

## **OSF Little Company of Mary Opens Part of Renovated State-of-the-Art Emergency Department**

Hospitals throughout the Chicago area have seen a marked increase in patients seeking care through the emergency department in recent weeks, thanks in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic, OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center included.

The Evergreen Park hospital was in the midst of an emergency department renovation/expansion project that began last summer when the pandemic spread to Chicago. In a move to more fully support the southwest Chicago area in this elevated time of need, OSF Little Company of Mary ramped up completion of part of the expansion and opened its expanded Emergency Department (ED) on March 26.

The Illinois Department of Public Health and Human Services (IDPH) was on-site the week of March 16 to assess the Phase 1 portion of the renovation project, and OSF Little Company of Mary was granted approval to open the new space earlier than anticipated.

“Our new rooms in our emergency room will offer our patients privacy and will allow us to securely isolate patients who need isolation in order to protect them and protect our Mission Partners at OSF Little Company of Mary Medical Center to provide the best care for the patient – Individual care that they really need at this time,” said Eileen Knightly, MHA, RN, BSN, vice president patient care services and chief nursing officer at OSF Little Company of Mary. “I think that there’s a lot of fear in the community right now and this is just another shining light to our community that Little Company of Mary Medical Center is here to serve them with the greatest care and love.”

“Here, we’re able to take care of the sickest of the sick, their loved ones. Especially during this crisis – what this new wing brings us is safety for our providers, safety for our patients. We had cloth curtains which we no longer have, we have closed doors to make sure that our providers are safe in their work space so we can take care of you,” explained Dr. Amar Bhardwaj, co-medical director of the emergency department.

The OSF Little Company of Mary Emergency Department renovation/expansion project began in August 2019 and is slated to be complete in 2021. The renovated emergency department will improve efficiency and patient throughput, while environmentally-friendly materials will enhance patient privacy and safety and reduce noise. The project includes a dedicated fast track area, dedicated behavioral health suite and more.

***OSF HealthCare is proud to offer three tools to help community members who have concerns about their health and COVID-19 or simply have questions: Our chatbot Clare, a digital assistant on the [www.osfhealthcare.org](http://www.osfhealthcare.org) home page, is answering questions and sharing education. The COVID-19 Nurse Hotline at 1-833-OSF-KNOW (1-833-673-5669) is another resource for those who have questions or are concerned about potential exposure. Additionally, text OSF to 67634 to get connected to OSF COVID Companion, which will proactively share tips and information from trusted clinical sources.***