

COVID-19 triggered a public health crisis with both a significant immediate effect and a projected long-term impact on under-resourced communities. From the start of the pandemic, Northwestern Medicine included its community partners in its comprehensive response plan, and is committed to walking the post-crisis path alongside them.

Health Outreach Promoting Equity

Northwestern Medicine's Health Outreach Promoting Equity (HOPE) initiative supports high-risk patients from communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19. A custom predictive model identified the patients as potentially at risk for serious illness if they did contract COVID-19. Then, Northwestern Medicine staff members reached out via phone, text, email and postal mail to provide COVID-19 screening and education. More than 18,000 patients were contacted and about 40% of the patients were connected to referrals to address social determinants of health.

Access to Safe Care

Community-based healthcare organizations serve the most vulnerable patients, but they struggled to secure the proper supplies during COVID-19 due to personal protective equipment (PPE) nationwide shortages and prices increases. Northwestern Medicine donated to partner organizations more than \$1.2 million of supplies, including N95 respirators, hand sanitizer, gloves, isolation gowns and surgical facial shields. Northwestern Medicine also provided PPE training to ensure a safe environment.

Food Insecurity

Community members who are at the highest risk of experiencing serious illness from COVID-19 are often those most adversely affected by the economic fallout of the pandemic and civil unrest. These factors can lead to food insecurity, especially among senior citizens, people with chronic illnesses, and groups that have been marginalized. Northwestern Medicine responded to hunger in local communities by supporting more than 40 community organizations. The system funded food donations, Lyft rides for food pantry deliveries and emergency grants to food pantries associated with the system's community partners.

Housing

People experiencing homelessness were at high risk for COVID-19 spread and infection. To support their needs, Northwestern Medicine partnered with The Boulevard of Chicago, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless and Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans.

Health Education, Including Mental Health

Northwestern Medicine collaborated with community members to share trusted education and resources during the health crisis. For example, Northwestern Medicine Behavioral Health Services Woodstock held a countywide Behavioral Health Summit to support local businesses and their employees, many of whom struggled during COVID-19.

Northwestern Medicine also provided an emergency grant to Bright Star Community Outreach (BSCO) to upgrade BSCO's technology and support remote access to BSCO's critical mental and behavioral health services.

In addition, the Community Affairs team, in partnership with students at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, provided education to senior living communities, veterans' homes and other organizations.



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