

Script- Print - Rural Community Health Care Countdown

OSF initiative approaches milestone in Streator

"We're in the home stretch." That's how Don Damron, Vice President of Ambulatory Services at OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, describes the few short months remaining in renovation work to the OSF Center for Health - Streator.

The nearly two year construction project, part of a larger, ongoing initiative aimed at improving and sustaining rural health care delivery, is getting its finishing touches.

Damron thanks the community for its patience and says he's excited for everyone to see the completed project and what it will mean for the region.

In addition to many outpatient services and programs, plus an emergency department, OSF Center for Health - Streator will be home to several community service organizations that will partner with OSF on health and wellbeing needs in the region.

One recent addition is the Faith Community Nurse program.

"We've got great partnerships with her in cooperation with the fire department and the police department - other community-based organizations and food pantry," says Don Damron Vice President of Ambulatory Services at OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. Really connecting with community members in a different way. Our most vulnerable, to say the least."

Meantime, Live Well Streator (LWS), a community-owned volunteer network, formed as part of the rural health care initiative, has been busy with projects and the development of community partnerships aimed at promoting healthier lifestyles.

Action teams include the Activity Team, which has a walk scheduled for Labor Day and the Healthy Eating Team, which is working with local restaurants on adding healthy options to their menus.

There's also the Live Drug Free Team, which has already hosted two drug take back days.

"We've collected, there's a hundred, over a hundred pounds of pills," says Ellen Vogel, Community Health Engagement Program Manager for OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. "Over forty pounds of creams, liquids and inhalers. And then around ten, over ten containers of needles, sharps."

Both Damron and Vogel see the completion of the Center for Health-Streator as an important milestone in the community's efforts to better understand how this new approach to health care can benefit them now and for many years to come.

"This is a building that will house a lot of our community-based partners and non-OSF providers," says Don Damron Vice President of Ambulatory Services at OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. "It will provide an environment with resources as kind of a one stop shop in that health care village."

It'll bring a face to Live Well Streator," says Ellen Vogel, Community Health Engagement Program Manager for OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. "Because, I think, we're going to have some materials and everything will be very visible there. It'll also be able to bring other outside organizations that are going to co-locate there that will be able to assist us. It's just, I think, overall it will bring the vision of a healthy village and health lifestyle really to life. You'll be able to see it."

Construction completion and a celebration of the new OSF Center for Health - Streator is expected by year's end.