

Governor Pritzker Applauds OSF Telehealth Services; Announces Applications Open for \$50 Million of Broadband Grants

Governor J.B. Pritzker lauded OSF HealthCare for leading the way in digital health care transformation through its telehealth program that has delivered care to 70,000 patients in just the last three months of 2019. Pritzker visited OSF HealthCare's [Jump Trading Simulation and Education Center](#) to view the capability of telemedicine to connect rural communities to scarce specialists and to offer new ways for patients to manage their health digitally.

The governor also toured OSF ConstantCare (eICU) which offers remote monitoring technology for an added level of clinical support. It helps hospitals across the OSF Ministry prevent potential patient complications within the intensive care unit. The goal is to save lives, reduce complications, decrease length of ICU stays and better manage health care costs.

The technology depends on a reliable support that will be available through Governor Pritzker's [Connect Illinois](#), an investment in broadband technology to improve telehealth, education and economic development. OSF HealthCare CEO Bob Sehring said, the high speed connection is critical to delivering care where people need it.

"Critical to achieving this connectivity is ensuring the communities and patients we serve have access to reliable high speed internet access. Connect Illinois will help us to achieve our goals and better serve our patients and the communities they call home," according to Sehring.

The initiative includes a \$400 million broadband grant program and a \$20 million capital program for the Illinois Century Network, a high-speed broadband network serving K-12 and higher education institutions, public libraries, museums, state and local governments and the health care community.

Governor Pritzker compared his initiative to the transformation that occurred with rural electrification effort that began in 1936 that created cooperative electric power companies and expanded electric use in rural communities across the country. His four-year plan has a goal of delivering broadband to every corner of the state by leveraging federal money with local and state resources.

The governor congratulated OSF HealthCare and OSF Innovation leaders for the inroads already made in leveraging technology to provide better access to medical care in rural communities.

"By connecting patients, physicians and specialists, OSF is using technology to provide the right care, in the right places at the right time and in just the last three months of 2019, OSF has totaled over 70,000 virtual, clinical interactions for a program that launched only October 1st," he said. "That's over six percent of all clinical interactions at OSF HealthCare and frankly, those numbers are astonishing! They are a true test of the impact of telehealth and how critical these services can be for residents all across Illinois." -Governor J.B. Pritzker

Pritzker highlighted innovative ways OSF HealthCare is using technology to improve access and the overall health of Illinois residents.

"From remote ConstantCare for critical patients and virtual assisted care for at home connections to the OSF OnCall virtual urgent care visits, OSF's telehealth services are fundamentally altering Illinois' health care landscape for the better," according to the governor.

Governor Pritzker also announced the state has opened applications for first, \$50 million in Connect Illinois grants through April 3. He emphasized the program is open to all hospitals and medical clinics, governments, schools, non-profits, rural cooperatives and companies throughout Illinois.

"We want to hear great ideas from people across the state for meaning ways that public-private partnerships can extend the critical reach of broadband throughout Illinois. It doesn't have to be the same old way. We can find new ways to solve an old problem," he emphasized.