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## Medicaid Innovation Collaborative hits first-year milestones to improve health and wellness in underserved populations

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(February 10, 2023/PEORIA, Ill.) – The [Medicaid Innovation Collaborative \(MIC\)](#) – a partnership between Peoria-based OSF HealthCare and four Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), celebrated its one-year anniversary by highlighting a long list of milestones achieved. MIC provides a variety of digital care services and personalized support for Illinois Medicaid patients through programs developed by OSF OnCall.

The state-funded, five-year initiative is designed to transform health care delivery to improve outcomes, decrease disparities and reduce costs using sustainable programs.

The FQHC partners in the program include [Heartland Health Services](#) (Peoria, Illinois), [Chestnut Health Systems, Inc.](#) (Bloomington, Illinois), [Eagle View Community Health System, Inc.](#) (Oquawka, Illinois), and [Aunt Martha's Health & Wellness](#) (Danville, Illinois).

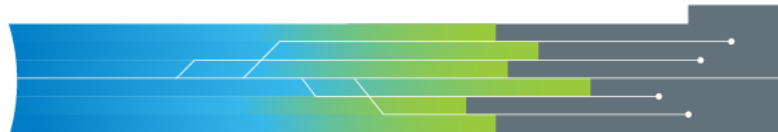
To date, MIC has been able to stand up several programs to expand services by:

- Providing [pregnancy and postpartum](#) support 24/7 to enrolled patients; featured on [this Health Accelerated podcast.](#)
- Offering [remote patient monitoring for chronic disease management](#) including asthma, diabetes hypertension, COPD and heart failure.
- In a collaboration with Illinois Central College, training [OSF digitally-enabled health navigators](#) to be embedded within communities across the state [and FQHC community health workers](#); within their facilities and co-located in community-based organizations, including homeless shelters. an.
- [Expanding breast cancer screenings](#) through digital outreach, making it easy for patients to schedule this important test.
- Extending health and wellness education with the goal of reducing chronic disease risks associated with diet and nutrition, exercise, unhealthy weight and smoking.
- Launching culturally sensitive, easy-to-use communication tools.
- Developing a systematic approach to assessing social determinants of health and tracking data to prioritize patient outreach, optimize workflow and to identify which patients might fit into specific programs. Future work will integrate all information with a patient's electronic record for providers to have a holistic view of their patients.

Jennifer Junis, senior vice president for OSF OnCall who also chairs the MIC Governance Council, says community health workers embedded in vulnerable communities also screen individuals for social service needs and they're connected with local resources to provide support for food, transportation, child care and affordable housing, among other factors that contribute to improved health and wellness.

During a day-long session earlier this week, FQHC leaders and frontline employees reviewed progress toward goals outlined for the first year.

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### **Chestnut Health Systems in Bloomington:**

- Began work on a building renovation and hiring for [a new dental clinic](#) that will serve Medicaid participants.
- Collaborated with a local homelessness service provider/food pantry to organize and implement a Food Pharmacy. Providers at Chestnut screen patients for eligibility criteria and prescribe use of the food pharmacy services. The pharmacy provides fresh and healthy food options often worth hundreds of dollars.
- The CHW program has solidified co-locations for staff at six partnering agencies.

### **Heartland Health Services in Peoria:**

- Built a new team within HHS and the framework to support digital care programs and to provide virtual primary care in homeless shelters.
- Began building trust with leaders and residents of homeless shelters through food and clothing drives and providing COVID-19 rapid kits.
- Hired a digital support manager and community health navigators who have also been trained on tele-diagnostic equipment that can be used to support virtual visits.

### **Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness in Danville:**

- Trained and hired community health workers.
- Established monthly Healthy Behavior meetings at the YMCA and Public Library.
- Educated more than 100 people in the community about resources and how to take control of their health.
- Expanded training for CHWs on cultural diversity, domestic violence and sexual assault.

### **Eagle View Community Health System in Oquawka:**

- Deployed CHWs who are providing services in three locations in the community.
- Implemented a new electronic health record system (Epic) that allows for better data collection and reporting on health outcomes.
- Ordered a new transportation van and hired a transportation director.

Junis says these efforts are designed to wrap a 24/7 digital safety net around patients that is available 365 days a year.

**"So if you have a question in the middle of the night, you don't have to go to an emergency department, or you don't know who to call. You can reach out to us and it's through text messaging or calls and we're available. So that's really the transformation piece. Is that we're not episodic but we're really meeting patients where they are and where they need us the most, at the times that they need us."**

The effort is expected to lower health care costs by keeping people out of the emergency department or the hospital, the most costly point of care. Savings can also be created by scaling the effort with telehealth providers overseeing care for many patients at a time.

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MIC will continue into year two with goals of improving dental care for patients, providing virtual health to residents of homeless shelters around the state, and enrolling new patients in existing MIC programs. Junis says it's also about improving based on feedback.

**“Year two is about optimization, and coordination and collaboration, and really continuing to work together to understand all of our different components of the holistic care of a patient and how we all play such a big role in that.”**

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Funds for the **Medicaid Innovation Collaborative** come from the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services/Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives. MIC will radically transform Medicaid delivery in Central and Northern Illinois by using innovation to improve access to care, improve health care outcomes and address unmet needs. MIC partners, which serve our communities' most vulnerable, include Aunt Martha's Health & Wellness, Danville; Chestnut Health Systems, Bloomington; Eagle View Community Health System Inc., in Oquawka, Illinois; Heartland Health Services, Peoria; and OSF HealthCare.

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