

Script – Print - OSF Part of National Rural Health Care Delivery Solution

Participation benefits Streator initiative

While it's been a focus for OSF HealthCare for many years, the delivery of medical services in a rural community, like Streator, is only recently gathering momentum across the US.

That resulted in the creation of the Root Cause Coalition, a group of health care organizations aimed at identifying ways to address the social determinants that impact how health care is provided to rural residents and establishing collaborative partnerships to accomplish it.

As part of the Root Cause Coalition, members of Live Well Streator, the volunteer group aimed at directing the health care delivery model, recently attended the National Summit on Social Determinants of Health.

"The Root Cause allowed us to have dialog with other organizations that have been going down this pathway," says Ken Beutke, President of OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. "Working with their communities. Working with payers. Working with other health care systems to address this. And so, it was very good timing for us and allowed us to reach out and get more information about what's worked and, maybe, what hasn't worked."

The Rural Health Care Initiative began shortly after OSF HealthCare established the Center for Health – Streator three years ago. Since then, OSF Medical Group has transformed its primary care model, a major renovation of the Center for Health is well underway, OSF helped finance an expansion of the Streator Family YMCA and Live Well Streator has been established.

Committee chair, Janette Strabala, says the summit was an eye opener for her and confirmed that Streator is not the only community struggling with this challenge.

"Being a health care provider and being a nurse for over thirty years, says Janette Strabala, Chair of Live Well Streator. "I got involved when St. Mary's was going to be leaving our community. And wanted to make sure that I could help in any way I could to keep our community as healthy as it can be. Find ways to provide different care - that rural look. Trying to get physicians here. Trying to provide every aspect of health care that we can to our small, rural community."

Strabala is proud of the progress that Live Well Streator has made - like the three work groups tackling the issues of activity, healthier eating and addiction services.

As an example of the positive momentum and how important it is to work together and not duplicate services, Beutke points to the transitioning of Center for Health phase three cardiac patient independent exercisers to the Y.

"Because nobody has the resources nowadays within rural communities to be competing or duplicating the cost that comes along with those services," says Ken Beutke, President of OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. So, when we look at trying to bring down that total cost of care, we have to work together."

It's that buy-in that has Strabala excited. And she says the Y is only one of several health and wellness organizations that have and will be partnering with OSF as part of this initiative. But while the community is getting involved, she admits, that more education and understanding is needed.