

# SHARING PROGRESS

*How OSF HealthCare is building a lasting relationship through love and service*

## Recognizing a need, OSF HealthCare has committed to better behavioral health care

People in LaSalle County, like most of America, have faced long wait times for mental health services. OSF HealthCare, spotting an issue in need of fixing, has responded in recent months by committing more behavioral health resources to the community and deploying technological solutions to overcome the distance between the people in need of care, and the population centers where most care providers practice.

To help better meet the community's needs, OSF HealthCare has grown the team of psychiatrists, therapists and nurses at the Behavioral Health CHOICES outpatient facility in Ottawa. And in June, the outpatient facility expanded its services to a second location by introducing a new on-site therapist, as well as a psychiatrist available using video conferencing technology, at OSF HealthCare Center for Health – Streator.

“We know that there is often a wait for patients

**Do you or a loved one need behavioral health resources?**

**Ask your primary care provider for assistance connecting to the appropriate services.**

**Here's how to access some of the tools and resources described in the article above:**

**Behavioral Health Navigator**

**Call (309) 308-8150 for assistance.**

**SilverCloud**

**Try our new online app. Learn more at [osfhealthcare.org/silvercloud](https://osfhealthcare.org/silvercloud).**

to see a psychiatrist,” said Wendy Navarro, director of the OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center behavioral health program, which serves both Ottawa and Streator. “We want our patients to get the care they need when they need it.”

**One of the most impactful solutions OSF HealthCare has employed to decrease wait times for treatment has been OSF TeleBehavioral Health.**

First offered at OSF Saint Elizabeth in fall 2017 and now available at the Center for Health in Streator, TeleBehavioral Health connects people with a psychiatrist using videoconferencing technology. Patients can see the psychiatrist they are speaking with, and a team member is present to answer any questions and make sure things work smoothly.

According to Navarro, feedback from patients using the service has been overwhelmingly positive, and wait times to see a provider have been cut in half, largely thanks to the technology.

“The access is much better, so we're able to see more people,” Navarro said. “The wait time to see a psychiatrist face-to-face is about two months. With TeleBehavioral Health we can get patients in within a month. It has really cut the wait time in half.”

The drive to improve access also led to a partnership with North Central Behavioral Health Systems, a community health agency that serves the county. A licensed clinical social worker is serving as a primary care therapist at the OSF Center for Health,

allowing the therapist to meet with referred patients in the same office as their general practitioner.

The availability of service has not been the only bar-

a person is struggling with things like housing or access to basic needs, I help link them to area resources.”

The behavioral health



*Rendering of a patient utilizing TeleBehavioral Health services at OSF HealthCare Center for Health – Streator.*

rier to people getting the care they need, however. Another issue has been a lack of awareness of the services available, which is why the behavioral health team at OSF HealthCare has behavioral health navigators. These specialists help assess a person's need, connect them with services and follow up to make sure everything is going smoothly.

“I have an initial meeting with patients to determine their needs and link them with counseling services or community resources,” said Jenna Boyd, behavioral health navigator at OSF Saint Elizabeth. “If

navigators also rely on SilverCloud to help facilitate easier communication with patients. SilverCloud is an online app – accessible on a computer or smart phone – that can help people with exercises, follow-up care and finding services.

OSF HealthCare is redefining what successful behavioral health care in rural communities looks like, but, according to Navarro, the work isn't done. The health system continues to innovate, adapt and adjust to be sure the people of LaSalle County are getting the care they deserve.



*Opening an outpatient facility at 111 Spring Street in 2016 was just the beginning of an expanded commitment to the Streator community by OSF HealthCare. As renovations to OSF HealthCare Center for Health – Streator continue, so does collaboration between the health care ministry and the community. We're partnering with local leaders and organizations to offer residents better access to health and wellness resources. This article is one of a nine-part series honoring the Streator Sesquicentennial. Watch for more stories as we celebrate a community we're proud to call home.*