



Photo Courtesy of Associated Press

# Georgia hospitals swamped by COVID-19 postpone surgeries

By Jeff Amy  
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Atlanta’s public safety net hospital became the latest to temporarily cancel elective surgeries on Wednesday, saying it’s being overrun with COVID-19 patients.

Grady Memorial Hospital CEO John Haupt made the announcement, saying that the hospital was “inundated” with patients over the Labor Day weekend even though it was officially diverting ambulances.

“Because of the strain this is putting on the health system, our patients, and our staff, we must make some changes to the way we operate,” Haupt wrote. “As of today, we are canceling non-essential outpatient surgery and procedures. We will regularly review patient volumes to determine when we can resume those services.”

More than 5,900 people sickened by the respiratory illness were in Georgia hospitals on Wednesday. COVID-19 patient numbers have been hovering around 6,000, a record high, for more than a week across Georgia. Across the state, 97% of intensive care beds were in use Wednesday, an all-time high.

Some other Georgia hospitals were already postponing elective surgeries, as more than 50 hospitals statewide Wednesday reported they were turning away ambulances bringing emergency or ICU patients.

The 16 hospitals in Piedmont Healthcare, Georgia’s largest hospital system, are making their own decisions, with some locations pausing elective surgeries while others are halting surgeries that might require an overnight stay or an intensive care bed, said spokesperson John Manasso.

“Each of our hospitals re-

views available resources daily related to current COVID volume, and where possible, we continue to shift resources as needed to maintain appropriate capacity — as we have since the pandemic began,” Manasso said in a statement.

Wellstar Health System said it’s shifting some surgeries from hospitals to outpatient surgery centers. That hospital group said it may delay some procedures to save bed space.

On the Georgia coast, Southeast Georgia Health System in Brunswick and St. Marys announced last month that it was suspending elective surgeries, but the St. Joseph/Candler system in Savannah is still performing the procedures.

Many medical providers put off all kinds of routine care during the earlier stages of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, but that strategy was financially harmful and hospitals tried to resume elective care beginning in the summer of 2020.

Grady’s move came as Democratic U.S. Reps. Hank Johnson and David Scott wrote to Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, urging the Republican to order the state Department of Public Health to postpone elective surgeries in all Georgia hospitals to preserve capacity for COVID-19 patients.

“By pausing elective surgeries, hospitals will be able to provide additional beds, resources and critical staff to areas requiring a higher level of care,” Johnson and Scott wrote.

They also urged Kemp to extend waivers of license requirements for health care workers and hospitals to expand capacity for COVID-19 patients.

Kemp’s position has been that he’s not going to impose any new mandates on anyone

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during the current COVID-19 surge, even as hospitals set new records for patients and deaths arc upward again. He quickly responded to Johnson and Scott on Wednesday in a letter outlining the steps he was taking to support hospitals and rejected their call to stop any surgeries.

“First, hospitals are already fluctuating and monitoring the volume of elective procedures themselves,” Kemp wrote. “Second, many elective procedures are critical to the short- and long-term health of millions of Georgians. And finally, banning elective procedures would bankrupt hospital systems already reeling from a year and a half of fighting a global pandemic.”

Anna Adams, a spokesperson for the Georgia Hospital Association, said the trade group supports letting its members make their own decisions.

“Hospitals are managing what the surge looks like at their own facilities,” Adams said. “We think that each hospital is doing what’s best for its own community.”

Kemp fired back at Johnson and Scott, saying they could be of more help if they would persuade the federal government to limit how much staffing companies can charge to provide nurses and other workers to supplement hospital capacity. “Currently, states are forced to outbid one another using federal coronavirus relief dollars in order to obtain adequate hospital staffing.”

Kemp also told the congressmen they should “demand” clearer guidance on plans to provide COVID-19 booster shots and seek federal agencies’ “detailed logistical plans to assist states in this enormous undertaking.”



# NEWS

## UWG Peer Tutoring and The University Writing Center: Utilizing Student Resources

**By Kinadi Dill**  
*Contributing Writer*

As an undergraduate student at The University of West Georgia, there are various resources and tools that are put into place to support student success. Tutoring services and writing services are available on campus, which both are free of charge and available to students virtually and face-to face. Both departments allow appointments for students with specific needs, which can be accessed through the UWG website along with information about what to bring and what to expect during a session.

The peer tutoring program is designed to service all UWG core curriculum, which includes up to 140 courses as well as upper-level courses. This is similar to the University Writing center, which services students with any aspect of writing they may need guidance with. Peer tutoring services are led by students and the University Writing center is led by graduate consultants who are open and eager to work with anyone regardless of classification.

“Tutoring is for everyone,” said the Coordinator of Peer Tutoring, Emily Richardson. “In fact, some of the benefits of utilizing peer tutoring is having someone assist you with the course content that has already taken the class and made an A, as well as working with students who know good study skills and strategies that they’re willing to share. It’s very casual and I think that’s what makes the experience fun for students.”

Peer tutoring services also offer ongoing tutor job applications with a requirement of a 3.0 GPA or higher. The peer tutoring department also encourages aspiring tutors to maintain an A letter grade in the core they are applying for. The peer tutoring center is always looking for students with different backgrounds and disciplines. Having a variety of tutors with different backgrounds is beneficial for students who need help within their specific major or area of study. Not only is this helpful in terms of obtaining more knowledge but it is also a great way to connect with other students and build relationships that can

further aid in student success.

Along with peer tutoring, UWG also offers tutoring sessions for writing at the University Writing Center in three different modes. These modes include limited face-to-face sessions, asynchronous paper reviews through Courseden and synchronous video sessions; all of which can be set up by contacting the center via email. The tutoring staff is composed of professors who teach English 1101 & 1102, as well as graduate students who are getting their masters in English and are happy to work with undergraduate students.

“There is absolutely no shame in taking advantage of tutoring,” said the Coordinator of the University Writing Center, Duane Theobald. “One of the things I tell students all the time is that even their professor’s work has to be reviewed by other people, or oftentimes they will get a colleague here on campus to review their work before it’s actually submitted somewhere. I believe there is a lot of value in working and talking with another person about your work.”



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# NEWS

## Local Carrollton Semi-Truck Driver Named Highway Angel

By Brittany Mersfelder  
*News Editor*

Carroll County resident, Mr. Devey South, was named a Highway Angel for saving a family out of their destroyed vehicle after a major accident. South, 50, is a semi-truck driver for JLE Industries. On June 9, he was driving a load for delivery when he saw an accident occur on Interstate Highway 78 outside of Saucon, Pennsylvania. He was in the right hand lane at the time of occurrence.

“The car started to fish-tail, swerved and then side-swiped the SUV,” said South. “It caused the SUV to spin and then flip 4 times across the highway.”

The SUV landed on the driver’s side and slammed against the concrete barrier. South applied his air brakes and pulled over. He then jumped out and ran across three lanes of traffic.

“When they came by me, I thought they were going to come back and hit me first,” said South. “Once he got sideways, the SUV started flipping.

“The back window was busted out,” South continued. “I stuck my head in, but there was smoke, or dust and I couldn’t see anything.”

He eventually saw a boy, about 12 years old, lift his head up. “He was cut and had blood all over his arms.” South told the boy to hang on. He then climbed on top of the SUV.

“The driver’s door was smashed in,” he says. “It took me about 10 minutes to pry the door open.”

The driver, the boy’s father, was conscious and still in his seat belt. “He was crying and in pain but didn’t speak English.”

South was able to pull the boy out first. He then used his Swiss Army knife to cut the driver’s seat belt. At the time, South says he didn’t know if he was dealing with smoke or dust from the air bags so he and another motorist who had stopped made the decision to pull the driver out and get him on the ground. As they waited for first responders, the driver of the other vehicle got out.

“She was on her cell phone and looked like she was fine,” said South. “She kept saying she was sorry.”

However, South couldn’t find out what had happened. He waited with the injured driver and his son until first responders arrived a short time later and took over.

Mr. South is on the road often and he has seen other accidents happen in front of him similar to this.

“I’m usually out for one to two months at a time. I have seen where people on motorcycles get killed by accidents. Just about every day you are getting in a backup somewhere. It is either construction or an accident. A lot of times with accidents, you don’t ever see them. If I was right up on [an accident] where I could help somebody, I would.”

Mr. South is one of 1,300 truckers who have received this award over the past 24 years. “I was not expecting it,” said South. “I was doing what comes naturally. I was not looking for praise. My company put me in that. It is human nature to help someone in need.



Photo Courtesy of Devey South



## NEWS

# UWG Counseling Focuses on Mental Health Awareness

By Victoria Mitchell

Contributing Writer

UWG is helping students to focus on their mental health by planning events during the upcoming month of October for Mental Illness Awareness week (MIAW). This week is dedicated to spreading awareness about mental health and the importance of helping those in need.

MIAW highlights several nationally recognized days including the National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding on Oct. 5, National Depression Screening Day on Oct. 7 and World Mental Health day on Oct. 10.

College students are especially susceptible to the effects of mental illness including anxiety and depression. While in college students are faced with different challenges which may include the pressure of school and maintaining good grades,

working either full or part time and even peer pressure from others.

UWG hopes to raise awareness during MIAW and everyday with their free counseling services for students. For those students facing any type of distress there are options provided by the university. Students can schedule an appointment online or face to face.

In order to receive counseling from UWG students can visit [counseling@westga.edu](mailto:counseling@westga.edu) and schedule an appointment online or call (678) 839-6428. UWG offers a hotline that can be accessed 24/7 which includes five free confidential counseling sessions per semester with off-campus counselors anywhere in the United States.

For an after-hours psychological crisis students can call 678-839-6428 and can be connected to an on-call counselor.

**Image Courtesy of UWG Counseling Center**





NEWS



Photo Courtesy of Associated Press

Biden’s Six-Pronged plan

By Emma Pence  
Contributing Writer

Biden introduced a six-step pronged plan which was designed to aid in slowing COVID-19 down over the next six months. The plan was designed to ensure a healthy future to unfold within the next few months for our country as we battle COVID-19 and its variants. By enforcing these six steps, schools and businesses will stay open and safe along with protecting our economy from another lockdown.

The first step in Biden’s plan is vaccinating those who have not yet been vaccinated. It is conveniently available to all Americans over 16 years old since April 19 and those who are over the age of 12 since May. The Biden administration now requires vaccinations for federal government workers. Many employers, schools, nursing homes, restaurants and hospitals have followed in those footsteps now requiring their employees to be vaccinated in order to slow the spread and protect their businesses. This step of the plan has the end goal to reduce the number of unvaccinated people by using regulatory power to increase the number of citizens that will be required to be vaccinated.

The second step is to further protect the over 175 million Americans who are already vaccinated. Although the vaccine slows the spread, there is still a possibility of contracting the virus. As of recent data, there is only one confirmed positive case out of every 5,000 vaccinated Americans per week. In August, national top health officials

released their plan for booster shots for older and more vulnerable individuals. Booster shots make for stronger protection against the virus as it grows into different variants. Once the FDA approves and the CDC recommends the booster shots, the booster shot would be given beginning the week of September 20.

Step three aims to keep schools open with the safety of teachers and students in mind. The goal is to keep young Americans focused on learning while also allowing them to safely return to the classroom. This has been a top priority for the Biden administration since day one. To keep students safe in schools, taking the right steps is going to be required— including all staff and eligible students to be vaccinated, universal indoor masking, maintaining social distancing, improving ventilation and screening regular testing for students and staff. The most important step parents can take is to get their children that are over the age of five vaccinated, as it is the best protection against the virus. It is important to surround those that are too young for the vaccine with vaccinated classmates and staffing.

Increasing testing and requiring masking is the fourth step of the plan. Doubling down with masking on top of being vaccinated increases the protection from the virus. Biden’s plan is to make testing easier and more accessible by testing at home, at pharmacies and in the doctor’s office.

Protecting our economic recovery is the fifth step in Biden’s plan. Biden’s focus by jumpstarting the economy and getting Americans back to work. Over 4 million jobs have been created in the first 6 months of his presidency alone, which is record breaking. Despite an increase in the Delta variant, last month the economy created 235,000 jobs and the unemployment rate fell to its lowest since before the COVID-19 outbreak.

The last step of the six-prong plan is Improving care for those with COVID-19. As the country is at work trying to reduce cases, hospitalizations and deaths related to the virus, they are planning to maintain focus on treating people infected. In early July, the administration launched Surge Response Teams to help states with increased cases. The Administration has worked with 18 states deploying almost 1,000 medical personnel, hundreds of ambulances and other medical related equipment and set up free testing sites along with local outbreak investigations.

The only way that our country is going to get back on the right track is by following Biden’s Administration six-step plan. It is our duty as American citizens to get vaccinated. It is possible to help protect each other and the ones that we love by slowing the spread and lowering the numbers of COVID-19 related patients in hospitals to make room for others who have other medical needs.



# ENTERTAINMENT

## UWG Theatre Returns With “School Girls; or the African American Mean Girls Play”

By Kayla Henderson  
*Editor-in-Chief*

UWG Theatre Company will hold its first production of the semester starting on September 29. “School Girls; or the African American Mean Girls Play” will run from September 29 through October 3 at the Townsend Center Mainstage.

“School Girls; or the African American Mean Girls Play” is the first installment of a series of plays from UWG Theatre Company for its “Celebrate Women” series, which aims to celebrate the power of women and their accomplishments, individuality and relationships to one another.

Paulina, the reigning queen bee at Ghana’s most exclusive boarding school, has her sights set on the Miss Global Universe pageant. But the arrival of Ericka, a new student with undeniable talent and beauty, captures the attention of the pageant recruiter—and Paulina’s friends. The play explores and celebrates the universal similarities and differences facing

teenage girls across the globe on the path to loving and accepting yourself.

“Students can expect a funny and fierce play that takes a critical look at society’s standards of beauty,” says a representative from the UWG Theatre Marketing team.

The show is the first in-person event for the theatre company since 2020. Because of COVID-19, all live shows were broadcasted online without an in-person audience. With COVID-19 restrictions still in mind, certain safety measures will be put in place to ensure both cast, crew and guest safety.

“Masks will not be required, but strongly encouraged. We are alternating seating rows so that we are at half capacity,” says the theater.

Students can purchase tickets in person at the Townsend Center Box Office or online at <https://townsendcenter.secure.force.com>. Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$5 for all UWG students.



Image Courtesy of UWG Theatre Company