Illinois Health and Hospital Association

Loyola Medicine Community Health Worker Victoria Prewitt helps improve the health and well-being of community members, especially in underserved areas.

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are an integral part of care teams at Loyola Medicine. As liaisons between individuals and needed services, they address patients' social needs and mitigate barriers to optimal health.

This dedicated effort to improve health and well-being resulted in CHWs connecting 736 new patients to resources in fiscal year (FY) 2024. During that period, CHW team members had 2,694 patient encounters, working closely with patients to assess their social needs, home environment and other social risk factors, and ultimately connect patients and their families to services within the community.

Victoria Prewitt, the lead on one Loyola Medicine Community Health and Well-Being team, described her work like this: "It's being able to help. It's being able to provide those resources. It's being able to at the end of the night saying, 'Did I make a difference in anybody's life today?'."

In the video below, Prewitt notes the role of CHWs is to keep patients healthy. To achieve this, Loyola Medicine works with community partners to support individuals who need help with, for example, getting groceries or paying their utility bill.

"I'm somebody that you can call and say, 'Hey, I really don't have food today' or 'Hey, I couldn't pay my utility bill… Is there something that you can do for me now? So it's that extra eyes on the patient in between the visits," Prewitt said.

Loyola Medicine's CHWs are strategically placed in clinics that treat a high percentage of patients covered by Medicaid or who are uninsured. They also work in the emergency department and in the centralized office to manage referrals from across the health system.

CHWs like Prewitt make a difference in the lives of patients every day. In addition to the resources the CHW team provides, the health system's Community Resource Directory also links people with community resources. In FY 2024, that directory yielded over 11,400 searches, with nearly 1,400 referrals made and 22 organizations.

Loyola Medicine treats more than human body. They also treat the human spirit.

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