

Peach State Health Plan and the Centene Foundation Announce \$2.2 Million Commitment to Augusta University - Jan 24, 2024

Funding will support expansion of programs that work to place physicians and dentists in rural parts of Georgia

ATLANTA, Jan. 24, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, [Peach State Health Plan](#), a care management organization that serves the needs of Georgians through a range of health insurance solutions and a wholly owned subsidiary of [Centene Corporation](#) (NYSE: CNC), and the [Centene Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of Centene Corporation, announced a \$2.2 million funding commitment to Augusta University (AU). The funding will facilitate the expansion of the University's Medical College of Georgia (MCG) 3+ [Primary Care Pathway Program](#) (MCG 3+ Program), as well as support the launch of a new loan forgiveness program for the university's Dental College of Georgia (DCG) students who commit to five years of practice in rural and underserved areas. This commitment builds on an existing relationship with AU and is another example of the work underway to approach challenges that result from provider shortages in rural areas of the state.

Peach State Health Plan and the Centene Foundation played a critical role in the launch of the MCG 3+ Program, with an initial \$5.2 million investment in 2021. The program, now in its [third year](#), is a critical element in efforts to combat the rural physician shortage by placing doctors where they are needed most in Georgia. The new loan forgiveness program will offer dental students – who agree to practice in rural, underserved Georgia counties after completing their dental training – with financial support for tuition. \$200,000 will fund the development of this program.

"Our collaborative efforts with Augusta University – and its MCG and DCG – are shining examples of how public-private partnerships provide long-term solutions to complex healthcare shortages in rural areas," said Centene's Chief Growth Officer and Plan President and Chief Executive Officer of Peach State Health Plan, Wade Rakes. "We are proud of the progress being made by the MCG 3+ Primary Care Pathway Program, which graduated its first cohort of medical students in May 2023. Peach State Health Plan is confident that a similar program at the Dental College of Georgia will share the same success."

According to the 2022 [Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce Report](#) on Rural Physicians, ongoing shortages of physicians and health care specialists in rural areas of Georgia have resulted in serious gaps in access to quality health care. In 2022, the [Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce's Annual Dentist Workforce Report](#) found that there were 22 counties in Georgia with no practicing dentist, while the Georgia Department of Community Health found that 127 counties in Georgia are experiencing at least partial shortages in dental care.

"Augusta University, our MCG, and now our DCG, are proud to partner with Peach State Health plan to expand and create programs that are working to place physicians and dentists in areas of Georgia where they are needed most," said Brooks A. Keel, PhD, president of Augusta University. "Our MCG 3+ Primary Care Pathway Program has been a tremendous success, and with this additional investment, we are closer to establishing a fund that will work in perpetuity. We look forward to seeing the same success with a similar program at our DCG."

"The DCG's new partnerships with Peach State Health Plan and the rural dentistry program is an innovative milestone in making sure our new dentists are financially capable of opening new practices in rural areas of the state," said Nancy Young, DMD, MED, dean of the DCG at Augusta University. "As Georgia's only dental school, we are constantly working to make sure the dentists we train are prepared to serve residents in all parts of Georgia. This new program will help us do that."

About Medical College of Georgia (MCG)

The [Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University](#) is one of the nation's largest medical schools by class size, with 264 students per class. The educational experience is anchored by the main campus in Augusta, regional clinical campuses for third- and fourth-year students across the state and a second four-year campus in Athens in partnership with the University of Georgia. MCG's expanding partnerships with physicians and hospitals across Georgia currently provides about 350 sites where students can experience the full spectrum of medicine, from complex care hospitals to small-town solo practices. MCG and its teaching hospitals also provide postgraduate education to more than 500 residents and fellows in more than 50 different Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-approved programs.

About the Dental College of Georgia (DCG)

The [Dental College of Georgia at Augusta University](#) is committed to growing in its purpose of teaching, patient care, research, and service. Since inception, we have graduated nearly 2,500 dentists who are now providing oral healthcare in Georgia and around the world. Established in 1969, the DCG is the state's sole dental college now providing education and training for more than 300 dental students and approximately 60 residents per year. In addition to offering a high-quality education in our state-of-the-art facilities, we provide care to nearly

50,000 patients each year, some traveling across the state or more to be treated by our students, residents, and faculty.

About Peach State Health Plan (PSHP)

[Peach State Health Plan](#) is a care management organization that serves the needs of Georgians through a range of health insurance solutions. Peach State Health Plan serves the Medicaid and PeachCare for Kids® population in partnership with Georgia Families. The organization also focuses on under-insured and uninsured individuals through its federal insurance marketplace plan, Ambetter, and its Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plan. Peach State Health Plan is a wholly owned subsidiary of [Centene Corporation](#), a leading healthcare enterprise committed to helping people live healthier lives. For more information visit www.pshpgeorgia.com.

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