



# OSF<sup>®</sup> HEALTHCARE

## Shield CU administers nearly 80,000 COVID-19 saliva tests

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Tim Ditman](#), Media Relations Coordinator, OSF HealthCare | (309) 838-9664

(June 21, 2022 | URBANA, Illinois) – [Shield CU](#), a partnership between OSF HealthCare and the University of Illinois, is highlighting its efforts to keep east central Illinois safe from COVID-19 through the quick and free administering of tens of thousands of saliva tests.

The university developed the saliva COVID test before the start of the fall 2020 semester. The COVID-19 resources OSF HealthCare also offered to the community proved to be a good match, and the [Shield CU partnership was unveiled](#) in March of 2021. As of June 12, Shield CU has conducted 77,703 tests. OSF HealthCare Mission Partners (employees) staffed the community testing sites each day. Nursing students from the U of I and Parkland College also assisted at the sites while obtaining clinical hours. OSF HealthCare was proud to partner with these local stakeholders to serve the community and slow the spread of the virus.

Aside from the general public, multiple school districts and employers used the Shield CU tests. Testers used a smartphone app to track results.

"MTD was grateful to partner with OSF and the U of I to bring a testing site to our employees," said Karl Gnadt, managing director of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District. "We were even able to open the testing to employees' household members. OSF Mission Partners made our site easy to manage, and we never had to ask twice for anything."

"The partnership between the University of Illinois and OSF HealthCare has helped to meet the needs of COVID-19 testing for our community members during the pandemic," said Wanda E. Ward, University of Illinois executive associate chancellor for public engagement. "Our collaborative work has been guided by the university's land-grant mission of education, scholarship, service and engagement. It is essential we continue to serve as an anchor for the community working toward enhancing overall health."

"In the past couple of years, COVID-19 has put the world and our community to the test," said Cristina Romero, supervisor of OSF digitally-enabled Community Health Workers. "Even though COVID kept us socially distanced, it has been heartwarming to see our community coming together to find ways to keep everyone safe and to combat the effects of COVID-19 through this program. We are honored that members of the community trusted us to provide them with the greatest care and love throughout this pandemic."

As previously announced, Shield CU testing sites will close by the end of June to correspond with the end of state funding. The last day for the Danville Area Community College site is June 24. The last day for the Parkland College site is June 30. Residents are advised to check with their local public health department or primary care provider for COVID-19 testing options. The federal government also continues to offer [free at-home tests](#). The latest COVID-19 information from OSF HealthCare can be found [online](#).

# # #

**About OSF HealthCare:** 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 – 10 acute care, five critical access – with 2,089 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 [osfhealthcare.org](http://osfhealthcare.org).

#### **Pronunciations for broadcast media**

Gnadt: guh-NAT