

## **PRINT -‘Care was so personal’ says broadcaster, former state ag leader about OSF OnCall Digital Hospital**

In the farming communities of Illinois and beyond, the name Colleen (pronounced COH-leen) Callahan is a familiar one. The former president of the National Farm Broadcasters Association and long-time agriculture broadcaster at WMBD radio, WMBD and WCIA TV stations in Peoria and Champaign, Illinois made Callahan a household name to many – even *before* she became director of Rural Development in Illinois for the U.S. Ag Department and later director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Callahan knows how to navigate a variety of situations but was at a loss when she recently found herself with bacterial pneumonia in both lungs. She was admitted to OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Illinois where she spent three days before being offered the opportunity to become a digital hospital patient through [OSF OnCall](#), the digital health arm of OSF.

The typically healthy 73-year-old has only needed to see her family doctor for anything other than a routine exam only twice in her lifetime but says even so, the idea of leaving the hospital after just three days seemed impossible. She felt better yes, but still had a long way to full recovery.

However, Callahan learned she could receive hospital-level care at home because her condition qualified and she lived within 30 minutes of the hospital. If she relapsed, no need to go to an emergency department, she would be speeded back to her hospital bed by ambulance – the same way she was sent home.

“And by the time I got home, all the necessary equipment that the doctors and the nurses needed was here. And from that moment forward, I received incredible personal care. It’s not that it wasn’t personal in the hospital, but it felt more personal because I was in my home.”

Callahan was visited by nurses twice a day and had a daily virtual visit with an OSF OnCall doctor via a tablet provided to her. Anytime she needed to be connected to the OSF OnCall care team, she only had to press a button on the tablet or pick up the installed landline phone connected directly to providers (no need to dial). It couldn’t have been easier.

Early release to home allowed Callahan to do the things she *could* do; while still getting all the care she would have received in the hospital.

“By that time, when I could take oral medication and I could get up and move around, then I just wanted to do that on my own. I didn’t want to push the buzzer. I didn’t want to ask for help. You know, I’ve always been pretty independent, and I wanted to be that way again even though I knew there were a lot of things I wasn’t ready to do, there were things I wanted to do that I knew I could do if I was home.” (:28)

Was she concerned about having strangers in her home? Callahan said they were so professional and personable, that wasn’t an issue.

“We talked about pets. We talked about families, what they’d done before they were doing digital hospital. And in a way, when I was released from the (digital) hospital and knew that none of them would be coming again, I kind of missed them. I was getting better, and I was glad to feel better. But I was also very glad for their presence in our home helping me get better.” (:25)

Callahan’s husband was home, and her daughter stayed with them as well, just to make sure she was okay, but Callahan points out, her care was in the hands of professionals. Three meals-a-day were also delivered from the hospital to her home.

For those who are hesitant, Callahan says it’s really a return to the way medical care was delivered in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

“Do think about it being an approach to the old fashion house call. You get to go home, and the nurses make a house call to you twice a day with interim visits with the doctor. That’s a really good way to frame it.” (:18)

OSF OnCall Digital Hospital is available in Peoria and Rockford. The costs are comparable to an in-hospital stay and is covered by Medicare and some private insurance.