



OSF
HEALTHCARE

OSF HealthCare and UIC Partner to Improve Health and Wellness in Chicago and Collar Counties; Other Urban Communities

For immediate release

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(July 22, 2021/PEORIA, ILLINOIS) – Peoria, Illinois-based OSF HealthCare is partnering with the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) to establish the Community Health Advocacy (CHA) program to address health and wellness challenges in urban communities. OSF HealthCare has committed \$1 million for each of the next 5 years and UIC will match OSF’s gift with a mix of royalty income and in-kind contributions to provide about \$2 million in grants annually to support multidisciplinary projects.

The efforts will leverage grants and additional resources available from local, state and federal dollars focused on improving access to care and removing other barriers, particularly in low-income, under-resourced communities. OSF HealthCare brings expertise in driving digital innovation in health care and together, with faculty in UIC’s 16 colleges and health sciences system, the CHA program will lead to innovative solutions to health-related problems that improve clinical outcomes and quality of care.

“We envision leveraging the talents of our clinicians and the brilliant minds at UIC, already an urban leader in social justice, to improve health equity and outcomes in urban environments where access to quality health care is often limited,” said Dr. John Vozenilek, chief medical officer for Innovation & Digital Health at OSF HealthCare.

Vozenilek estimates the competitive grant process, led by a steering committee with representatives from both partners, will result in 5-10 high-impact grants awarded each year and that the CHA program will grow over time.

“Many of the projects that will be funded focus on areas OSF HealthCare has made a priority, including looking at new primary care models, using data science and automation to provide radical efficiency, and leveraging technology to provide precision medicine that can improve prevention and early treatment, particularly for racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk for chronic health conditions according to Becky Buchen, senior vice president for Innovation at OSF HealthCare.

“This partnership is an endorsement of UIC’s strength in innovation and deep connection with the health and wellness of the Chicago community,” said TJ Augustine, UIC vice chancellor for Innovation. “By adding the clinical expertise at OSF, we will develop new products and approaches to accelerate health care innovation.”

“UIC is the principal educator of health science professionals in Illinois and a major healthcare provider to underserved communities in Chicago and beyond. At the core of our mission is the creation of new knowledge that transforms the world and addresses the challenges facing our city and our state,” said UIC Chancellor Michael Amiridis. “The Community Health Advocacy program and our partnership with

OSF HealthCare will allow us to bring the results of our breakthrough research to practice as we develop new models for delivering excellent, effective care to our communities.”

The CHA program builds on the success of the [OSF Innovation Lab](#) at the [UIC Innovation Center](#), where interdisciplinary teams of faculty and students work together to find new solutions to combat problems in health care. Additionally, a longstanding partnership between OSF HealthCare and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign’s (UIUC’s) Grainger College of Engineering known as [Jump ARCHES](#) (Applied Research for Community Health through Engineering and Simulation), further demonstrates OSF HealthCare’s commitment to accelerating health innovation by connecting academia and medicine.

“The Community Health Advocacy program between OSF and UIC is an incredible partnership that will present new opportunities to work with Jump ARCHES in developing solutions to improve health care for all,” according to T. Kesh Kesavadas, director of the Health Care Engineering Systems Center at UIUC. “We are pleased to strengthen the collaboration between our campuses within the Illinois system, become a leader in the arena of medicine, and empower communities through quality health care delivery.”

With the recent final approval of the agreement, the CHA steering committee will begin reviewing funding requests for existing projects and will announce the request for proposals process within a few weeks.

To learn more about the CHA program, please visit [Community Health Advocacy | Office of the Vice Chancellor for Innovation | University of Illinois Chicago \(uic.edu\)](#).

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OSF HealthCare is an integrated health system owned and operated by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. OSF HealthCare employs nearly 24,000 Mission Partners in 150 locations, including 15 hospitals – ten acute care, five critical access – with 2,098 licensed beds, and two colleges of nursing throughout Illinois and Michigan. The OSF HealthCare physician network employs more than 1,500 primary care, specialist and advanced practice providers. OSF HealthCare, through OSF Home Care Services, operates an extensive network of home health and hospice services. It also owns Pointcore, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization; and OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. More at www.osfhealthcare.org/.

Jump Simulation, a part of OSF Innovation, is a collaboration between University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria and OSF HealthCare. The center replicates a variety of patient care settings to ensure novice and seasoned clinicians can practice handling medical situations in a life-like environment. Boasting six floors and 168,000 square feet, the center is one of the largest of its kind and provides space for conferences, anatomic training, virtual reality and innovation. For more information, visit www.jumpsimulation.org/.

OSF Innovation, launched in 2016, is a multidisciplinary innovation center focused on internal and external innovation to solve the largest health care challenges. More at www.osfinnovation.org.

University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) is a hub of innovation and cutting-edge research with a commitment to discovery and solving real-world problems. UIC is the city’s largest university and only public research institution with 16 colleges and more than 33,000 students. UIC is recognized as one of the most ethnically rich and culturally diverse campuses in the nation, a leader in providing access to underrepresented students. With one of the largest colleges of medicine in the nation, and colleges of dentistry, pharmacy, public health, nursing, social work, and applied health sciences, UIC is also the state’s principal educator of health professionals and a major healthcare provider to underserved communities. More at <https://www.uic.edu/>.