

NorthShore University HealthSystem was the first organization in Illinois to earn system-wide Magnet recognition, a prestigious honor in nursing and patient care. That same spirit of excellence drove NorthShore's response to COVID-19.

When NorthShore leaders first learned of COVID-19 in January 2020, step one was clear: assemble a cross-functional team immediately. Through daily communications, the group of clinical, administrative and operational personnel proactively prepared and implemented detailed action plans system-wide. Since January the team has been studying case trends and assessing readiness planning and activities in terms of systems, supplies, staff and communication.

At the end of January, the team held its first town hall meeting on COVID-19. Just weeks later, NorthShore admitted its first COVID-19 patient on March 11. All five of the system's hospitals responded by implementing visitor restrictions and mandatory screening, as well as postponing all non-emergency surgeries and services.

Sean O'Grady, NorthShore's chief clinical operations officer, noted that the health system's close and constant monitoring of the global crisis led to internal system reorganizations to meet the expected surge in demand for care. NorthShore, based in Evanston, redeployed ventilators from other departments and converted Glenbrook Hospital in Glenview into a designated treatment center for COVID-19 patients.

"We're mobilizing personnel from across the organization to provide care and assistance where needed," said Colette Urban, NorthShore public relations director. "We are managing our supplies very carefully and sensibly for the protection of our patients and employees."

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