

Volunteer Program News

This quarterly newsletter highlights volunteer programs and Northwestern Medicine news. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our volunteers. The time, energy and talent you so generously share make us better. Thank you.

Proton Therapy for Pediatric Tumors

Precision Radiation Reduces Side Effects

Childhood cancer is a heartbreaking diagnosis, and it is one that nearly 10,000 children under age 14 in the United States receive each year. But because of major treatment breakthroughs, more than 83% of children diagnosed with cancer survive five years or more. And due to the precision of proton therapy, many are living with fewer side effects than ever before.

Leukemia, brain and central nervous system (CNS) tumors, neuroblastoma, Wilms tumor, and both Hodgkin and non-Hodgkin lymphoma are some of the most common cancers affecting children under 15. Childhood cancers are not strongly linked to lifestyle or environmental risk factors, and they tend to respond better to treatments like chemotherapy. Some of these cancers, particularly brain and CNS tumors, can be treated with proton therapy.

Proton therapy exposes the least amount of surrounding healthy tissue to radiation, which means it may cause fewer side effects. At [Northwestern Medicine Proton Center](#), specialists use proton beam therapy with pencil-beam scanning to treat pediatric tumors and improve children's long-term quality of life.

Learn how proton beam therapy works and how it benefits pediatric patients on [HealthBeat](#).

NM Grant Initiatives Directly Impact Local Communities in Chicagoland

Northwestern Medicine serves patients across Illinois, and to better assist the diverse needs of individual communities, the health system's grant initiative was created to help address disparities highlighted in local [Community Health Needs Assessments](#).

This year alone, more than 300 organizations have received Northwestern Medicine grants, totaling more than \$16.3 million.

[Read about](#) the organizations and services NM grants support.



Volunteer Spotlight: Marla Cohen

*Universal Care Center Nursing Support
Lake Forest Hospital*

What has your volunteer experience taught you?

That everyone needs and responds to a kind word or gesture. One person can't fix the world, but just one volunteer can certainly help alleviate the immediate problems of the patients and their families who walk through our doors every day.

How has volunteering impacted you personally?

Volunteering has given me a view of health care from the provider side and allowed me to see the everyday issues and stressors that affect my unit. I continue to be amazed at how patient-oriented every healthcare provider is on my unit, and I am proud to be a part of their little family!

Patients Can Now View and Download Medical Imaging in MyNM

Northwestern Medicine now allows patients to view and download medical imaging through their MyNM account. Images can be viewed after the final imaging result has been released to the patient's MyNM account. Earlier this year, patients gained the ability to upload medical imaging completed outside of NM into their MyNM account.

Patients can currently view and download the following medical imaging taken in 2024: CT, DEXA/DXA scan (bone scan), MRI, mammography, nuclear medicine, PET scan, ultrasound and X-ray.

Images can be downloaded in one of two ways:

- On a desktop computer using Chrome, Edge or Firefox internet browsers
- On a mobile device, via the MyNM® app

The NilRead service is possible through a partnership with Hyland™ Healthcare, a technology company for cloud-based medical imaging management.

“This new technology allows patients to view and download their medical images shortly after their patient visit,” says Michael Manka, vice president, Administration. “The ability to view and download imaging will allow patients to move seamlessly through our system.”

To learn more, see the Imaging Guides and Frequently Asked Questions on nm.org.

Is This the Key to Controlling Lupus? NM Scientists Discover Driver of the Disease

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE or lupus), a chronic autoimmune disease that causes inflammation and pain in your body, affects more than 1.5 million people in the United States. With lupus, your immune system, which is meant to fight infections, attacks its own healthy cells and tissues.

Scientists at Northwestern Medicine have discovered an imbalance of a molecule in the blood that drives the harmful immune response in lupus. Restoring balance of this molecule in the blood may potentially cure the disease.

For more insight on the promising discovery, plus lupus symptoms and risk factors, visit [HealthBeat](https://www.healthbeat.com).



Wendy Balog,
Same Day Surgery,
Delnor Hospital



Jeff Rubin,
Surgical Family
Waiting Room,
Delnor Hospital

NM Hospitals Ranked Among America's Best

Northwestern Medicine is proud to have **five** hospitals ranked among “America's Best” by *U.S. News & World Report*, 2024 – 2025.

Northwestern Memorial Hospital, the No. 1 hospital in Illinois for **13** straight years, is nationally ranked in **11** clinical specialties, including four ranked in the top **10**:

- Diabetes and Endocrinology
- Cardiology and Heart and Vascular Surgery
- Gastroenterology and GI Surgery
- Obstetrics and Gynecology

Other NM rankings in Illinois:

- Central DuPage Hospital, No. 7
- Lake Forest Hospital, No. 8 (tie)
- McHenry Hospital, Huntley Hospital and Woodstock Hospital, No. 13 (tie)
- Palos Hospital, No. 15 (tie)

[Read more.](#)

Encourage others to join our team. Learn more: nm.org/volunteer.

Do Seasonal Allergies Develop with Age?

An Allergist Has Answers

Allergies can develop at any age; it's not uncommon to develop them later in life. One theory as to why adults may get allergies is that they may not have been exposed to the allergens as a child.

Learn what may be causing your allergies and how allergies can be treated on [HealthBeat](https://www.healthbeat.com).