

**For Immediate Release**

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**OSF HealthCare Partners with Heart of Illinois Homeless Continuum of Care to Support Interim Shelter Program**

(PEORIA) OSF HealthCare and the Heart of Illinois Homeless Continuum of Care (HOIHCO) are collaborating with United Way partner agencies to provide interim shelter services for the homeless in central Illinois.

Since 2016, the Heart of Illinois United Way has provided leadership and administration for the Heart of Illinois Homeless Continuum of Care, a regional planning body coordinating housing services for homeless families and individuals on behalf of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Generous financial support from OSF HealthCare allowed The Salvation Army to open an interim shelter for homeless single men on December 1, 2017. This interim shelter is open 24/7 and provides services including sleeping accommodations, bathroom and bathing facilities, limited storage, phone and internet access, laundry facilities, meals, and, most significantly, comprehensive case management services. In addition to The Salvation Army's interim shelter, the Dream Center Peoria is also implementing a HOIHCO interim shelter model for single women and families.

Comprehensive case management services are provided by the Southside Office of Concern and include helping individuals experiencing homelessness to:

- Identify and select permanent housing options based on needs and financial resources
- Address issues impeding access to housing (credit history, arrears, and legal issues)
- Negotiate manageable and appropriate lease agreements
- Receive time-limited services to allow quick stabilization within permanent housing
- Connect to resources that improve safety and well-being to achieve long-term goals

Together, these three United Way agencies ensure interim shelter services will serve as primary access points for the homeless to obtain permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and homeless prevention resources.

The interim shelter model is an excellent example of HUD's "Housing First" approach which aims to provide permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness and serves as a platform from which these individuals can improve their quality of life. Once permanent housing is obtained, the individual or family has a base from which they can address challenges and a location where supportive case management services can be delivered. The "Housing First" approach is guided by the belief that people need basic needs met before addressing more critical needs, such as employment or substance use.

"This Interim Shelter model is a great example of United Way agencies, such as The Salvation Army and the Southside Office of Concern, working together to improve the lives of people in our community. OSF HealthCare is grateful to be able to have a role in this excellent collaborative effort," said Robert L. Brandfass, Senior Vice President, Chief Legal Officer for OSF HealthCare and Chair of the Heart of Illinois Homeless Continuum of Care and Heart of Illinois United Way Board Member.

Through this collaboration, OSF HealthCare and the Heart of Illinois Homeless Continuum of Care seek to ultimately improve the health of individuals experiencing homelessness by tracking outcomes related to behavioral health, substance abuse and housing placement.

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