



Latest Community Health Advocacy Grants target solutions to reduce barriers to diagnosis, care in underserved communities

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(July 17, 2023 | PEORIA, Ill.) – Peoria, Illinois-based OSF HealthCare is partnering with the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) to award six grants totaling more than \$460,000 to support projects funded through the [Community Health Advocacy](#) program, with a goal to improve outcomes and reduce health care disparities. The latest grants seek to generate solutions focused on new models of care that improve access and reduce barriers for individuals from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. The projects also explore prototypes that can transform care and community-based initiatives that address the social determinants of health. The CHA program is also aimed at improving outcomes and reducing health care disparities.

The CHA program is a partnership between OSF HealthCare and The University of Illinois Chicago (UIC).

The funding supports research involving clinicians, engineers and social scientists to rapidly develop technologies and devices that could revolutionize medical training and health care delivery. A requirement of the grant applications was for solutions that could be deployed quickly, within four to six weeks.

Spring 2023 CHA Grant Projects

Automated Seizure Detection in Ambulatory EEG

- Huan Huynh, MD, OSF HealthCare
- Biswajit Maharathi, PhD, University of Illinois Chicago

Ambulatory EEG is a powerful tool to evaluate seizure propensity in patients with epilepsy within natural community settings and residential environments. This goal of this pilot project is to build a semi-automated seizure screening system using modern machine learning-based computational approaches to significantly reduce the physician's time evaluating these events by providing faster and more accurate screening methods and improving the patient care experience.

BRIDGEs (Building Resourceful Interactions Despite Grief and Stress)

- Eileen Knightly, MHA, RN, BSN, OSF HealthCare
- Carolyn Dickens, PhD, APRN, ACNP-BC, University of Illinois Chicago

This project addresses the growing issue of violence and incivility in the community and its impact on patient care in hospitals. It utilizes findings from a 2022 community health needs assessment to address cultural and communication barriers affecting nursing staff and patients. Nurse burnout, caused by prolonged stress, has worsened due to staffing shortages, documentation burden and increased violence.

Developing Tools to Empower Patient Understanding, Management and Communication of Condition

- Jonathan Handler, MD, OSF HealthCare
- Michael J. Scott, PhD, University of Illinois Chicago

This project will focus on social determinants of health (SDoH) and consider solutions that empower the patient to more accurately track and communicate their conditions before they reach the reactive state. The approach is to change the way patients engage with their health-related data and provide better tools to convey this information to their care provider.

Harnessing Mobile Technology to Diagnose Migraines in Rural Communities

- Hrachya Nersesyan, MD, PhD, OSF HealthCare
- Yelena Nersesyan, MD, PhD, University of Illinois Chicago

The goal of this project is to test and improve the MiGRO app that enables providers to quickly and accurately diagnose and treat migraines, resulting in better health outcomes and improved patient satisfaction. The app also streamlines the referral process, allowing providers to quickly refer patients to migraine specialists, reducing medical costs and improving access to care in rural areas.

Improving Cancer Screening in Underserved High-Risk Populations

- Lisa Barker, MD, FACEP, OSF HealthCare
- Elizabeth Papautsky, PhD, MS, University of Illinois Chicago

This project seeks to characterize the current barriers to completion of screening recommendations among patients at high risk for breast cancer, then use that data to create and pilot test an “intervention bundle” to optimize rates of breast MRI completion for eligible high-risk patients. With attention to the underserved communities within the OSF service population, this project will contribute to reduced health disparities by reducing barriers to care in the context of timely breast cancer diagnosis.

UI Health Pancreatic Cancer Screening Initiative

- Jason Bill, MD, OSF HealthCare
- Paul Grippo, PhD, University of Illinois Chicago

The project aims to develop an infrastructure of early community engagement with clinical trials for all types of cancer. The goal is to address the increasing technological development in screening modalities without simultaneously widening the gap in morbidity rates of cancer within underserved communities. With this health care protocol in place, the team hopes to increase accessibility of clinical trials using methods that are showing promising results in pancreatic cancer detection.

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OSF HealthCare is an integrated health system owned and operated by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. OSF HealthCare has 15 hospitals – 10 acute care, five critical access - with 2,084 licensed beds throughout Illinois and Michigan. OSF employs nearly 24,000 Mission Partners throughout 150+ locations; has two colleges of nursing; operates OSF Home Care Services, an extensive network of home health and hospice services; owns Pointcore, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization; and OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. OSF OnCall, a digital health operating unit, was established in 2020 to improve patient experience, using digital tools for 24-7 communication, on-demand care, remote patient monitoring, and offers the largest hospital-at-home program in Illinois. OSF HealthCare has been recognized by *Fortune* as one of the most innovative companies in the country. [More at osfhealthcare.org](https://www.osfhealthcare.org).

Jump Simulation, a part of OSF Innovation, is a collaboration between University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria and OSF HealthCare. The center replicates a variety of patient care settings to ensure novice and seasoned clinicians can practice handling medical situations in a life-like environment. Boasting six floors and 168,000 square feet, the center is one of the largest of its kind and provides space for conferences, anatomic training, virtual reality and innovation. For more information, visit [jumpsimulation.org/](https://www.jumpsimulation.org/).

OSF Innovation is a collaborative network of different disciplines that designs bold, strategic solutions to advance the future of health care. Learn more at [osfinnovation.org](https://www.osfinnovation.org).

University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) is a hub of innovation and cutting-edge research with a commitment to discovery and solving real-world problems. UIC is the city's largest university and only public research institution with 16 colleges and more than 33,000 students. UIC is recognized as one of the most ethnically rich and culturally diverse campuses in the nation, a leader in providing access to underrepresented students. With one of the largest colleges of medicine in the nation, and colleges of dentistry, pharmacy, public health, nursing, social work, and applied health sciences, UIC is also the state's principal educator of health professionals and a major healthcare provider to underserved communities. More at [uic.edu/](https://www.uic.edu/).