

Volunteer Program News

April 19 to 25 is Volunteer Week, a time we pay special tribute to our more than 1,500 volunteers. Thank you for your generous, compassionate support of our patients, visitors and staff. Watch for details from Volunteer Services about Volunteer Week activities.

A Message From Howard B. Chrisman, MD

President and CEO Northwestern Memorial HealthCare

Our volunteers make an immeasurable impact on our patients, visitors and staff. No matter where you serve in our health system, your presence makes it possible for us to deliver world-class care to each person who walks through our doors.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to helping make lives better. Thank you for your empathy, kindness and generosity. And thank you for your support of the Northwestern Medicine mission. We are truly fortunate to have you on our team.

Happy Volunteer Week!

Take Care Tips

How Happiness Impacts Your Health: The Science Behind Positive Emotions and Stress Relief

Happiness is good. It gives you a sense of optimism, a “take-on-the-world” attitude and a positivity that can be infectious. Did you know happiness can also be good for your health? Rhyann Willey, LCSW, a therapist at Northwestern Medicine, explains how joy and health are closely connected.

Learn more, including eight ways to boost your mood, on [HealthBeat](#).



Volunteer Spotlight: Andrew Alavi

**Pediatric Gamers Outreach Volunteer,
Central DuPage Hospital**

What has your volunteer experience taught you?

I was so happy to find out just how much some patients would light up when given the chance to play games during their stay. I've learned how to approach patients more naturally, read the room, and become better at meeting people where they are.

How has your volunteer experience impacted you personally?

Volunteering has reinforced that my career shift into health care is the right path for me. Each shift leaves my heart feeling a little more full, and I'm grateful for the kindness of the Central DuPage Hospital staff and patients, as well as the opportunity to make someone's day a little bit better.

Encourage your friends and family to join our volunteer team. They can learn more at nm.org/volunteer.

Northwestern Medicine by the Numbers

- **11** hospitals and hundreds of care sites across the Chicago metropolitan area
- **1.3 million** patients from 95% of Chicago ZIP codes, all 50 states and over 106 countries
- **42,000** employees from 85% of Chicago area ZIP codes and the third-largest private employer in Illinois
- **5,500+** physicians
- **2,900** students, interns and trainees
- More than **1,500** volunteers who gave 164,000 hours of service in fiscal year 2025
- **\$695.4 million** in research funding and over **7,000** active clinical trials

Care Team Performs First Robotic Lung Transplant in Illinois

Minimally Invasive Surgery May Cut Recovery Time in Half for Some Patients

In a big step for lung care, surgeons at Northwestern Medicine performed the first robotic lung transplant in Illinois. This breakthrough offers an option to patients with advanced lung disease who may benefit from a less invasive surgical procedure.

For many people, a lung transplant can be lifesaving — but traditional surgery is complex and demanding on the body. Robotic technology may help reduce that burden for select patients.

In a traditional lung transplant, surgeons must cut through the breastbone and open the chest wide to reach the lungs. This type of open-chest surgery can take eight to 10 hours and often leads to significant pain and a long recovery.

With robotic lung transplant surgery, surgeons use small incisions and robotic instruments instead. Doctors at Northwestern Medicine Canning Thoracic Institute used this approach to perform the entire transplant through small incisions on each side of the chest.

Learn additional reasons why robotic lung transplant can benefit patients on [HealthBeat](#).

\$50 Million Gift From Neil Bluhm Marks New Milestone

Chicago philanthropist Neil Bluhm recently gave a \$50 million gift to support the future of Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute.

“As we conclude the celebration of BCVI’s first 20 years, this extraordinary gift ensures we are not only honoring our past, but shaping the next 20 years of cardiovascular care,” says Patrick M. McCarthy, MD, executive director of Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute. “This commitment keeps Northwestern Medicine at the forefront of cardiovascular medicine, empowering us to deliver superior outcomes for patients today and for generations to come.”

Bluhm made his first gift to Northwestern Medicine in 2004, and just one year later, Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute opened its doors to serve patients. Since then, Bluhm and the Bluhm Family Foundation have given more than \$135 million to Northwestern Medicine.

“My main goal has always been to ensure that anyone who needs world-class heart care can get it,” says Bluhm. “We made this possible 20 years ago in downtown Chicago and built on that when we expanded care into the suburbs. It has been one of my greatest honors to watch this program touch so many lives, and I’m humbled to continue supporting this mission.”

Read more about Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute on [nm.org](#).

*Varsini
Ramakrishnan,
Catherine Gratz
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Forest Hospital*



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