

1 **A RESOLUTION BY THE FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
2 **AUTHORIZING THE FULTON COUNTY ATTORNEY TO FILE A COMPLAINT WITH**
3 **THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ) REQUESTING THAT IT INVESTIGATE**
4 **WELLSTAR HEALTH SYSTEM FOR HEALTH CARE REDLINING; AND FOR OTHER**
5 **PURPOSES.**

6
7 **WHEREAS**, in May 2022, Wellstar Health System closed the emergency
8 department and hospital beds at its Atlanta Medical Center South hospital that primarily
9 served the citizens of south Fulton County; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Wellstar Health System abruptly closed its Atlanta Medical Center
11 hospital on November 1, 2022, and closed other nearby health care facilities, including
12 primary and specialty care offices and centers, in mid-November 2022; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the Atlanta Medical Center hospital housed 460 hospital beds and
14 was one of only two level one trauma centers in the Atlanta metro-area; and

15 **WHEREAS**, the closure of the Atlanta Medical Center hospital has resulted in a
16 single level one trauma center, Grady Memorial Hospital, remaining to serve the residents
17 of Fulton County; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the closure of Wellstar Health System facilities resulted in a loss of
19 health care providers available to serve the needs of some of the most vulnerable Fulton
20 County citizens; and

21 **WHEREAS**, the closure of the Atlanta Medical Center and Atlanta Medical Center
22 South hospitals and other health care facilities disproportionately and negatively impacts
23 minorities and economically disadvantaged individuals; and

24 **WHEREAS**, the closure of emergency department services by Wellstar Health
25 System, in particular, has caused a strain on other local hospitals and created disparities
26 in emergency services including increased wait times, overcrowding and reduced

resources for Fulton County citizens as the Atlanta Medical Center South was the only full-service emergency department in Fulton County south of Interstate 20 (“I-20”); and

WHEREAS, the closure of the Atlanta Medical Center hospital exacerbated challenges facing pregnant women seeking prenatal care and birth services, and resulted in a significant surge of pregnant women seeking such services at Grady Memorial Hospital; and

WHEREAS, Wellstar Health System has continued to operate in other areas of Fulton County and is expanding operations in areas outside of Fulton County, specifically in areas with smaller minority and economically disadvantaged populations, evidencing an intent not to serve such populations; and

WHEREAS, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance; and

WHEREAS, redlining is a discriminatory practice of systematically denying essential services—including mortgages, insurance, and health care—in minority areas; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners does not condone redlining or unlawful discrimination in any form.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fulton County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the Fulton County Attorney to file a complaint with the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) requesting an investigation of Wellstar Health System for possible health care redlining, in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, related

to its closure of hospitals and primary care networks in south Fulton County and downtown Atlanta, and any other apparent violation of federal laws.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall become effective upon its adoption and that all resolutions and parts of resolutions in conflict with this Resolution are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of Fulton County, Georgia this 15th day of March, 2023.

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Sponsored By:

Robert L. Pitts, Chairman

ATTEST:

Tonya R. Grier, Clerk to the Commission

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Y. Soo Jo, County Attorney