

PRINT-On the Street with an OSF Pandemic Health Worker

Digital supporter proud to be “glimmer of hope” for those in isolation at home

While many of us are working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, Shannon Egli's (pronounced EGG-lee) office is his car. Egli is an OSF HealthCare pandemic health worker (PHW). He and his PHW counterparts hit the road every morning to deliver care kits to individuals who are in quarantine at home with symptoms of COVID-19.

A PHW serves as a connection between medical care providers and individuals who are suspected or have been confirmed to have COVID-19 and are in isolation. The care kits include a tablet, pre-loaded with health applications (for individuals who don't have a home computer or tablet), health education materials, a thermometer, hand sanitizer and wipes. After delivery PHWs check in with clients daily, usually for a two week time period.

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, OSF Innovation, and OSF Saint Gabriel Digital Health collaborated to create the remote monitoring program that allows people to receive supportive care while recovering where they are most comfortable, at home.

Egli's traditional role with OSF HealthCare is as coordinator of the Anatomical Lab at the health system's [Jump Simulation and Education Center](#) in Peoria. He volunteered to be a pandemic health worker because he wants to bring empathy and optimism to people who are not feeling well, are scared, or in some cases lonely.

“A lot of people are isolated already so they just want to talk to somebody and so while you're helping them get through the apps that they have to learn about and you're helping them go through the packet, they just want to chit chat sometimes, he shared. “Sometimes after you explain everything, they don't want to get off the phone right away so you can talk to them a little bit longer while you're headed to the next client. It's nice because you also get a little interaction at a time when we're socially distancing from everybody.”

Egli says his initial call with the client sets a drop-off timeframe before heading over. All PHWs are given face masks and multiple sets of gloves, but Egli takes additional measures to ensure a touch-free exchange.

“So when I told him 15 minutes and I'm there in 11 minutes, they're not waiting at the door for me to come out and grab it from my hand. So hopefully, I'll get there and put it on the door knob and wait a few more minutes and then say, ‘It's on your doorknob. Can you go out and get it?’ There are just certain things I think about doing to keep myself safe.” he explained.

Some individuals, like Egli's last client of the day, have not been tested, but have experienced symptoms that concerned them enough to call the [COVID-19 Nurse Hotline](#).

During his call, the young and otherwise healthy 31 year-old father of four says he's feeling fine now and had a great day, but Egli encourages him to keep checking and reporting his symptoms.

“You might want to just keep checking in with the Get Well (app). It only takes a couple of minutes each day and if they feel there's something odd going on, then they'll let you know. Do you think you can continue with that app each day for a couple more days?” Egli asked. His client responds that he can and will keep reporting his symptoms.

One of Egli's main goals is getting clients comfortable navigating apps such as [Get Well](#) for regular symptom reporting, [Google Duo](#) for live streaming video, [OSF MyChart](#) to get test results, prescription refills and communicate with your medical provider, as well as [OSF SilverCloud](#), a tool for managing stress, anxiety and depression and which has live support from mental health professionals.

While much of the PHW's interactions are scripted, Egli says it's important to listen carefully to understand the client's emotional struggles.

"People don't really stop to think, 'What if I were caged up in my own house for 10 days or 14 days and I can't see people, what would make me feel better or what could I do for somebody else to help them feel better about the situation they're in?'" he explained.

As part of the pandemic health worker program, patients who begin experiencing more severe symptoms can send alerts and if their condition worsens, more tools are sent to the home to monitor vital signs, including oxygen levels. The at-home care program is enhanced with oversight by a physician or advanced practice provider, unless hospitalization is required.

PHWs in the field are specially trained and ready to be deployed seven days a week. They can serve as many as twenty-seven clients a month and up to 80 clients in 90 days. OSF HealthCare also has interpreter services available to serve a diverse population.

Learn more about OSF HealthCare's Pandemic Health Worker Program [here](#).