

BROADCAST- Expanding hospital-based innovation hubs to promote 'what if' solutions

Most people in their daily jobs don't seem themselves as innovators and that's certainly the case with OSF HealthCare Mission Partners (employees). But the Peoria, Illinois based health system is working to change that.

"But when you really start to leverage the ideas that they have, because they're at the frontline of care, they're seeing the challenges that are being faced every day, whether it's by our patients or their fellow Mission Partners, and then bringing forward those ideas really starts to advance that innovative culture. Buchen adds, "Then they build on each other's ideas and that really supports the transformation of health care." (:24)

That's OSF Innovation Senior Vice President Becky Buchen. She says experts in the division she oversees researched and found a platform called [Ideawake](#) – to solicit and vet possible solutions to pressing issues facing caregivers and patients. Buchen says the platform provides a safe space that's easy and fun to crowdsource ideas.

"You start out with a problem that you want to solve, but then it acts very much like a social media platform. So I can bring forward my ideas. Other people can vote up my ideas or add to my ideas, and that starts to build great excitement. It's a very intuitive platform; very easy to use so it's not intimidating." (:23)

Zack VanKeulen is the director of Emergency Services for OSF HealthCare Saint Paul Medical Center in Mendota, 60 miles south of Rockford, Illinois. VanKeulen was a finalist for the first Trailblazer Challenge launched at a hospital-based hub in the I-80 region.

VanKeulen says even if the solution he pitched in a 'Shark Tank' style presentation isn't fully developed, the experience was worth the effort. He enjoyed the coaching sessions available through Ideawake and gained useful skills along the way.

"You learn about things outside of health care, like software design and coding and the amount of money and resources it takes to create some of these apps. And those things may not be possible, so you have to bite off a smaller piece than you originally thought was possible. But in the end, if you can innovate and make a change that positively impacts the patient's experience, then it's a win-win situation," says VanKeulen. (:25)

OSF Saint Paul Medical Center President Dawn Trompeter was an early champion of innovation hubs. For the Trailblazer Challenge, leaders solicited solutions for improving processes when patients are discharged from the hospital. The best solutions, pitched "Shark Tank" style, will get support for development, testing, and could potentially be rolled out to other OSF hospitals or clinics.

"If the pilot is successful and increasing those experiences for our patients, then that's something we can spread across our entire market region and then across the Ministry to enhance our patient experience across the entire health system." (:14)

The hub has a designated space but also houses mobile, virtual reality (VR) headsets that can be used for patient or provider education. For example, Trompeter says a patient with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) can be immersed in their own body to view their lungs in 3D.

"That's just one example. It could be for diabetes, it could be a number of different things, but really engaging our patients in their own health care and helping them understand in layman's terms, really what happens and what their diagnosis may be about or how they may be able to help keep themselves healthy through that (seeing the impact)." (:20)

Innovation hubs can provide cost-savings and help ensure hospitals continue to operate in challenging times. Buchen says they can also be an economic engine for communities but the hubs will get support from OSF Innovation based at the Jump Simulation & Education Center in Peoria. It is home to experts such as data scientists, engineers, performance improvement and legal specialists among others.

“It might be that we need to better understand the data. It might be that we take a deeper dive into the process as we transform the ideas they’re bringing forward. It may be that the idea they brought forward is something so unique that we need to make sure that we have the intellectual property protected for them.” (:22)

VanKeulen agrees the best way to transform health care is from the inside out, and having support is important because those engaged in it every day care deeply and want to improve patients’ experience.

“You hear the general public saying that the health care system is broken. So this is members of the health care system, Mission Partners from OSF, trying to make that repair that’s so desperately needed in our country today.” (:15)

OSF HealthCare is also a major backer of [Distillery Labs](#), a downtown Peoria-based Innovation Hub that is part of the Illinois Innovation Network.