

Urgent Care Centers: A New Choice for Medical Care

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

Shelli Dankoff – Media Relations Program Manager

When you need medical care for basic things such as the flu, sprains, minor lacerations, sports physicals, and upper respiratory infections, where are you getting that care? There was a time when you simply headed to your doctor's office, and while that option still exists, a growing number of people want more flexibility when it comes to accessing health care.

According to the Urgent Care Association (UCA), the total number of urgent care centers in the U.S. reached 8,774 in November 2018... up from 6,400 in 2014. Urgent care clinics handle about 89 million patient visits each year, which includes more than 29% of all primary care visits in the US.

OSF HealthCare opened its eighth urgent care location – called OSF Urgo – in February in Washington, IL, with a ninth location opening in Ottawa, IL later this month.

"One of the neat things is this model was built to appeal to a younger demographic of patients who, historically, they have not identified a primary care physician, they don't have a lot of need for healthcare, but when they need something they want it quick, they want it easy, and they want it convenient. We are really seeing those patients start using our OSF Urgo locations," said Lynn Fulton, President of OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Medical Center in Bloomington, IL and the executive champion of the OSF Urgo initiative, which complements the OSF PromptCare and primary care physician offices the OSF Ministry offers.

While the urgent care locations typically cater to a younger demographic, Fulton says the data is showing the model appeals to a wide variety and age-range of patients who are busy, want to be treated with kindness and compassion, but also meets their needs on their timeframe.

Over 19,000 people visited OSF Urgo clinics in during the first seven months of operation, nearly 3,000 of those who had not come to OSF for care previously. Fulton is particularly excited that over 600 patients were connected to a primary care physician, which helps establish a longer-term relationship to manage their health needs better moving forward.

The on-the-go medical care is a niche that was begging to be filled.

"Today we're busy, we have busy families, busy individuals. To think that people need to go to a medical campus for all of their needs really doesn't fit the model of how we live today and how we interact with each other. People want to be able to be in and out quickly but go to a place that is comfortable to them and that respects them as individuals and I think that's what OSF Urgo brings to the table," Fulton added.

Learn more about the services offered through OSF Urgo, including scheduling an appointment online, [here](#).