

Script – Print - Celebrating a Health Care Revolution

OSF Center for Health - Streator is new chapter in rural health care delivery

It's an evolution that's been nearly four years in the making.

After Hospital Sisters Health System opted to close St. Mary's Hospital in Streator, OSF HealthCare acquired the building in early 2016 with plans of creating an outpatient center. It included the creation of a new health care delivery model to better serve the needs of the mostly rural region.

The plan included working with community leaders and partnering with local social service agencies to address and meet health and wellness needs identified by the residents themselves.

Areas of concern were generated from the Community Health Needs Assessment for LaSalle County and suggestions from regional health organizations. The result has been the creation of the Live Well Streator initiative, which has identified and addressed key areas of concern, like drug abuse and healthy eating.

What has and continues to develop from this pilot initiative, says Don Damron, Vice President of Ambulatory Services for OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, is best practice for providing medical services and wellness to rural communities.

"We involve our own care models for delivering care," says Don Damron, Vice President of Ambulatory Services for OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. "We bring in technology to support care and connectivity and access in rural communities. The building, which is more than just a renovation to support clinical services, but to incorporate a center for health and wellbeing. And allow co-location of community partners that help the sustainability. Addressing the social determinants of care and health inequities."

Partnerships, like the OSF collaboration with the Streator YMCA to upgrade the Y's fitness center and improving community education opportunities with numerous health-related support organizations – like the American Center Society, have been established through the initiative.

Other co-located service agencies at the OSF Center for Health – Streator include North Central Behavioral Health Systems and LaSalle County Health Department Women's and Children's Program (WIC). In early 2020, the Catholic Charities Guardian Angel program will also co-located.

Transportation needs for patients to make their medical appointments has been addressed. And OSF was successful in getting state approval for Illinois' first rural free-standing emergency center.

The centerpiece of the OSF rural health care initiative is completion of a \$30.5 million renovation to the OSF Center for Health-Streator. It includes improvement to OSF specialty clinics, rehabilitation, primary care and diagnostic imaging.

In addition to the refreshed building, Damron wants Streator residents who tour and use the Center for Health to understand the grander concept of what the project and its initiatives mean for them and the broader community.

"We cannot move forward in the delivery of care in a sustainable, effective way in a building that was meant for a totally different purpose at a totally different time," says Don Damron, Vice President of Ambulatory Services for OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. "So, we're hoping that, from the building standpoint, they see the benefits of what a resource this brings to them as a community hub and more than just the OSF services that are provided in there."

The Spring Street facility also has a new entrance and lobby, upgrades to registration, meeting rooms and a TECH (Technology, Education and Community Health) Café for patients and visitors to learn more about taking accountability for their health. The TECH Café is an innovative approach to connecting patients with community resources or training and education on technology and digital solutions, such as wearable fitness trackers, OSF MyChart and more.

Having overseen this project since the beginning, Damron says he's most proud of the OSF Sisters having the foresight, courage and commitment to see and understand the needs of the Streator community and to invest the resources necessary to deliver on a promise of providing the region access to health care.

"It's an opportunity to look at a new model for care," says Don Damron, Vice President of Ambulatory Services for OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center. And as we see people's trust, increase in their engagement with OSF HealthCare around this project, it really makes me proud for the community."

OSF HealthCare invites the community to join them in a celebration of the project completion and learn more about its health care and wellness programs and opportunities at an open house from 3 to 6 p.m. on Thursday, December 5 at the OSF Center for Health-Streator, 111 Spring Street, Streator, IL.