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## Pritzker Administration Awards \$18 Million in Healthcare Transformation Funds to New Central Illinois Partnership

### *Medicaid Innovation Collaborative to Expand Quality Care for Medicaid Customers*

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services has awarded a new central Illinois Healthcare Transformation Collaborative, coined the Medicaid Innovation Collaborative, \$18 million as part of the inaugural round of Healthcare Transformation funding. The collaborative will work to address systemic obstacles individuals and families face in accessing quality health care through new initiatives that address technology gaps, expand telehealth services, and more.

Partners in the Medicaid Innovation Collaborative are OSF Healthcare; Heartland Community Health and Wellness in Peoria; Chestnut Health Systems, Inc., in Bloomington; Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness in Danville; and Eagle View Community Health System, Inc., in Oquawka.

Gov. JB Pritzker signed legislation earlier this year that established the [Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives program](#), which encourages healthcare providers to partner together to develop innovative solutions for meeting healthcare needs in their communities and closing gaps that exist in healthcare delivery across the state. In July, the administration [announced roughly \\$94 million in funding](#) to eight innovative collaborations.

“Expanding access to Medicaid services in Illinois’ rural regions is exactly the type of ground-breaking progress we hope to empower through our Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Transportation, technology, or geography should never prevent a patient from receiving the care they need – especially our most vulnerable Illinoisans. This funding builds on this administration’s commitment to addressing systemic inequities in our rural healthcare systems and ensuring all communities have access to quality, affordable healthcare.”

“The Medicaid Innovation Collaborative has presented ways to creatively remedy an array of barriers that face Medicaid customers in accessing the highest quality of care,” **HFS Director Theresa Eagleson said**. “From greatly boosting telehealth offerings to addressing lacking transportation in rural areas, these efforts will alleviate persistent access issues and address the social and structural determinants of health. I’m looking forward to seeing the impacts of this work come to fruition.”

Highlights of this Healthcare Transformation Collaborative include:

- The collaborative will assign digital health workers to pregnant mothers enrolled in the Medicaid program for remote patient monitoring with virtual visits and assessments, and connection to resources.
- In partnership with homeless service providers in Peoria, community health workers will conduct outreach to Medicaid patients, provide digital health services and provide supportive services to help manage individuals' social determinants of health.
- Addressing transportation gaps in rural areas to provide more access to needed health care services for Medicaid patients. This could mean either a collaborative partner providing rides to medical appointments or deploying community health workers to Medicaid customers in need of services.
- Expanding existing dental programs to increase dental care access for Medicaid patients in Bloomington-Normal and Warren and Henderson counties.
- Conducting text message outreach to Medicaid patients eligible for cancer screenings.
- Health and wellness literacy/chronic disease management will target individuals identified to be at high risk for developing disease or who are struggling to understand medical guidance. Remote patient monitoring with a virtual health and wellness coach will be provided.
- Advanced care remote patient monitoring: providers within the collaborative will connect patients who are the highest utilizers of high-cost services to a multi-disciplinary team to provide services to customers with chronic disease and/or multiple co-morbid conditions.

"We are very excited to receive this award and look forward to working closely with HFS as we work to transform healthcare delivery in Illinois for our Medicaid patients," said **Michelle Conger, Chief Strategy Officer and CEO OSF OnCall Digital Health**. "This Collaborative brings together hospital and FQHC partners committed to improving healthcare access and quality for those most in need. By using innovative approaches to care delivery and technologies refined and proven during the pandemic, Medicaid patients in central Illinois and beyond will have fully coordinated and integrated care that proactively addresses their needs."

The goal of Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives is to reorient the health care system in Illinois to reduce inequities, address social determinants of health and remedy persistent barriers to accessing quality health care, in order to broadly improve health outcomes.

"When you look at Peoria, and even our surrounding rural communities, the data clearly shows that we're facing unprecedented health disparities on every side. That's why, I'm proud that despite any political noise we have stayed laser-focused on really improving healthcare outcomes for families in tangible ways — so this is just another big win for central and downstate Illinois," said **Deputy Majority Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-Peoria)**. "And the Heartland team more than deserves this support because they show up every day to do the hard work of caring for folks in the community up close."

"The Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives that have received awards so far have creative plans to increase access to quality healthcare in underserved communities across Illinois – from our urban centers to the our most rural areas," said **House Majority Leader Greg Harris (D-Chicago)**. "These are the types of forward-thinking efforts we need as we continue to work to reduce the disparities that have created systemic divides in the ability to access critical healthcare services."

With support from federal matching funds, the state is authorized to invest up to \$150 million in Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives each fiscal year. HFS anticipates announcing the second round of funding awards later this calendar year, and the Department hopes to continue this program in future years with ongoing appropriations from the General Assembly.

"The collaboratives that are receiving funding in this first round demonstrated real, innovative visions and presented solutions that also address social determinants of health which heavily impact health outcomes," Eagleson said. "The best part is, we're just getting started."

In making these awards, HFS prioritized collaborations that included safety net and critical access hospitals, and those that included minority and women-owned business participation. Also given priority were projects that improve specialty care or provide workforce development in underserved communities, and those that will work to fill health care gaps in Illinois communities that are high on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's social vulnerability index.