



**Office of the Governor  
JB Pritzker**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Saturday, Apr. 11, 2020

**CONTACT**

[Gov.Press@illinois.gov](mailto:Gov.Press@illinois.gov)

## **Governor Pritzker Announces New Statewide Telehealth Programs, Mental Health Support Hotline**

**CHICAGO** – Expanding on efforts to protect the physical and mental health of Illinois communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor JB Pritzker announced the launch of a new Remote Patient Monitoring Program and mental health support line.

“We are living in a deeply unprecedented moment, and holding the emotional ramifications of that inside will only be harder on you. Please know that you don’t have to feel it all alone,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “My administration is here to serve you and help see you through this time of crisis – I want you to know that we’re here to help.”

### **Remote Patient Monitoring Program**

Illinois has launched a new Remote Patient Monitoring Program utilizing Telehealth Services and Pandemic Health Worker (PHW) Programs in partnership with OSF HealthCare and Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

The program will reduce barriers to health and mental health services to support residents across Illinois with a focus on underserved communities and those at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“To help see all our residents through this pandemic, the Department has contracted for these specific at-home COVID-19 supports for anyone in the state regardless of whether they are insured,” **said Theresa Eagleson, Director of Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services**. “We’ve also significantly expanded telehealth and remote options to ensure access to health care, including addiction and mental health treatment, for our over 3 million Medicaid members.”

Pandemic Health Workers (PHWs) will digitally connect with members in the community who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and need to stay home or quarantine to protect themselves and others.

PHWs will virtually visit recipients daily, deliver wellness kits that include essential tools to monitor their health, and follow-up over a 14-day period to ensure no further assistance is needed. Wellness kits will include items such as thermometers, pulse oximeters, blood pressure cuffs, and alcohol wipes.

Through this statewide program, the state of Illinois will safeguard hospitals from being overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients, limit the spread of the virus, and digitally support those needing care.

A person is eligible for the program if he or she is showing COVID-19 symptoms, or is at high risk for contracting the virus, but does not require emergency or inpatient care, and can be digitally monitored at home. A person must call the COVID-19 hotlines for a final determination of eligibility for the Pandemic Health Worker Program.

The Department of Healthcare and Family Services has formalized contracts for Central and Southern Illinois and is finalizing the partnership for the Northern Region this coming week.

The OSF PHW teams are serving East Central and North Central Illinois communities include Peoria/Bloomington, Champaign/Urbana, Evergreen Park, Danville, Galesburg, Kewanee, Monmouth, Ottawa, Mendota, Streator, Pontiac and Rockford. The OSF Hotline number is 833-673-5669 and is available now. More information can be found at [www.osfhealthcare.org](http://www.osfhealthcare.org).

The SIU SOM PHW program is serving West Central and Southern Illinois include Springfield, Quincy, Decatur, Carbondale, and Metro East communities. The SIU Hotline number is 217-545-5100 and will be available starting Monday. More information can be found at [www.siumed.edu/phw](http://www.siumed.edu/phw).

### **Call4Calm**

The Illinois Department of Human Services' Mental Health Division has launched a free-of-charge emotional support text line, Call4Calm, for Illinois residents experiencing stress and mental health issues related to COVID-19.

Individuals who would like to speak with a mental health professional can text "TALK" to 5-5-2-0-2-0, or for Spanish, "HABLAR" to the same number: 5-5-2-0-2-0. Call4Calm is free to use, and individuals will remain anonymous.

Once a resident sends a text to the hotline, within 24 hours they will receive a call from a counselor employed by a local community mental health center to provide support.

Individuals can also text 5-5-2-0-2-0, with key words such as “unemployment” or “food” or “shelter” and will receive information on how navigate and access supports and services.

### **Youth Town Hall**

The Governor will be co-hosting a virtual townhall meeting for youth of all ages today at 5PM with the Center for Childhood Resilience (CCR), the Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership, and Mikva Challenge.

This townhall will directly reach Illinois youth to address their unique concerns amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The townhall will be hosted through Facebook Live on the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago Facebook page [www.facebook.com/luriechildrens/](http://www.facebook.com/luriechildrens/).

###