

Care of Advanced Life Support Patients Approved at OSF Center for Health-Streator

Expanded designation fulfills promise made to community and region

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the department of the Illinois state government sanctioned to help prevent disease and injury and regulate medical practitioners, has given its official approval for the OSF HealthCare Freestanding Emergency Center in Streator to handle increased Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance traffic.

This revision to the regulatory rules is expected to greatly benefit patients, as it will expedite care and provide convenient access at the fully-functional freestanding emergency center.

It also addresses one of the main concerns of the community when OSF assumed responsibility for the region's health care needs nearly two years ago.

"People see this as, again, keeping one of those promises to bring health care here where we are able to," says Ken Beutke, President of OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. "And then an acceptance that we're building this health care model differently and this is one of those unique features of a freestanding emergency center and working through all of those changes that have to happen in order to make it effective for any rural community, such as Streator."

The ALS designation, which goes into effect at 9.a.m Tuesday, November 21, means more patients would need cardiac monitoring or intravenous care can be transported to the emergency center. This allows local ambulances to remain local more frequently and ensures patients are able to receive care closer to home.

"You can be cared for here in much the same fashion as you would be cared for at other facilities," says Dr. Matthew Jackson, OSF HealthCare Emergency Medicine Physician. "And the situation, if you do not need to be admitted to a hospital, you can be discharged and you have a short drive back to your home. And situations where you need to be transferred, those arrangements would be made and would be done in a scheduled manner and we'll take you to where you need to go."

OSF HealthCare has been working to amend the regulatory rules since last year, and was recently able to make progress through increased public interest and the assistance of state and local lawmakers.

"(Illinois) Representative Long and (Illinois) Senator Rezin, because we need their support when we're trying to make policy change or regulatory change, says Beutke. "We are so appreciative of their support in any of those efforts that we make. Such as passing the legislation for even to be able to have a freestanding emergency center. It was so critical."

Beutke also singles out the Streator Mayor and City Manager for their support and collaboration. He says it just another example of a community coming together - which is what's need to form the direction of the health care model Streator and the region needs.