

# Volunteer Newsletter

Winter 2022

## Volunteer Program News

### Welcome to the Winter Volunteer Newsletter

The quarterly Volunteer Newsletter highlights volunteer program and Northwestern Medicine news. Volunteers are part of the Northwestern Medicine family, at the heart of our mission of putting patients first in everything we do.

### Areas of Emphasis in 2022

This year, Volunteer Services is exploring role expansion in new areas and functions, access to Northwestern Medicine digital resources, and enhanced training and education opportunities. Our goal is to enrich your volunteer experience and extend the reach of invaluable support you provide. We look forward to updating you on these important initiatives in the coming months.

## Canning Thoracic Institute Opens

Northwestern Medicine Canning Thoracic Institute is a patient-centered destination for treating patients with the simple to most complex respiratory illnesses and lung cancer.

The institute was launched after Northwestern Medicine successfully performed the first-in-the-U.S. double-lung transplant for a patient who had COVID-19 and began offering guidance to transplant centers around the world. This investment in the fields of thoracic surgery and respiratory medicine will help Northwestern Medicine meet the growing patient demand for lung care. Supported by a generous gift from John and Rita Canning, Canning Thoracic Institute is committed to providing groundbreaking research, clinical breakthroughs, and high-quality care for patients with diseases of the lung and chest across the health system.

“Canning Thoracic Institute will capitalize on Northwestern Medicine’s breakthroughs in medicine with a regional, national and global impact,” say John and Rita Canning, whose \$20 million gift made the institute possible. “Our philanthropic contribution will help recruit and educate the top physicians in the nation, pioneer new procedures and clinical trials, incorporate artificial intelligence and machine learning tools, and make the patient experience exceptional. We want Canning Thoracic Institute to be known as the leading program for thoracic care, creating a platform that allows patients from all over the country and world to access leading-edge treatment.”

Read more: [Northwestern Medicine Launches the Canning Thoracic Institute to Meet the Growing Patient Demand for Lung Care | Northwestern Medicine](#)



## Volunteer Spotlight Q&A

**Abby Stanton**  
**Guest Services Desk Attendant,**  
**Woodstock Hospital**

Q. What has your volunteer experience taught you?

A. I love to help people and love talking to them. Helping others makes me feel happy.

Q. How has volunteering changed your outlook on the community?

A. There are good people out there. Everyone could always use a friendly “Hello!”

Q. How has volunteering impacted you personally?

A. I want to volunteer more. I never realized how volunteering can make a difference in my life and in the life of others.

## Social Determinants of Health Assessment Is Now Live in Inpatient Areas

A program to gauge individual social determinants of health (SDOH) is now live in all inpatient areas across Northwestern Medicine. The goal is to screen all inpatients for a concise set of SDOH that could act as barriers to health care, and ask patients if they want to be connected with resources that can help them address their needs.

In 2021, the SDOH program was piloted at 15 sites in primary care, inpatient and emergency department settings, across diverse geographic regions. Since April 2021, more than 12,000 patients have been screened for SDOH. Of these patients, about 10% requested referrals to help them navigate needs.

“The SDOH project goes along with our *Patients First* value, treating the whole patient and setting them up for success after discharge by providing them with the resources they may not have known about in the past,” says Abby Falbo, director of Nursing Operations at Huntley Hospital.

SDOH are broadly defined as social and environmental factors that affect a patient’s health. The focus of the SDOH team at Northwestern Medicine includes needs shown to be most important nationally and locally:

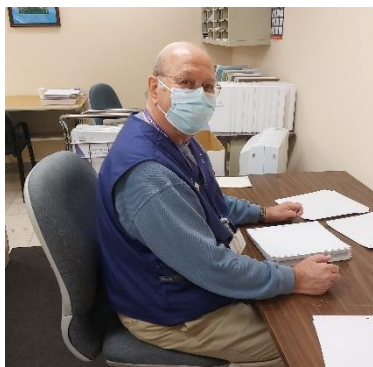
- Medical home (patient has a usual source of care)
- Medication affordability
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Food insecurity
- Housing instability
- Access to mental health care

Patients who identify a concern are asked if they want to learn about resources to address their needs. A community referral platform called NowPow generates a resource list based on the patient’s home ZIP code. NowPow is integrated with Epic, so the list is included in the patient’s After Visit Summary.

SDOH screening and referral will soon be available in ambulatory care as well: The program begins in primary care and obstetrics and gynecology practices this winter, followed by emergency departments in spring 2022.



Lauren Sessing and Katie Hallowell  
Front Desk Volunteers  
Kishwaukee Hospital



Larry Wells  
Mailroom Volunteer  
Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital

### Did You Know...?

**Northwestern Medicine** is the shared strategic vision of Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine to transform the future of health care.

The system has more than **200** care sites, including **11** hospitals and more than **2,500** licensed beds.

Each day, **33,700** clinical and administrative staff, faculty and medical students come together with a shared commitment to superior quality, academic excellence, scientific discovery and patient safety.

*U.S. News & World Report*, 2021-22, ranks **five** Northwestern Medicine hospitals among “America’s Best.” Northwestern Memorial Hospital is the No. 1 hospital in Illinois and a top 10 hospital in the nation.

Share this newsletter with friends and family, and encourage them to join the Northwestern Medicine volunteer team to make an impact!

[Volunteer | Northwestern Medicine](#)

### Take-Care Tips

#### Critical Blood Shortages and How You Can Help

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. has faced a nationwide blood shortage because community blood drives have been canceled and many people are limiting themselves to essential activities.

**Your blood donation can save three lives. Find a location near you at [versiti.org/il](https://www.versiti.org/il).**

Read more: [Quick Dose: What Causes a Blood Shortage? | Northwestern Medicine](#)