

# GORDON Gazette

Weekend, February 13, 2021

www.gordongazettega.com

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Calhoun-Gordon County's #1 Source for News

## Gordon County BOE holds first reading of updates to nutrition policy that will replace student vending machine snack options

**Brandi Owczarz**  
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The Gordon County Board of Education met on Monday night, and had a couple of first readings to policy changes, including a change to Policy EEE, Wellness Program. The changes made will ensure that the school district will adhere to the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010 and comply with state requirements regarding exempt fundraisers. The district will market only those foods and beverages that meet nutrition standards and Smart Snack Standards.

Gordon County Schools School Nutrition Director Nicole Head said that the system is

updating the standards to fall in line with the state, but Board member Eddie Hall was concerned that the policy was changing back to the tasteless food that many kids wouldn't eat, reminding those in attendance that the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010 was essentially the Michelle Obama standards.

"The Michelle Obama standard was a disaster for our school nutrition programs," said Eddie Hall.

Superintendent Dr. Kimberly Fraker said that the policy wording changes took out the requirements of being consistent with federal meal pattern requirements and nutrition standards; prohibiting the sale to students on the school



campus during the school day of competitive foods that do not meet the federal criteria; and adhering to the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010 and state requirements regarding exempt fundraisers, but

Head said the school system would still have to fall under the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010 because that is part of the school nutrition.

"There are some things that we can do, as far as like, grain waivers

and things per the USDA, which we do have for our school nutrition program, so we're able to offer things like non-whole grain biscuits, so we have ways of adhering to the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act

but also adhering to USDA standards through waivers by providing documentation for showing them that the whole grain biscuit, for

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## Numbers of COVID cases down at both school systems this week; Community numbers trending lower

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After announcing on Friday, Feb. 5 that Gordon County high schools would go on a hybrid schedule for the next couple of weeks, numbers of active COVID cases were down in numbers reported on Friday, Feb. 12 but still hovering around the number from mid-October 2020 where the high schools were put on a hybrid schedule the first time.

In mid-October 2020, when GCS put their high school students on a hybrid schedule due to active COVID cases, there were 26 active cases within the school system at

that time. This week, the school system had 29 active cases, down from 37 active cases last week.

This is the fourth week that Gordon County Schools has had active cases over the October number. With more active case numbers, there are far greater quarantine numbers.

There are a total of 6 staff members (down 2 from last week) and 23 students (down 6 from last week) that are considered active cases of COVID-19 at the system.

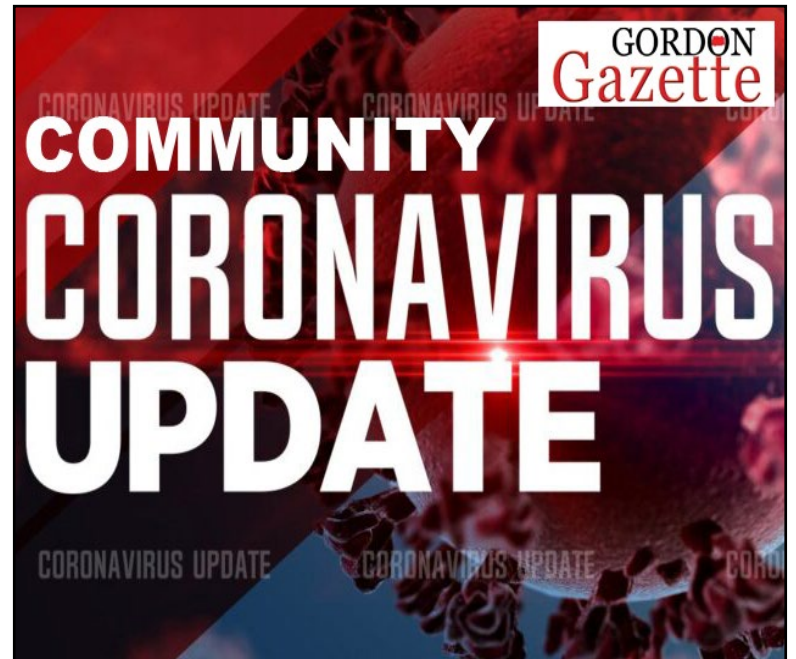
The student breakdown of current active COVID19 cases at the school system is: 2 students at Ashworth Middle

School, 4 students at Belwood Elementary, 10 students at Gordon Central, 6 students at Sonorville High and 1 student at WL Swain Elementary with active COVID cases.

Among staff with current active cases of COVID, Gordon County Schools reported 1 staff member at Ashworth Middle, 2 staff members at Belwood Elementary, 1 staff member at Gordon Central and 2 staff members at Sonorville High School.

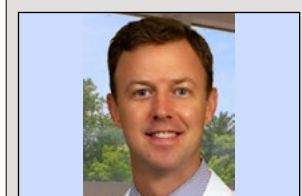
Gordon County Schools' reporting is slightly different than the City school system.

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Hamilton's Cardiac Rehab Program staff taking extra precautions to keep patients safe.

**ARC 4A**



American Red Cross suggests giving blood in honor of Black History Month.

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## CCS announces CCCA Programs/Teachers of the Month Spotlight for January 2021

### CALHOUN CITY SCHOOLS

The January 2021 CTAE Teacher and Spotlight Program of the Month is the education and training pathway offered through the Calhoun College and Career Academy (CCCA) to Calhoun High students.

Mrs. Lynn Davis is the education and training pathway teacher at Calhoun College and Career Academy (CCCA). Lynn has been teaching for 29 years and has taught multiple grade levels, including 3rd and 5th grades. Lynn started her career at Calhoun High teaching in the Project Success program to help prepare students for their futures after high school. In 2011, Lynn started the education and training program and the FCCLA chapter that she is currently teaching and considers this her dream job.

Lynn earned her Bachelor of Science degree in early childhood education from the University of West Georgia. She then earned her master's and specialist degree in education through Piedmont College. Lynn's oldest daughter, Calli, is a teacher at Redbud Elementary and her youngest daughter, Lyndi Rae, is a senior at Calhoun High School and has signed to play softball at the University of Georgia in the fall. Michael, her husband, is a PE teacher at Calhoun Middle School and the offensive coordinator for the Yellow Jackets football team at Calhoun High School.

Lynn grew up in Commerce, GA and graduated from Commerce High School. Lynn grew up around sports. She played basketball, tennis, softball, and was a football cheerleader

in high school. Lynn played tennis in college. An interesting fact about Lynn is that every town she has lived in has started with the letter "C" (6 towns).

At CCCA, the education and training program introduces students to the education career. Students are placed at Calhoun Pre-K, Calhoun Primary, and Calhoun Elementary Schools to gather hands on experience. Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is the Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) associated with the education and training pathway. The central focus of FCCLA is family. Competitions and conferences provide many great experiences for students to become successful in the workforce as well as their own homes. There were many Early Childhood Education students who



competed at the region, state, and national levels.

Lynn's favorite thing about teaching the education and training pathway at CCCA is the relationships that she builds with her students. Lynn stated, "The most rewarding thing about teaching this pathway is witnessing students I taught become teachers!" Congratulations to Mrs. Lynn Davis on being the CCCA Programs/Teachers of the Month Spotlight for January 2021.

**HERITAGE 2021 - FEBRUARY 23**  
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# Second Front

## Cardiac rehab staff taking extra precautions to keep patients safe

### HAMILTON MEDICAL

Hamilton Medical Center's (HMC) Cardiac Rehabilitation Program has continued to provide safe services throughout the pandemic.

"We certainly understand the reluctance that some people have in coming in for rehab," says Tina Haithcock, Cardiac Rehabilitation Program manager. "We want people to know that we've taken additional steps to keep everyone safe, because it's still very important to participate in a cardiac rehab program when your condition warrants it."

According to Haithcock, staff are screening everyone at the door, limiting class sizes, social distancing, enhancing cleaning processes and keeping exercise equipment separated by 10 feet.

"When you've had a cardiac event, and cardiac rehab is prescribed by your doctor, following

through and participating in cardiac rehab significantly lowers your chance of having another life-threatening event," says Jim Stewart, MD, board certified interventional and structural cardiologist. "It also lowers your chance of needing to be readmitted to the hospital and boosts your chances of getting back to an active lifestyle."

Hamilton's Cardiac Rehab program can help patients feel healthier and allow them to return to a full and productive life and help prevent other heart problem. Those who have had a heart attack, bypass surgery, stents, congestive heart failure or other cardiovascular disease are strong candidates for the program.

Cardiac Rehab at Bradley Wellness Center is a 12-week, medically supervised program for the recovering cardiac patient. The program includes monitored exercises, educational sessions, dietary consults

and behavioral change interventions. The goal of this program is to equip the patient with the necessary tools to be able to make the appropriate choices and changes to help increase his or her physical, mental and emotional well-being.

The program includes:

- Initial interview with a cardiac rehabilitation specialist who will carefully evaluate the needs of the patient and recommend an individualized program
- Personal, supervised, monitored exercise sessions
- Patient and family education (individual and group sessions)
- Cholesterol testing
- Nutritional counseling
- Assistance in developing a safe home exercise program
- Encouragement and support from the staff.

Haithcock says patients are treated like family. "We're going to do all we can to keep you safe," she says.

Hamilton's cardiac



From left: Jim Stewart, MD; Tina Haithcock, cardiac rehab program manager

team consists of physicians, a registered nurse, exercise physiologists, and a registered dietitian who work together to provide specialized services including exercise prescriptions, dietary consults and education on various health topics for the patient and their family.

After graduating from Hamilton's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, each patient is encouraged to continue exercise with the maintenance program called PREP (Progressive Rehabilitation Exercise Program).

A physician's referral is required for Cardiac Rehab and PREP. After receiving the physician's

referral, a staff member will contact the patient to set an appointment for an initial assessment. Upon completion, the program is ready to begin.

HMC's cardiac rehabilitation is covered by most insurance plans. For more information, call 706-278-9355 or visit [bradleywell.com/cardiac-rehab](http://bradleywell.com/cardiac-rehab).

## Gov. Kemp supports Georgia Jobs, Calls on President Biden to overturn ITC Ruling on SK Innovation

### OFFICE OF GEORGIA ATTORNEY GENERAL CHRIS CARR

Governor Brian P. Kemp on Friday issued the following statement urging Presidential review of the International Trade Commission's (ITC) February 11 ruling. Without Presidential action, the long-

term prospects of SK Innovation's \$2.6 billion electric vehicle battery production facility in Jackson County, Georgia, would be harmed significantly. Following the ITC's order, there is a 60-day window for Presidential review during which time the Biden administration may overturn the findings that would affect SK,

along with its customers, Ford and Volkswagen.

"SK Innovation is a valued member of Georgia's business community and a continued partner in bringing jobs and greater prosperity to the Peach State. Unfortunately, the International Trade Commission's recent ruling puts SK's significant investment

in 2,600 clean energy jobs and innovative manufacturing in peril during a pandemic that has created unprecedented challenges and hardship for countless families here in Georgia, and across the country.

"Litigation in these disputes is always

complex, and there are several additional levels of review prior to a final resolution – along with the possibility of a settlement. President Biden and his administration also have the opportunity to support thousands of hardworking Georgians

– and their communities – who would benefit from SK Innovation's continued success in our state. I sincerely hope Georgia's congressional delegation will join me in advocating for swift presidential action."

**HERITAGE 2021**

THE BEST OF GORDON COUNTY'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

**ROOTED IN GORDON COUNTY**

A FREE ONLINE PUBLICATION LAUNCHING ON FEB. 23, 2021

GORDON Gazette

**2 Work Staffing**  
www.2workstaff.com

**WE'VE GOT JOBS!**

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

**CUSTODIAN:** \$11.09/HR, will do deep cleaning, and some cleaning after events/games to ensure clean facility

**UTILITY PERSON:** \$10/11 HOUR, forklift skills, will work in warehouse as needed/directed doing material handling, and working where needed. Day shift.

**EXTRUSION LINE:** \$12.50/hr 8pm to 8am, client wants to see profiles, must have experience running machines, especially extrusion lines

**PRODUCTION WORKERS:** \$12/hr 7am to 4:30pm, heavy lifters needed for production line work-lots of over-time possible

**GENERAL LABOR:** \$10/hr, 12 hour shift- 7p to 7a, 7 days a week right now, lots of over time, Spanish is a must! Heavy lifters needed for cutting, sealing boxes, packing, and able to work with variety of people

**MACHINE OPERATOR:** 7pm – 7am (creeling, TMO/ EXTRUSION-doffing experience) – 1 OPENING-\$14/hr starting

**SEWER:** \$12+, bilingual needed needs experience on industrial sewing machine-will interview with client

513 Lovers Lane Road S.E., Calhoun, GA  
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# Obituaries

## February 13, 2021

### Carmen Bridges

Mrs. Carmen Jones Bridges, daughter of the late Reuben and Eunice Oakes Jones, passed away on Wednesday, Feb. 10 at her home in Calhoun at the age of 92.

Mrs. Bridges was born in Floyd County and was a long-time resident of Gordon County. She was a member of Meadowdale Baptist Church and retired from Shannon Mills.

She was preceded in death by her parents, as well as her husband- Paul E. Bridges; brothers- Harry, Robert, Berrymond, David, and Richard Jones; and sisters- Elizabeth, Sarah, Ruth, and Mary. She is survived by one sister, Mittie Jones Broyles, and six children and their spouses: Carol (Michael) Parker, Bob (Lucie) Bridges, Sharon Bolton, Don (Gray) Bridges, Douglas Bridges, and Greg Bridges.

Mrs. Bridges leaves behind a large extended family, including twenty-two grandchildren and seventeen great grandchildren, as well as many precious nieces and nephews. Grandchildren include Anglena (Wayne) Jarrett, Stephanie Bolton, Jonathan (Amy) Parker, Katherine Bolton, Christopher Bridges, Kayleigh (Matt) Wynn, Derek (Ashley) Bridges, Adam (Aleri) Bridges, Chandler Bridges, Alyssa Greeson, Jill Bridges, Joshua Bridges, Aubrey (Sarah) Bailey, Katherine (Kevin) Geary, and Bradley Bailey. Great grandchildren include Drew (Janice) Jarrett, Erin Jarrett, Anna Caroline Parker, Alexis Bolton, Makayla Bolton, Madison Bridges, Cole Bridges, Reese Wynn, Brenley Bailey, Addy Baily, Noelle Geary, Shiloh Geary, Chole Geary, Sawyer and Odin, and Makenzie Bridges.

The family of Mrs. Bridges share heartfelt thanks to her son, Douglas, who lovingly cared for her in her home for six years during her declining health. Homespun Hospice also assisted in providing excellent care during her last weeks and the family would like to thank Jerri, Shannon and Brooke for their kind and loving care.

Services will be held on Saturday, Feb. 13 at the Chapel of Thomas Funeral Home in Calhoun. Family will receive visitors from 11 a.m. until the funeral hour of 1 p.m. Dr. Steven Pearson and Dr. Jether Cochran will officiate. A graveside service will follow at Chandler Cemetery.

Grandsons Jonathan Parker, Wayne Jarrett, Christopher Bridges, Derek Bridges, Adam Bridges, and Chandler Bridges and nephews Raymond Shope, Eddie Shope, and Wayne Jones will serve as pallbearers for Mrs. Carmen Jones Bridges.

Due to the ongoing national health crisis, face coverings must be properly worn by all those who plan to attend. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times while attending the service.

You may leave the family online condolences at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Mrs. Carmen Jones Bridges.



**Thomas**  
Funeral Home

### Dorothy Carden

Dorothy Neal Carden, age 96, of Adairsville, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021 at her residence.

Dorothy was born on Oct. 6, 1924 in Gordon County, daughter of the late Alvin Neal and Georgia New Neal. In addition to her parents, Dorothy was also preceded in death by: her husband, Wilburn "W.T." Carden; son, David T. Carden; and seven brothers and sisters.

Dorothy is survived by: two sons, Kenny Carden and Neal Carden; daughter Lynn Hall; two sisters, Mary Spector and Shelby Davis; ten grandchildren, Andy Carden, Adam Carden, Adrien Carden, Robbie Lynn, Tammy Lynn, Kimble Hall, Johnathan Carden, Danita Abernathy, Chris Carden, and Brian Whiteman; seven great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren.

The family will receive friends on Sunday, Feb. 14, 2021 from 1 - 3 p.m. at Thomas Funeral Home.

A graveside service will be held on Sunday, Feb. 14, 2021 at 3 p.m. at Fain Cemetery with Rev. Gary Hibberts in charge of gravesite rites.

Due to the ongoing national health crisis, face coverings must be properly worn by all those who plan to attend. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times while attending the service.

You may leave the family online condolences at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Dorothy Neal Carden.

**Thomas**  
Funeral Home

### Diana "Lucy" Edwards

Ms. Diana Lynn "Lucy" Edwards, age 62, of Resaca, departed this life Monday, Feb. 8, 2021 at AdventHealth Gordon in Calhoun. Lucy was born Oct. 19, 1958. She was preceded in death by her father, Lester Thomas Edwards.



She is survived by her husband, Lowell Underwood of the residence; mother, Betty Price of Dalton; daughter and son-in-law, Tanya Underwood and Billy Smith; son and daughter-in-law, John and Becky Underwood, all of Resaca; grandchildren, Erin and Christopher Hunt, Colby Rich, Cara and Cody Carroll, Tiffany and AJ Mills, Keith Underwood, Kayla Underwood, Harley Smith and Billy Smith, Jr.; great-grandchildren, Camden Hunt, Olivia Carroll, Audrey Rickett, Tingleigh Mills, Aleah Mills, Jauston Mills, Kaylee Mills, Braxtyn Underwood, Katie Underwood, Kinley Stewart, Katlen Steele, Maddie Underwood and Zaylen Underwood; brothers, Eric Edwards of Dalton, Lester Edwards of Chatsworth; aunts, Sue Ensley, Connie Stansell and Katherine Carrollall of Dalton; nieces, Ashley Miller and Erica Edwards; nephews, Shaun Edwards and Brandon Turner; special neighbor, Hunter Stokes; several other nieces and nephews.

Services to celebrate the life of Ms. Diana Lynn "Lucy" Edwards were held Friday, Feb. 12, 2021 at 1 p.m. at Ponders Calhoun Chapel with Reverend Nicky Starling officiating. She was laid to rest at Fairview Cemetery at Hall Memorial Church with Chris Hunt, Cody Carroll, Chris Miller, Shaun Edwards, Billy Smith and Dakota Hunter serving as pallbearers. The family received friends after 10 a.m. Friday morning until the service hour.

Due to the National health crisis and the Covid-19 virus, masks must be worn properly at all times and social distancing must be observed when visiting the funeral home.

Condolences may be expressed to the family at [www.pondersfuneralhome.com](http://www.pondersfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements by Ponders Calhoun Chapel 675 Jolley Road Calhoun, Georgia 706-625-7577

[www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org](http://www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org) and [www.ogr.org](http://www.ogr.org)

**PONDERS**  
FUNERAL HOMES

### Frederick "Fred" Osborn

Mr. Frederick Charles "Fred" Osborn, age 63, of Calhoun, departed this life Tuesday afternoon, Feb. 9, 2021 at his home surrounded by his loving family. Fred was born Feb. 11, 1957 in Suffern, New York, a son of the late, Harold Clarke and Pauline Deger Osborn. Fred proudly served his country in the U.S. Army. He was a welder by trade and retired from Apache Mills.

He is survived by his loving wife, Cindy Lynn Ingram Osborn of the residence; daughters, Gracie Annelisa-Destiny Osborn, Elisabeth Jeann Osborn Kendrick and Jered Kendrick; grandchildren, Hazel Marie Kendrick and Brent Lee Kendrick, all of Calhoun; son and his fiancée, James Dillon Colson of Stockbridge, and Bailey McKeehan of Griffin; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Olson and Barbara Ingram of Stockbridge.

The family received friends from 5:00 o'clock p.m. until 7:00 o'clock p.m. Friday, Feb. 12, 2021. Military honors will be provided by the American Legion Post #112.

Due to the National health crisis and the Covid-19 virus, masks must be worn properly at all times and social distancing must be observed when visiting the funeral home.

Condolences may be expressed to the family at [www.pondersfuneralhome.com](http://www.pondersfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements by, Ponders Calhoun Chapel 675 Jolly Rd Calhoun GA 30701

[www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org](http://www.selectedindependentfuneralhomes.org) and [www.ogr.org](http://www.ogr.org)

**PONDERS**  
FUNERAL HOMES

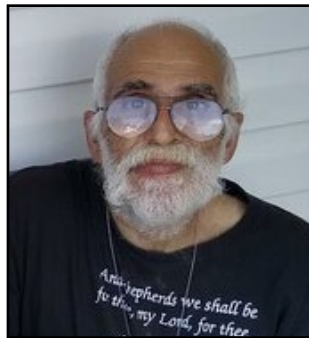
### Maria Torres

Maria Ofelia Torres, age 68, of Calhoun, passed away on Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021 at AdventHealth Gordon.

Maria was born on April 2, 1952 in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, daughter of the late Inocencio Arias and Ramona Garcia.

Maria is survived by: her husband, Jose Torres Aguilar; two sons, Juan Jose Torres Arias, Jorge Armando Torres Arias; two daughters, Maribel Torres Arias and Ana Maria Torres Arias; brother, Raul Arias Garcia; four sisters, Maria del Rosario Arias Garcia, Maria del Socorro Arias Garcia, Maria Silvia Arias Garcia, and Maria Piedad Arias Garcia; twelve grandchildren, Aimee Torres Pacheco, Joseph Abraham Pacheco, Alexandra Pacheco, Miriam Itzel Torres, Jonathan Alexander Torres, Daphne Sophia Torres, Alyson Aileen Orozco, Arlette Orozco, Alexa Aitana Orozco, Valeria Antonella Torres, Valentina Isabella Torres, Ian Sebastian Torres, Natalie Elizabeth Cisneros, Ethan Alexander Cisneros, Evan Christopher Cisneros; and one great-granddaughter, Scarlett Arabella Leon.

A Funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021 at 3 p.m. at St. Clement's Catholic Church with Father Feiser Munoz officiating. Interment will follow in Fain Cemetery.



The family received friends on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021 from 5 - 8 p.m. at Thomas Funeral Home.

Due to the ongoing national health crisis, face coverings must be properly worn by all those who plan to attend. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times while attending the service.

You may leave the family online condolences at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Maria Ofelia Torres.

**Thomas**  
Funeral Home

### Daryl Walker

Daryl Walker, 61, of Calhoun, died Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2021 after a two-year battle with cancer. He was born on Oct. 13, 1959 in LaGrange to Ann Heard Walker and the late Drexel Walker. He was preceded in death by his brother, Greg Walker.

Along with his mother, Ann Walker he is survived by his children, Ashely (Chris) Clark and Joshua Walker; brothers, Alan (Carol) Walker and Jeff Walker; sister, Tracey (James) Floyd; grandchildren, Kade Clark and Ellie Clark; several nieces and nephews also survive.

The family will receive friends on Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021 from 12 - 2 p.m. The service will follow the visitation at 2 p.m. from the Chapel of Max Brannon and Sons Funeral home with Rev. Ronnie Wells and Rev. Ralph Parker officiating. Burial will follow in Haven of Rest Memorial Park.

To leave condolences and sign the online guestbook please go to, [www.maxbrannonandsons.com](http://www.maxbrannonandsons.com)

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Daryl Walker.

**MAX BRANNON & SONS**  
FUNERAL HOME

### Christal "Christie" Watkins

Christal "Christie" Marlene (Mulkey) Watkins, 50, of Calhoun, died early Friday morning, Feb. 12, 2021, in the Emergency Department at AdventHealth Gordon following an apparent heart attack.

Christie was born in Calhoun on Oct. 28, 1971, daughter of Emma Hall Copeland and the late Robert Mulkey. In addition to her father, she was preceded in death by a sister, Tammy Mulkey VanKirk. She was a member of the 1991 graduating class of Fairmount High School, was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother, and enjoyed spending time with her family.

Survivors include her husband, Travis Scott Watkins of Calhoun, a daughter, Nacole Cox and her husband Michael of Calhoun; son, Kevin Watkins of Calhoun; one grandchild, Lason Cox; sister, Tina Mulkey Wilcox; brothers, David Mulkey, Jeffrey Mulkey, Alan Mulkey and Terry Mulkey along with several nieces, nephews and other relatives.

It was Christie's request to be cremated. A memorial service will be held later at the chapel of Max Brannon & Sons Funeral Home.

The family asked that flowers be omitted and contributions can be made to the funeral home to assist with final expenses,

Online condolences may be expressed and the guest register signed at [www.maxbrannonandsons.com](http://www.maxbrannonandsons.com).

**MAX BRANNON & SONS**  
FUNERAL HOME

### Patricia Wood

Patricia Ann Wood, age 77, of Calhoun, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 9 in AdventHealth Gordon.

Patricia was born May 19, 1943 in Attalla, Ala. She was a member of the Meadowdale Baptist Church and the Nellie Peters United Methodist Church. Patricia was devoted wife, mother, and grandmother, who loved to cook.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Ira Gibbs Stephens and her daughter, Missy Ann Wood Shugart.

Survivors include her husband of 62 years, Joe M. Wood, Jr.; one son, Todd Wood and his wife Jennifer; two daughters Tammy Bryant and her husband Scotty and Cathy Suzanne Phillips. Eight grandchildren, Keena Leanne Trapp, Trevor Bo Bryant, Darrell Phillips, Ted Phillips, Dawn Breanne Phillips, Kaleb Shugart, Anna Grace Wood and Kaitlyn Wood. Six great-grandchildren, Rali Ann Proffitt, Eli Proffitt, Jaylyn Phillips, Jyda Phillips, Jordyn Phillips, and Aiden Phillips also survive.

Funeral services were conducted Thursday, Feb. 11 at 2 p.m. from the chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with Rev. Frank Wood officiating. Burial followed in Chandler Cemetery with Bo Bryant, Darrell Phillips, Tad Phillips, Glenn Phillips, Scotty Bryant, Kris Trapp, and Andrew Shattuck serving as pallbearers.

The family received friends from 11a.m. until 1 p.m. at the funeral home.

You may send condolences to the family at [www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com](http://www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com)

Due to the ongoing national health crisis, face coverings must be properly worn by all those who plan to attend. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times while attending the service.

Thomas Funeral Home is proud to have been entrusted with the care of Patricia Ann Wood.

# Give blood in honor of Black History Month in February

Celebrate the legacies of Drs. Charles Drew, Jerome Holland by giving blood; Donors who give in February will receive a \$5 Amazon.com gift card thanks to a \$1 million donation from Amazon

## AMERICAN RED CROSS

In honor of Black History Month this February, the American Red Cross encourages eligible donors, and especially those who have recovered from COVID-19, to give blood to honor the legacies of African Americans like Dr. Charles Drew and Dr. Jerome Holland.

Their passion for helping improve the lives of patients in need of lifesaving blood products is carried on through dedicated blood donors, blood drive sponsors, volunteers, and Red Cross employees.

Drew, an African American surgeon, was the medical director of the first Red Cross blood bank in 1941. Drew's research about the storage and shipment of blood plasma proved that blood could be stored for transfusions. Many of the processes he developed are still in use today.

As the first African American chair of the Red Cross Board of Governors, Holland was passionate about blood research. His commitment to providing the safest possible blood products for patients in need helped inform many safeguards the Red Cross has in place today to not only protect patients but also blood donors.

Donors have the ability to create a legacy of their own simply by rolling up a sleeve to give blood, platelets, or plasma to help patients in need. COVID-19 survivors are especially needed to address a convalescent plasma shortage. These individuals may have antibodies in their plasma that could help patients currently battling the virus.

Every day there are thousands of patients who rely on lifesaving blood donations – people like David Kendrick. In 2007, serving in Iraq left Kendrick with an injury to his femoral artery which caused massive bleeding and a blood infection. He underwent emergency surgery and received multiple blood transfusions.

Additionally, he spent three months in the hospital and spent three years in physical therapy.

He credits blood transfusions for helping to save his life. "I received multiple blood transfusions after being injured in Iraq. I don't know who donated the blood that saved my life, but there is a hero out there somewhere," said Kendrick. "You can be a hero too by donating today." Watch and learn more about Kendrick's story.

Blood donation appointments can be made by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1 800-733-2767), or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device. As a thank-you for helping ensure a stable blood supply, those who come to give this February will receive a \$5 Amazon.com Gift Card via email, courtesy of Amazon. (Restrictions apply. Additional information and details are available at [RedCrossBlood.org/Together](http://RedCrossBlood.org/Together).)

### Inspiring lifesaving action

This gift is made possible by a generous \$1 million donation from Amazon, and the Red Cross hopes it will motivate donors to roll up a sleeve to ensure patients continue to have access to lifesaving blood products. During this pandemic, the Red Cross has been fortunate to witness the best of humanity and grateful to partners like Amazon, who have stepped up to help. Amazon's generous donation will specifically help support the Red Cross efforts to collect a sufficient amount of convalescent plasma to treat COVID-19 patients as well as support the needs of sickle cell patients by helping to engage the Black community on the importance of giving blood and hosting blood drives.

In addition to Amazon's financial gift, Amazon has opened its corporate and operations building to host blood drives nationwide. In 2020, Amazon hosted 65 blood drives, collecting nearly 2,000 donations to help save thousands of lives.

### Important COVID-19 information for donors

The Red Cross is testing blood, platelet, and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether an individual developed COVID-19 symptoms. Red Cross antibody tests will be helpful to identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies and may now help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transfusions. Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors that have antibodies that may help patients who are actively fighting the virus. Plasma from whole blood donations that test positive for COVID-19 antibodies may be used to help COVID-19 patients.

COVID-19 antibody test results will be available within one to two weeks in the Red Cross Blood Donor App or donor portal at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org). A positive antibody test result does not confirm infection or immunity. The Red Cross is not testing donors to diagnose illness, referred to as a diagnostic test. To protect the health and safety of Red Cross staff and donors, it is important that individuals who do not feel well or believe they may be ill with COVID-19 postpone donation.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including temperature checks, social distancing, and face coverings for donors and staff – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive and are required to wear a face-covering or mask while at the drive, in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.



### About blood donation

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds, and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](http://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) or use the Blood Donor App.

### About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds, and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or [cruzrojaamericana.org](http://cruzrojaamericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.

## No love at the pump this February; AAA Forecasts Gas Prices to Continue Climbing

### AAA

At \$2.46, the national gas price average is more expensive on the week (+4 cents), the month (+16 cents) and the year (+2 cents). This past Saturday, February 6, was the first time in 340 days the national average was more expensive than a year ago. Today, nearly two-thirds of all state gas price averages are more expensive year-over-year. Pump prices continue to climb, in part due to expensive crude oil and the market's growing optimism that demand will increase amid the vaccination roll-out.

Up to \$56/bbl, crude oil increased last week following Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) decision to keep their production cuts unchanged—a decision influenced by the ongoing impact of the pandemic on gasoline demand. Crude has not been priced this high since January 2020. Typically, it can take a few weeks before pump prices see the impact of more expensive crude, and with crude accounting for more than 50% of the retail price, increases are no doubt going to continue.

"Consumers can expect to continue paying more to fill up this month, potentially up to 10 cents more a gallon, depending on how high crude goes," said Jeanette Casselano McGee, AAA spokesperson. "If demand grows, that will further fuel pump price increases."

On the week, 46 state gas price averages are more expensive with 13 states seeing a nickel or more increase. Motorists in Florida (+11 cents), Michigan (+11 cents) and West Virginia (+10 cents) saw the largest weekly increases.

### Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 largest weekly increases: Florida (+11 cents), Michigan (+11 cents), West Virginia (+10 cents), Missouri (+6 cents), Wisconsin (+6 cents), Pennsylvania (+6 cents), Connecticut (+6 cents), Kentucky (+6 cents), Illinois (+5 cents) and Louisiana (+5 cents).

The nation's top 10 least expensive markets: Mississippi (\$2.14), Texas (\$2.16), Oklahoma (\$2.18), Missouri (\$2.19), Louisiana (\$2.20), Arkansas (\$2.21), South Carolina (\$2.22), Kansas (\$2.23) and Tennessee (\$2.23).

### Oil Market Dynamics

At the close of Friday's formal trading session, WTI increased by 62 cents to settle at \$56.85. Crude prices rose last week after OPEC and its production reduction agreement partners met to review compliance with their agreement to collectively reduce crude production by 7.2 million b/d. The group decided to hold the cuts steady and expects output to remain low this year since demand is forecasted to be lower than expected in 2021, due to ongoing crude demand concerns as the pandemic continues. Crude prices were also bolstered by the

Energy Information Administration's (EIA) latest report showing that total domestic crude inventories dropped by 1 million bbl to 475.7 million bbl. For this week, crude prices may continue to climb if the next weekly EIA report shows another reduction in total domestic crude inventories.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at [AAA.com/mobile](http://AAA.com/mobile).

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# Education

## GNTC announces President's and Dean's Lists for fall 2020

### GNTC

Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC) is proud to announce the students on the President's and Dean's Lists for the 2020 fall semester. To be eligible for the President's List, the student must maintain a GPA of 3.8 or higher during the semester with a course load of at least 12 credit hours. To be eligible for the Dean's List, the student must maintain a GPA of 3.5 to 3.79 during the semester with a course load of at least 12 credit hours. GNTC students are listed by their designated home campus and dual enrolled students are listed by their high school.

The GNTC President's List for:

The Catoosa County Campus: Brandon Avans, Avery Cavin, Joseph Chase, Richard Eaker, Graham Focht, Hannah Godfrey, Sammy Hamby, Stephan Herbel, Larry Holbrooks, Sylvia Kamp, Joshua Lee, Megan Leigh, Lorien Lemus Arita, Kayla Lockhart, Thadeous Long, Courtney Parks, Amie Patterson, Levi Pettigrew, Hailey Pilkington, Ashlyn Propst, Ashley Vineyard, Charles Walsh, Brittany Wattenbarger and David Young.

The Floyd County Campus: Courtney Adams, Nicole Adams, Josi Adcock, Mayela Alsina-Guerrero, Samantha Arrington, Joshua Banks, Adriana Barajas, Matthew Barnes, Stephanie Barnhart, Amie Bates, Eric Beach, Kinsley Beck, Savannah Beeler, Clara Bennett, Tori Bennett, Shaye Beverly, Alice Bibby, Melissa Blackwell, Heather Bourg, Jessica Briggs, Joy Brown, Tressa Brown, Christina Bullock, Dana Bunch, Jeffery Burger, Christopher Cabe, Cody Campbell, Brittney Carter, Destiny Carter, Jonathan Casey, Elizabeth Chihuahua, Esmeralda Cisneros, William Clanton, Abie Cline, Krysta Coker, Stephen Cordle, Cesar Cornejo Lopez, Emmanuel Cornejo-Escutia, Stephanie Cornett, Jonathan Crane, Steven Crane, Christine Crouch, Erik Cruz, Oksana Daniel, Melanie Davenport, Riley Deck, Reagan Deems, Brannon Draper, Payton Eagan, Emily Edwards, Houston Edwards, Timothy Edwards, Praise Eguavoen, Morad Enayet, Marvin Escobar, Joseph Esposito, Andrea Etzler, Emma Evans, Oscar Flores Segura, Araseli Fonseca-Cruz, Candice Franks, Joshua Freeman, Caterine Galicia Baez, Jazmyn Gamble, Virgilio Gaspar-Francisco, D'ana Gay, Katelin Gaylor, Michael Gibson, Tyler Gollahon, Destiny Griffin, Sabrina Griffin, Netashna Guyant, Eric Hamilton, Jacob Hammitt, Joseph Harper, Nicole Hatcher, Omar Hernandez, Ileana Hidalgo, Casey Hipps, Kristen Hosbach, Tyler Howland, Hannah Hunter, Kelli Irvine, Jacquera Jester, Leslie Jimenez, Kasey Jones, Keilyn Jones, Peyton Jones, Taylor Kinsey, Laura Kizziah, Breanna Kreider, Asrealla Lee, Lacey Leming, Dafne Leonard, Ariel Lewis, Aaron Little, Debra Little, Joshua Little, Lucas Loboda, Maria Lopez, Diana Madero Hernandez, Rebecca Martin, Erin Massey, Nyia Maurer, Tara Maurer, Alyssa May, Regina McClendon, Kelly McDowell, Zachary Miller, Kalee Mitchell, Joshua Monk, Ian Moore, Denna Morgan, Alexandra Morley, Michaela Mosley, Mason Mull, Hunter Mullinax, Marrio Oliver, Emilce Ortiz, Nicholas Pearson, Cody Peoples, Jessica Phillips, Madalyn Pittman, Lucas Pizano, Andrea Pooser, Cattera Pullen, Edwin Ramirez Clara, Cheyenne Ramsey, Elora Ratcliff, Kaylyn Reed, Joan Reyes, Mariana Reyes, Saul Reyes, Bladdimir Reyes Alvarado, John Reynolds, Jimmy Rivera Velasquez, Jeremiah Rogers, Wesley Runyon, Luke Ryan, Sara Saade, Jennifer Salinas, Molly Schrimsher, Logan Seabolt, April Shank, Deann Shelley, Grace Sims, Caroline Sizemore, Autumn Slay, Kelsey Sledge, Lauren Smith, Brian Stallings, Bradley Stanley, Kayla Stephenson, Jennifer Still, Lee Tanner, Samantha Taylor, Danny Thomas, Vanessa Tomas, Jessica Trejo, Nichole Truitt, Hayden Vaughn, Noah Voils, Abby Walker, Jennifer West, Reanna Whirley, Madisyn White, Lily Whyte, Alexis Williams, Derrick Williams, Ethan Witt, Jackson Wood, Baylee Wright, Jessica Wynn and Spencer Youngblood.

The Gordon County Campus: Sarai Albor, Taylor Amos, Erica Baber, Morgan Baggett, Lacie Bailey, Heather Ballinger, Cassandra Bennett, Raymond Bentley, Emily Brewer, Lindsay Burkhalter, Rebekah Cates, Dawn Charles, Hayley Cloer, John Craig, Jordan Crider, Mary Crowe, Angel Cruz, Brenda De Leon, Priscilla De Santiago Sanchez, Emily Dillard, Leighanna Edwards, Carly Ellison, Haley Enderle, Amanda Fowler, Guillermo Fraire, Lori Gallagher, Wilmar Gonzalez, Kaytlyn Green, Kari Hamby, Jason Harrod, Jacob Hayter, Jessica Heifner, Dagoberto Hernandez, Katelyn Horner, Amanda Jackson, Clayton Long, Grayson Lusk, Kiya McDaniels, Cohen Miller, Lara Miller, Joshua Monroe, Saxil-Ha Mura, Zachary Newman, Amanda Ochart, Steven

Ollis, Tony Parker, Johnathon Pearson, Jamie Perez, Candy Phillips, Ethan Pratt, Isam Rasheed, Alaina Reece, Jeremy Reed, Halle Rhodes, Miguel Sanchez-Perez, Nicholas Santos, Darsey Shields, Anna Smith, Ramsey Smith, Tayler Stanley, Katelynn Stockman, William Swantic, Karley Thomas, Hazel Trujillo, Jose Ulibarri, Shannon Vann, Montserrat Villalobos Hernandez, Kristin Wade, Joshua Walls, Findley White, James Wilson and Jonathon York.

The Polk County Campus: Anna Bellantoni, Kayla Brand, Heather Byars, Kayleigh Carter, Cathy Holsey, Cynthia Jacobo, John Jones, Anna Lewis, Tandalea Mendez, Tina Nguyen, Jordan Rakestraw, Lorren Waters and Elizabeth Zuker.

The Walker County Campus: Sheena Agan, Macy Allgood, Jennifer Bailey, Jerry Bland, Madison Boone, Crystal Brady, Ronald Bristow, Linzee Brown, Jasmine Bryson, Nathan Busby, Elisa Callan, Taylor Casey, Haley Christopher, Connor Cooran, Sharon Coker, Bethany Colbert, Kaitlyn Conner, James Cotter, Emily Cowart, Gracie Daniel, Steven Davis, Rhonda Dekarske, Caitlin Dillinger, Chloe Dockery, Chelsie Eaton, Aubrie Edwards, Justin Ellison, Brooklyn Espy, Andrew Eychaner, Abigail Fowler, Kaitlyn Fuller, Meghan Gadbois, Stacey Garmany, Tina Gentry, Destiny Gomez, McKenzie Gossett, Tanner Groce, Mackenzi Haney, Angela Hendrix, Jessica Hester, Jennifer Highsmith, Sylvia Hill, Ashlyn Hodges, Donna Hogue, Allie Ingle, Kimberly Jenkins, Jazmin Jennings, Phillip Jennings, Dakota Jones, Janet Kennett, Marion Lay, Thomas Lyons, Bobbie Mackey, Julia Maddux, Ashley Magin, Kolby Marsh, Tiffany Martin, Matt Matteson, Catelynn McCoy, Stacy McDonough, Jessica McKenzie, Mary Morter, Olivia Moses, Alayna Moss, Haley Nguyen, Dora Nunez, Jessica Osborn, Megean Page, Mary Partain, Mitchell Patterson, Labeth Payne, Grace Pearson, Emily Plemons, Stacia Powell, Bailey Putnam, Alysha Quinn, Angela Rash, Heather Reynolds, Makinsey Reynolds, Heather Rich, William Rutledge, Denisse Sarmiento, Kevin Schoettler, Michael Scott, Adriana Silva, Dylan Simpson, Jessica Staton, Shelby Steele, Samantha Stowers, Megan Strickland, Alexis Taylor, Laura Tennant, Bethany Thomason, Sally Thomison, Madison Thompson, Erin Tucker, Steven Tucker, Andrew Van Gorp, Tammy Ward, Italia Whaley, Amanda Williams, Anna Wilson, Cierra Womack and Rebecah Woody.

The Whitfield Murray Campus: Levi Anderson, Harry Austin, Latoya Bargo, Kendra Bennett, Joel Burns, Lauren Callahan, Jessica Carnes, Cristina Carrillo-Rosas, Steven Cole, Brooke Cornette, Grant Davis, Justin Derosier, Eliseo Diaz Gomez, Feliciano Diego, Matthew Dunn, Ronnie Dunn, Matthew Earley, Bray Erwin, Jason Findley, Gregory Fish, Adriana Flores, Jennifer Flores, Justin Ford, Paola Fraire Morales, Tyler Gadd, Moises Gil, Andy Gillham, Wade Goolsby, Lupita Guzman, James Hampton, Patricia Herrera Pena, Kathleen Herring, Lydia Hyde, Evan Lewis, Lauren Lindsey, David Lopez, Bryce Mantooth, Jeffrey McClain, Aaron McCurdy, Hannah McFalls, Alexander Mutchler, Victor Paramo, Alan Parker, Atanacio Perez, Brandon Pinson, Jonathan Pritchett, Kelly Rickett, Jennifer Rodriguez, Alejandro Rosillo, Matthew Rountree, Juan Sanchez, Frances Scoggins, Haley Sterner, Edgar Tapia, Dustin Tate, Heather Thrasher, Jennifer Triana, Tyler Tuck, Christian Varnell, Luis Vasquez, Lance Watson, William West, Lisa White, Andrea Zavala and Arely Zendejas.

Sonoraville High School: Edwin Andrade, Bethany Champion, Janette Graves, Sydney Stanley and Riley Triplett.

The GNTC Dean's List for:

The Catoosa County Campus: Cory Clark, Brandon Cowart, Justin Davis, Bethany Giles, Sita Greene, William Hooper, Noah Lance, Devin Leake, Terry Morris, Hunter Shepherd, Nicholas Woods and Austin Yearta.

The Floyd County Campus: Jillian Alspaugh, Haley Arp, Cooper Bing, Catherine Bowers, Jarrod Broome, Raelyn Bryant, Carlee Buffington, Tara Butler, Bryson Caudle, Jamey Beth Childers, Madelyn Clay, Tucker Cleveland, Lisa Cochran, Lacie Coker, Joseph Cooper, Edgar Cornejo-Escutia, Chastity Crabtree, James Cromer, Matthew Dalton, Diontai Dammond, Erin Davenport, Ava Dent, Holley Dupree, Aden Edwards, Juan Escutia, Rolando Escutia-Nunez, Benjamin Fellers, Madison Fox, Jose Gonzalez, Shelly Grisham, Mitzi Harrell, Lauren Heiser, Raegan Henderson, Christian Hobgood, Teresa Hodgkins, Kolton Holder, Sharon Hoxie, Daniel Hudson, Brittney Hullander, Janan Hussein, Calandra Jones, Ethan Kitchen, Grzegorz Kowal, Anna Lively, Abigail Lockhart, Ricardo Martinez, Cattera

McBride, Addison McCray, Eric Miller, Jeffrey Morrell, Morgan Motes, Chariesa Motin, Mckenzie Nash, Viviana Nevarez, Shaniqua Nina, Chidi-Ebere Nnamani, Jaqueline Nunez-Cruz, Megan O'Connell, Melanie Padgett, Ashley Paramo-Carmona, Tamara Passley, Amy Peace, Jorge Peinado Segura, Madison Phillips, Anna Prather, Darlene Rand, Barbara Rayburn, Ruth Reagin, Jerry Redd, Maria Reveral, Nallely Reyes, Daniel Reyes-Alvarado, Lane Robinson, Jessica Rogers, Montana Rogers, Lauren Sailors, Matthew Schmit, Matthew Schmucker, Rya Scott, Mikayla Shaw, Benjamin Skinner, Jonathan Skokan, Hannah Stepp, Rachell Story, Annalisa Stowe, Jordan Stroud, Taylor Teems, Cason Thompson, Alexandria Tillmann, Adam Trammell, Shaina Underwood, Maggie Waid, Racann Watkins, Colleen West, Amy White, Evan White, Trevor Woodward and Regan Young.

The Gordon County Campus: Ruth Alonso-Velasquez, John Anthony, Andres Beltran, Brandon Busby, Marie Cervantes, Alec Coker, Isaiah Curtis, Devin Ellis, Kaitlyn Epperson, Harrison Fraire, Leonardo Garcia-Navarro, Joshua Guthrie, Seth Harkins, Banks Hathcox, Lexi Hill, Carol Hilton, Matthew Hines, Haleigh Hodge, William Holden, Susana Huerta, Charles Kirby, Stephanie Kührt, Summer Manns, Courtney McBurnett, Joshua McIntyre, Amanda Medders, Brandon Najera, Jose Orellana, Chaz Shelton, Brittney Smith, Nathaniel Tate, Owen Towe, Sondra Washington and Judy Whitfield.

The Polk County Campus: Whitney Kohut, Alliyah McBryde, Katelyn Moore and Sarah Summerville.

The Walker County Campus: Ciara Armstrong, Brandi Bradley, Brittany Bradley, Kali Clark, Alexcia Davis, Megan Dodd, Heather Doperalski, Evelyn Fraire, Sandra Garcia Martinez, Cabot Gass, Kristen Green, Heather Gregg, Karlie Guzman, Bobby Handy, Katlin Henry, Jonathan Hernandez, Logan Hilton, Melissa Hughes, David Huskey, Jacob Jones, Caleb Laferry, Zachary Ledford, Caylee Marks, Audrey Meacham, John Henry Mills, Heather Moore, Maria Paez, Kylee Park, Karlee Patterson, Nicholas

Priester, Amanda Pritchett, Emma Quintero Vega, Casey Ramey, Christina Scott, Ashley Simmons, Amaira Sloop, Diamondlu Sloop, Alexander Smith, Denise Smith, Riley Smith, Dana Snyder, Rodney Stallings, Madison Stanley, Tristan Taylor, Jenna Thompson, Zaida Torres, Magan Trammel, Thomas Ventura, Katelyn Wallace, Princess Ware-Bristow and Blake West.

The Whitfield Murray Campus: Ivan Avalos, Rodney Baggett, Logan Bailey, Gidget Baine, Amado Barragan, Erik Bibiano, Jennifer Clinton, Alexis Contreras Hurtado, Bethany Coppock, Zachary Costlow, Esmeralda De Anda, Alicia Diaz, Barbara Ellis, Fabiola Garcia, Julia Gonzalez, Hector Gutierrez, Jessica Haynes, Wolf Hemby, David Hernandez, Eduardo Hernandez, Heather Hile, Beverly Hyde, Mackenzie Jennings, Griffin Kirk, Joshua Lopez, Ethan Martin, Diana Martinez, Julia Morgan, Kyle Muse, Henry Pacheco, Trace Parks, Zachary Phillips, Amanda Pittman, Enrique Ponce, Juan Ramirez, Anthony Rhoten, Jose Rodriguez, Ivan Sanchez, Jessica Santana, Breannah Snow, Chase Tidwell, Maria Torres, Rebecca Vergara and Logan Watson.

Calhoun High School: Dante Morton, Khushi Patel and Parth Patel.

Sonoraville High School: Priya Patel and Matthew Ramsey.

Georgia Northwestern Technical College provides quality workforce education to the citizens of Northwest Georgia. Students have the opportunity to earn an associate degree, diploma, or a certificate in business, health, industrial, or public service career paths. This past year, 12,454 people benefited from GNTC's credit and noncredit programs. With an annual credit enrollment of 7,730 students, GNTC is the largest college in Northwest Georgia. GNTC has an additional enrollment of 4,724 people through adult education, continuing education, business and industry training, and Georgia Quick Start. For more information about GNTC, visit us at [www.GNTC.edu](http://www.GNTC.edu). GNTC is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia and an Equal Opportunity Institution.



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# GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: Feds appear set to halt Georgia's upcoming Medicaid waiver rules

**ANDY MILLER,**  
Georgia Health News

Georgia's move to add some low-income adults to Medicaid appears threatened as the Biden administration moves to eliminate work requirements for coverage under the government program.

The White House on Friday was expected to notify states that it plans to revoke Medicaid work requirements, Politico, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal reported.

And a letter dated Friday, and addressed to a Georgia Department of Community Health official, said the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has "serious concerns" about the state's new Medicaid plan, set to begin in July. A copy of the letter was obtained by Georgia Health News.

The state plan at issue was approved under a waiver granted by the Trump administration. Such federal waivers are necessary for states to alter certain health care programs.

The federal agency, in the Friday letter to DCH Commissioner Frank Berry, cited Georgia's policies

"that condition health care coverage on meeting work or other community engagement requirements."

The letter pointed to uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including job training and other activities used to satisfy work and other requirements, along with access to transportation and affordable child care.

For a qualified person to get Medicaid coverage under Georgia's 1115 waiver, it's required that the person put 80 hours a month into a job, an education program, a volunteer organization or another qualifying activity. The waiver was expected to add an estimated 50,000 low-income Georgia adults to the Medicaid program.

The CMS letter, from acting Administrator Elizabeth Richter, said the pandemic has "greatly increased the risk that it would be unreasonably difficult or impossible for many individuals to meet the community engagement requirement approved in this [waiver], which would significantly compromise the [waiver's] effectiveness in promoting coverage for its intended beneficiaries."

The waiver plan was promoted by Gov. Brian Kemp, passed by the Georgia General Assembly,

and approved by CMS last year.

Twelve states received federal approval under the Trump administration to impose work requirements. But Medicaid work requirements in Arkansas, Kentucky and elsewhere have been blocked by federal courts, and the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to take up a related case in March.

States could go to court to challenge efforts by the Biden administration, the Journal reported.

A spokesman for Kemp said late Friday that Georgia officials are reviewing the letter.

"Taking into account the totality of circumstances, CMS has preliminarily determined that allowing work and other community engagement requirements to take effect in Georgia would not promote the objectives of the Medicaid program," Richter's letter said. It added that the federal agency is considering withdrawing the ability of the state to require work or other requirements as a condition of Medicaid eligibility.

The 1115 waivers are experimental and can be ended by a presidential administration, said Bill Custer, a health insurance expert at Georgia State

University.

A federal rejection of the eligibility requirements could provide momentum for Georgia to pursue a full Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act, which 38 states have done.

Congress is working on incentives for holdout states to adopt expansion, both in COVID-19 relief legislation and a separate Senate bill. Expansion is projected to cover 10 times the number of Georgians who would gain coverage under the Kemp plan.

Republican political leaders in Georgia, though, are expected to push back against the full expansion idea, as they have done in the past.

The Kemp administration could drop the work requirements and keep the rest of the Medicaid enrollment changes, which would increase eligibility for uninsured single adults with incomes up to 100 percent of poverty, about \$12,000 annually.

"If work requirements are removed from the governor's plan, many more Georgians could gain coverage," said Laura Colbert of the advocacy group Georgians for a Healthy Future. "This would be a positive move, although other barriers to coverage are still in place

and the plan would still cover fewer people than a full Medicaid expansion."

Kemp's plan requires that Georgians living in poverty pay a premium before their Medicaid coverage takes effect, Colbert noted. "With so many low-income families struggling to pay rent, put food on the table, pay for virtual school expenses, and so on, even a modest 5-to-10-dollar premium is likely too much for many."

"Work requirements have never been about work," she said. "Most Georgians who would be covered by Medicaid expansion or by Governor Kemp's smaller plan are already working, taking care of a child or other family member, going to school, or are too sick to work."

Politico reported that federal health officials are also preparing to withdraw the Trump administration's 2018 letter that announced the work requirements policy, and rescind a separate letter from earlier this year aimed at making it more difficult for the incoming Biden administration to quickly overturn the policy.

"CMS has serious concerns that now is not the appropriate time to test policies that

risk a substantial loss of health care coverage or benefits in the near term," according to a health department draft rollout plan titled "Medicaid Work Requirement Rescission," Politico reported.

Seema Verma, who was CMS administrator under Trump and who crafted the requirements, argued they would encourage healthy people to work and help keep state Medicaid programs financially sustainable.

In the final weeks of the Trump administration, Politico noted, Verma asked states to sign contracts that would establish a lengthy process for unwinding work requirements and other conservative changes to their Medicaid programs. Medicaid experts have questioned whether those contracts are legally enforceable.

Only one state, Arkansas, fully implemented the Medicaid work rules, Politico pointed out. About 18,000 people in that state lost Medicaid coverage in 2018 during the few months the requirements were in effect, before a judge blocked them.

*Andy Miller is the owner and editor of Georgia Health News.*

## Weekly Schedule: Free Public Health COVID-19 Testing in Northwest Georgia

Monday February 15	Tuesday February 16	Wednesday February 17	Thursday February 18	Friday February 19
Paulding	Gordon	Dade Floyd	Walker	no testing



### TEST SITES

### HOURS

- Dade: 71 Case Avenue, Suite H-100, Trenton, GA
- Floyd: Rome Fair Grounds, 1400 Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd., Rome, GA
- Gordon: Senior Center, 150 Cambridge Court, Calhoun, GA
- Paulding: Paulding Meadows, 472 Paulding Meadows Dr., Dallas, GA
- Walker: Mount Zion Baptist Church, 289 Dunwoody Road, LaFayette, GA

- 9 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- 9 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**All test sites drive-up, no appointment needed.**

Test sites may delay opening due to weather concerns. Delays will be posted at [nwgapublichealth.org](http://nwgapublichealth.org) and county health department Facebook pages.

# BOE From page 1A

example, was causing our breakfast participation to decrease drastically," said Head. "We still have to adhere to the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act because it is part of the nutrition standards."

Eddie Hall also asked about items in vending machines, whether they would stay the same or have to be taken out.

"So, items in the vending machines do have to meet all Smart Snack guidelines," said Head. "The high school vending machines are something that we have to really get down to the nitty gritty with. Our middle school vending machines do meet all the Smart Snack standards, but as far as the high school vending machines, from what I've seen, unfortunately they do not (meet the standards). So that's something we would have to look at; we can either turn them off during the day while students are on campus and turn them back on at the end of the school day or we can talk with our vending machine company and have Smart Snacks put in those and adhere to the Smart Snack standards. Unfortunately, we are going through a school nutrition review next year, and that is one thing they will be looking at and they will be looking at a high school and both high schools do not have Smart Snack snacks in any of their vending machines. So we can get financial action against our school nutrition program if Smart Snacks are not in vending machines."

"When I looked at it prior to Nichole coming, we were behind in adhering to some rules that had been in place for a while," said Dr. Fraker. "I've gone through it as a principal, changing them over to the smart snacks. It works fine once the students get used to it; they can't have the same Mello Yellow that they thought they can have but they can have a healthier option. And the snacks are not bad; it is things like baked chips."

"The snacks they can buy on the cart in the lunch line are basically the same snacks they can get in the vending

machines," said Head. "We will have to take the full fat snacks out of the vending machines, the candy...we'd also have to take the full-fledged sodas out of the vending machines; they could have the diet and zero sodas but they could not have the full Cokes and the full Mountain Dew's."

Eddie Hall then asked about groups and clubs that sell candy.

"We could still do so many (candy sales) a year; there are allowable ones but you'd have to pick and choose which ones you want to do. I think, as far as fundraising goes, we've been fine. We've been going by the guidelines."

Board Chair Charlie Walraven wanted to know if vending machines could be put in teacher workrooms, and Head told him that there could be vending machines in those rooms and as long as they were out of sight of the students, could be filled with any type of snack.

"Those can have Cokes, candy and full-fat chips," said Head. "Those can be in the teacher break rooms but the students cannot have access to them."

"I think we've made great strides in moving away from the Obama-era nutrition guidelines and I would hate to see us go back toward that. The meals and things kids get at school are very often all they get and I feel like we've been moving toward making them better the last few years. I don't think it's our job to tell them it's unhealthy; how many of you cook without salt at your house? But yet we do that here and expect them to eat it," said Eddie Hall. "I'm not excited about this."

"The things that we're cooking (in the cafeterias) are not going to change because that's the waiver (Nicole Head) was talking about. But that (2010) act was never repealed, so the snack part is the part that still stands and that everybody has to go by. There's never been an option to move away from it or we'll lose funding," said Dr. Fraker.

Head assured the Board that the cafeteria meals will not change.

"If we moved away from it, then why would we go

back to it?" asked Eddie Hall.

"I don't think we ever converted over to it in our snack machines fully," said Dr. Fraker of the 2010 act. "That's what I'm learning from talking to the high schools; that was just an area of 'maybe we won't get caught, lets don't worry about it.' But those are the ones where our funding will be affected. As far as meals go, we've come light years from where we used to be...those won't change at all."

"I think what most people are afraid of is Obama had Joe for a vice president, and now he's the president," said Board member Bobby Hall. "A lot of things you saw under (Obama's) administration are going to come back."

Board member Jason Hendrix pointed out that it could be revenue lost for the schools, since the schools use vending machine money for their specific school.

"I know we've got to adhere to it, but it's kind of like 'don't tie our hands' but we do," said Hendrix.

Dr. Fraker told Hendrix that when she was a principal and implemented the snack machine changes, students still purchased snacks and it wouldn't take that big of a hit.

It was also pointed out that some vending machines, such as those located in gyms, could still have traditional snacks and be turned off during instructional time, and turned back on after school.

Also at the meeting, the first reading for Policy IHF(6) was also held, concerning Graduation Requirements, beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and for every year thereafter.

"There have been some significant changes through the years, as far as wording, especially where special education is concerned and the awarding of diplomas to those students," said Dr. Fraker. "We did provide a provision for, as a school system we have more requirements than the state requires and we do require a student to finish a pathway and it's something we do feel very strongly about, however we did include a provision for a hardship (reason) a child might have to review the pathway. That will be used very sparingly."

# COVID From page 1A

Gordon County Schools' weekly numbers, reported each Friday afternoon, show the new cases of COVID-19 for the week, plus any previous cases that are still active. You can find those numbers on their website at <https://www.gcbe.org/domain/5112>

Calhoun City Schools reported new cases of COVID-19 this week decreased to 7 new cases, down 19 new cases from last week. There were 5 new cases among students (1 at Calhoun Middle and 4 at Calhoun High), and 2 new cases among staff members (1 at Calhoun Primary and 1 at Calhoun Elementary).

Calhoun City Schools post the new case numbers each Friday afternoon, and includes the previous week's numbers separately on their website at [https://www.calhounschools.org/summer-resources/](https://www.calhounschools.org/summer-resources/ccsd-covid-19-case-status-reportnew-) ccsd-covid-19-case-status-reportnew-

page

Both school systems have adopted strict cleaning procedures and are following the health and safety guidelines set forth by the CDC concerning social distancing. Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 at either school system cannot return to school until they meet the Department of Public Health's Return to School Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure.

Numbers of new COVID19 cases were down in Calhoun-Gordon County, with 167 new cases reported in the community since last Saturday, with 3 additional deaths contributed to the virus. At press time Saturday morning, Feb. 13, 2021, Gordon County has had 5,557 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began—up 167 cases since the same time last week. COVID-19 related deaths now stand at 85, up 3 deaths from last week. The Department of Public Health also reports 8 probable deaths from COVID. There have been 268 hospitalizations in Gordon County due to COVID-19 since

March, up 9 hospitalizations since last week.

The COVID-19 statistics for Gordon's neighboring counties since the beginning of the pandemic as of Saturday morning are:

- Bartow County...9,570 cases, 165 deaths, 13 probable deaths and 653 hospitalizations;
- Floyd County... 8,958 cases, 150 deaths, 30 probable deaths and 731 hospitalizations;
- Whitfield County...13,870 cases, 193 deaths, 9 probable deaths and 675 hospitalizations.

The State of Georgia has now reported 786,277 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, with 13,856 deaths, 1,852 probable deaths and 53,111 hospitalizations.

County EMA Director Courtney Taylor reminds the public to continue to wash hands often, cover your cough and practice social distancing.

For further information and numbers such as demographics for Georgia and totals all counties please visit: <https://dph.georgia.gov/>



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