

OSF HealthCare Honors 2026 Innovator of the Year Award winners

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(May 14 , 2026| PEORIA, Ill.) – OSF HealthCare proudly announces the recipients of its 2026 ***Innovator of the Year Awards***, recognizing exceptional leaders who are transforming care delivery, advancing research, and driving operational excellence across the Ministry.

This year's honorees include Colleen Klein, Nicole Esterdahl and Tiffany Magallanes. They have each demonstrated extraordinary vision, creativity, and measurable impact in their respective areas. The awards were announced during the OSF Innovation Showcase at Jump Trading Simulation & Education Center.

Driving the Future of Health Care Innovation

"These innovators exemplify the Mission of OSF HealthCare by transforming challenges into opportunities for meaningful change," says Becky Buchen, senior vice president, OSF Innovation. "Their work is not only improving today's care experience but also shaping the future of how care is delivered across our Ministry."

The Innovator of the Year Awards highlight the commitment of OSF HealthCare to advancing innovation that is scalable, sustainable and grounded in the needs of patients and Mission Partners.

Research Innovator of the Year: Colleen Klein, PhD, APRN, Research Scientist

Colleen Klein is recognized for her pioneering contributions to the Medicaid Innovation Collaborative, where she has advanced digital health research through rigorous, implementation-focused methodologies. By integrating an approach that uses mixed-methods research, implementation science and applied health services evaluation, Klein has helped bridge the gap between evidence generation and real-world application.

Her work stands apart by examining digital health interventions within real-world Medicaid delivery systems – addressing access, engagement and equity while accounting for operational realities. Through this approach, Klein has generated meaningful insights into patient trust, digital engagement and utilization patterns. Her research has resulted in multiple peer-reviewed publications and provides a scalable, equity-focused framework for digital health innovation across health systems.

Klein's nominator says, "Colleen has supported team members in understanding research methods, measurement strategies and evaluation frameworks, strengthening collective capability and promoting methodological consistency. This mentoring approach has enabled teams to engage more effectively in data-informed decision-making and continuous learning."

Non-Clinical Innovator of the Year: Nichole Esterdahl, MSN, RN, Director of On Demand Operations, OSF OnCall

Nichole Esterdahl is being honored for leading a transformative initiative that reimaged care delivery within OSF OnCall Urgent Care. In response to rising patient volumes and long wait times,

identified as the top driver of patient dissatisfaction, Esterdahl spearheaded the development of a self-service, in-clinic virtual visit model.

This innovative hybrid solution allows patients to independently connect with virtual providers using existing tools, including OSF MyChart and TytoCare diagnostic technology, while seamlessly integrating onsite clinical support when needed. The model has completed 505 visits since implementation, achieving an average door-to-door time of just 23 minutes and 34 seconds and an exceptional Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 92.31.

Esterdahl's leadership was defined by adaptability and collaboration. After initial workflows proved misaligned with real-world operations, she engaged frontline staff, identified barriers and pivoted to a more intuitive, patient-centered model. Now implemented across all OSF OnCall Urgent Care locations, the solution requires no additional staffing, improves throughput, and enhances both efficiency and patient experience, positioning OSF as a leader in hybrid care delivery.

Esterdahl's nominator says, "Nichole's innovation aligns perfectly with current health care trends, including digital transformation, hybrid care models, operational efficiency and patient empowerment. As urgent care continues to evolve, her work positions OSF OnCall as a leader in modern, technology-enabled access to care."

Clinical Innovator of the Year: Tiffany Magallanes, Vice President of Operations and Special Projects, OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center

Tiffany Magallanes is being recognized for her transformative leadership in reimagining radiology care delivery through scalable, technology-enabled models that expand access while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety.

She led the development of two groundbreaking system-level innovations: an MRI remote scanning program and a remote radiologist model for diagnostic breast imaging. Through strategic partnerships with OSF OnCall, Pointcore and GE HealthCare, Magallanes designed a multi-phase pilot enabling remote MRI technologist support that enhances local capabilities, supports staff training and allows complex imaging to be performed closer to home. Approximately 20 advanced MRI exams that previously would have required patients to travel outside their communities have now been retained locally, with no increase in safety concerns and improved technologist confidence.

At the same time, Magallanes reimagined diagnostic breast imaging by implementing a remote radiologist model across multiple sites. This innovation eliminated geographic bottlenecks and significantly improved access, enabling patients to consistently receive diagnostic mammograms within seven days. The model has already expanded to four locations, with a fifth site planned, increasing both diagnostic and preventive screening capacity across the region.

Importantly, these innovations were intentionally designed for sustainability and scale. With standardized workflows, replicable playbooks and minimal additional infrastructure requirements, both programs are positioned for expansion across additional OSF markets and beyond. Magallanes is already advancing new concepts, including remote radiology models for ultrasound and other specialty services, while contributing to enterprise-wide transformation initiatives.

Her nominator says, "What distinguishes Tiffany as an innovator is her ability to anticipate challenges such as workforce shortages, access gaps and care fragmentation, and to proactively design solutions that are both visionary and operationally sound. Her leadership in complex initiatives, including system-wide imaging standardization efforts, has streamlined workflows, reduced denials and improved patient access across the Ministry."

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OSF HealthCare is an integrated health system founded by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis and headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. The system includes 18 inpatient facilities encompassing 16 licensed hospitals, two of which operate dual campuses in separate communities. Among these hospitals, 10 are acute care facilities, five are critical access hospitals and one is a continuing care facility. OSF has 2,141 licensed beds throughout Illinois and Michigan and employs more than 27,000 Mission Partners across 170+ locations. These include OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois, the third largest pediatric hospital in the state, and OSF OnCall, its digital health operating entity that offers hospital-at-home care. In addition, OSF operates two colleges of nursing; OSF Home Care Services, an extensive network of home health and hospice services; Pointcore, Inc., which is composed of health care-related businesses; and OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the organization. Advances in health care transformation take place through OSF Innovation as well as OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. OSF HealthCare has been recognized by Fortune as one of the most innovative companies in the country and by Forbes as one of America's Best Employers for Healthcare Professionals. Learn more at osfhealthcare.org.

OSF Innovation is a collaborative network of different disciplines that designs bold, strategic solutions to advance the future of health care. Learn more at osfinnovation.org.