

## **Script – Print – Making the call on telehealth medicine**

The COVID-19 pandemic taught the healthcare industry many things when it comes to delivery of care. One of the biggest lessons was the need for telehealth medicine.

“We know that telehealth became a necessity during COVID, but even after COVID it was a way that we could increase our access, to give people care and to try to keep them healthier at home,” says Dawn Mosher, assistant professor, OSF Saint Anthony College of Nursing. “And we really need to make sure that our healthcare professionals are being educated on how to provide care that way.”

Telehealth connects patients to health care services through videoconferencing, remote monitoring, and electronic consultations. And it’s becoming more popular for patients and providers. According to the American Hospital Association, 76% of U.S. hospitals connect patients and medical providers using video and other technology.

The Saint Anthony College of Nursing has added a telehealth simulation laboratory to its curriculum that will help educate nursing students for the future.

In 2020, the College of Nursing created two scenarios that were first used by graduate students. Scenarios were then written for the undergrad nursing students to provide them with telehealth experiences. The telehealth lab was built thanks to a grant from Community Health Advocacy (CHA), a partnership between the Jump Simulation & Education Center at OSF HealthCare and the University of Illinois Chicago.

Mosher says telehealth is going to become the norm for providers – some patients will be seen in person and others will be seen over telehealth. And the simulation lab will prepare today’s students as they enter the workforce.

“Their confidence will be better when they do these things out in the healthcare field and their knowledge will be better,” says Mosher. “And hopefully they’ll see that their patients are more satisfied because they’ll feel like they’re heard and cared for.”

The simulation-based training allows students to get firsthand experience with possible healthcare scenarios, with actors playing their patients. The actors are trained in how to respond to the follow-up questions from the students.

The scenarios vary. For example, some students complete a mental health follow up appointment for a patient who was hospitalized for depression and later discharged. Other students follow up with a patient admitted for with a seizure or stroke. Professors oversee the sessions and provide feedback.

For students like Lauryn Eitenmiller, the simulation provided an opportunity to interact with a patient, something, she says, will help her confidence when she becomes a full-time nurse.

“It was interesting because you got to see what kinds of questions they asked, what was of a concern, what they needed from you and what you needed from them,” she says. “It was the fostering of that communication with them that was really eye opening.”

Eitenmiller knows that nurses are faced with many daunting tasks, whether it’s COVID or some other challenge. She says she’s ready, thanks to her educational experience.

"It just prepared me for taking over, accepting an assignment and really just caring for your patients as best as you can in those sorts of conditions," she says.

Students can expect more educational offerings using the telehealth simulation lab. Students at the Saint Anthony College of Nursing will team up with medical and pharmacy students from the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford in future sessions.

For more information, visit the [Saint Anthony College of Nursing](#).