019 were black, and over half (51.5%) were insured by Medicare or Medicaid. As a whole, AMC routinely provided care for the majority of Atlanta's most vulnerable patient populations.

Due to unsustainable financial losses, Wellstar closed AMC South in May 2022 and AMC in November 2022. The loss of AMC has left Atlanta with a single Level 1 trauma center, the public safety-net hospital Grady Memorial Hospital. In a state beset with health inequities (Georgia is ranked second worst in the nation), the impact of this closure not only threatens to deepen existing disparities, but also to create more. Upon announcement of the closure, Mayor Andre Dickens claimed that it "will most adversely impact low-income populations," displacing or entirely cutting off their provision of care.

As the closest hospitals to the AMC campuses, Emory University Hospital (EUH), EUH Midtown, and Grady Hospital are projected to absorb most of AMC's patients, specifically the 100,000 annual emergency room visits that it previously handled. Only one month after AMC's closure, EUH Midtown saw a 29% increase in emergency room volume and Grady reported a 25% increase in trauma volume. These numbers are only projected to increase as the year goes on.

An increase in volume of that magnitude may not sound substantial but consider that in 2022 Grady Hospital managed over 33,000 inpatient visits and over 150,000 emergency department visits; a 25% increase in visit volume that equates to more than 37,000 additional ER visits. Moreover, Grady Hospital's revenue is highly dependent on Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, which traditionally reimburses at a much lower rate than private insurers. Absorbing the displaced patients formerly seen by AMC will require Emory Hospital (which itself manages over 100,000 admissions across its

campuses) and Grady Hospital to manage an increased proportion of patients covered by Medicare and Medicaid, a recipe for potential financial woes.

The prompt of this year's IHI Case Competition therefore seeks to explore how Emory Healthcare (EHC) and Grady can address this challenge in care delivery and manage the health of their growing patient populations. How will these systems adjust to manage the network of care that AMC provided? How will they manage an increase in ER visits and admissions, especially considering that these visits may reimburse at a relatively lower rate? How can these healthcare systems best distribute their financial resources to continue to provide high quality emergency and inpatient care, as well as manage chronic conditions such that the need for emergent care might be reduced?

## Problem Statement

You are part of an interdisciplinary team of health professionals tasked with developing a strategic approach to mitigate the impact of AMC's closure on Atlanta's healthcare systems and manage the care of their patient populations. To develop this approach, you might consider how other healthcare systems could absorb the patients displaced by the closure of AMC? Might this be best achieved by increasing efficiency in the emergency department? Or might investments in community, public, and population health initiatives be better served to reduce the volume of visits over time? What innovative ideas, products, or services might allow EHC and Grady to address this challenge in healthcare delivery and manage the care and health of their growing service population?

Addressing this problem will require your team to:

- 1. Highlight a particular challenge or need created by the closure of AMC and AMC South. Possible opportunities include but are not limited to:**
  - a. Addressing the social inequities faced by the patient populations formerly served by these facilities.
  - b. Managing the chronic disease burden (including diabetes, hypertension, and obesity) in this population.
  - c. Ensuring access to care, including behavioral healthcare and care for substance abuse disorders.
  - d. Managing the increased need for emergency and trauma services or developing an approach to prevent visits to the emergency department or reduce traumatic injuries.
- 2. Demonstrate the impact this need or challenge, if unaddressed, will have on healthcare systems and patients.**
- 3. Research and conceptualize possible solutions.**
- 4. Propose a viable recommendation that addresses this issue and articulate the research and data to support your proposal.**
- 5. What costs will this unaddressed need place on healthcare systems, patients, or local government? What will the cost be to implement your program?**
  - a. How will your solution generate value or a return on investment for the system that implements it, either through cost savings or increased revenue. How will your solution be sustainable financially?
  - b. What is a realistic timeline for implementing this proposal? What needs, other than monetary, would be required to bring it to fruition?

**6. Sketch a persona of the primary, secondary, and tertiary stakeholders your proposal would benefit, would affect, or whose buy-in you would need to implement it.**

- a. For patient populations, include demographic characteristics and challenges faced. For model or example patients, include health history, comorbidities, social inequities faced, and any other details needed to demonstrate the potential benefit or efficacy of your solution.
- b. For all stakeholders, describe their needs, their likely requirements for buy-in, and potential barriers to their acceptance of your proposal.

## **Data Exhibits**

In addition to the case prompt, your team has been provided with the following Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA). The 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires all not-for-profit hospitals to complete a CHNA and implementation plan every three years to better meet the health needs of under-resourced populations living in the communities they serve. The following CHNA documents provide the most up-to-date information about the top community health needs of the patients living in the primary service area of the hospital. Please note that these resources are ***optional*** and that your proposal will not be evaluated based on their inclusion. However, we encourage you to reference external data and literature to inform your proposal and cite your sources as appropriate.

- 2022 Grady Community Health Needs Assessments
- 2022 EHC Community Health Needs Assessments
- 2022 Wellstar AMC Community Health Needs Assessments

## **Deliverables**

Please prepare a ***5-10 slide PowerPoint proposal*** addressing the above components, including how you obtained your information and arrived at your conclusions. Additionally, ***please record a 2-5 minute pitch*** of your proposal, focusing on your solution and how it addresses this problem.