

Script – Broadcast - Getting to the Heart of the Matter

Coming to the hospital for regular lab work can be difficult for some patients. But it can be especially tough during a pandemic. That was certainly the case at the OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute Anticoagulation Clinics, which is a simple, convenient way to monitor and assist patients taking Coumadin® or any other brand of anticoagulant or blood-thinning medication.

SOT: Lori Foster, Clinical Supervisor, Anticoagulation Clinic, OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute

“The patients that we see in the clinic range anywhere from AFib (atrial fibrillation), which is an abnormal heart rhythm, we have patients who have clots, pulmonary embolism, deep vein thrombosis (DVTs), patients with mechanical heart valves. That category is usually patients who are prescribed the medication from the cardiologists.” (:21)

Patients are typically tested every one to two days in the beginning of their treatment plan, depending on the diagnosis. Some patients are tested every four to six weeks, if they are considered low risk for AFib with no history of clotting. The Anticoagulation Clinic handles between 150-200 patients each day.

Typically, patients are seen in person at the clinic while some are managed over the phone. But when COVID-19 started to ramp up earlier this year, patients didn’t want to come in for their regular labs.

SOT: Lori Foster, Clinical Supervisor, Anticoagulation Clinic, OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute

“We tried to get patients to test elsewhere or we have lab services that go out and see the patients. But patients were very afraid. We had about 75 patients who did not want to have their INRs (International Normalized Ratio) done at all. So we developed a way for patients to come to our clinic and have less exposure and very minimal contact between the patients and the staff, so that protects the patients and our staff as well.” (:30)

Instead of patients coming into the building, the staff created a process where patients drive up to the side of the clinic and call the front desk when they arrive. The staff then alerts the nurses who meet the patients in the parking lot to have their labs done without ever leaving their car.

SOT: Lori Foster, Clinical Supervisor, Anticoagulation Clinic, OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute

“It has gone very well. Patients are very happy. They like that they’re been safe and we are taking all the precautions when we go out and see the patients. Once they get their lab results the nurses call them so they do get the same nurses guidance they would if they came into the clinic. It’s just being done in the parking lot now.” (:23)

Four years ago, William Johnson, 51, began to notice irregular heartbeats so he went to visit his doctor. After a series of tests, Johnson was diagnosed with Mitral valve regurgitation, a condition in which the heart's mitral valve doesn't close tightly, allowing blood to flow backward in the heart, creating fatigue or difficulty breathing. Johnson had surgery, changed his diet and started exercising more and is feeling good these days. Because he's on medication for the rest of his life, Johnson visits the Anticoagulation Clinic once a month for lab work and couldn't be happier about the drive up process.

SOT: William Johnson

"It's been wonderful for me. Everyone here is so nice to me. Coming here I get my Coumadin checked and it's wonderful. In and out." (:12)

SOT: William Johnson

"It's much easier. I come, I make a phone call they come out and see me. It doesn't get any better than that." (:06)

The Anticoagulation Clinic is open Monday through Friday. For more information, visit the [Anticoagulation Clinic](#) at OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute.