

BROADCAST-Genetic testing pilot aims to find a silent killer

ANCHOR LEAD-IN:

A potentially life-saving pilot program is underway in Bloomington to detect a hidden genetic condition that raises cholesterol and the risk of heart attacks and strokes, even in children. It's called **familial hypercholesterolemia**, or FH, and affects about one in 200 Americans.

VO or Radio Package:

OSF HealthCare cardiologist Dr. Darrel Gumm says most people don't know they have FH.

SOT-Dr. Darrel Gumm

"It's estimated about 1.3 million people in the United States have FH and 90 percent don't know it. This is a tremendous opportunity to find those patients and provide therapies that may prevent terrible things down the road." (:13)

The program uses artificial intelligence to scan medical records for high cholesterol and physical signs doctors might have noted, then offers patients a simple cheek swab test. If diagnosed, treatment with cholesterol-lowering medications can cut cardiovascular risk by up to 80 percent.

ANCHOR TAG: Because FH is inherited, doctors also encourage family members to get screened. The goal: prevent heart attacks and strokes before they happen.