

Volunteer Program News

This quarterly newsletter highlights volunteer programs and Northwestern Medicine news. Thank you for making volunteer service a routine part of your life. The compassion you show and the support you provide make a difference in the lives of others.

New MyNM Features Give Patients More Tools to Manage Their Health

Northwestern Medicine recently added new features to MyNM on both the browser version and mobile app. "MyNM 2.0 is a foundational step towards a better patient experience," says Doug King, chief information officer at Northwestern Medicine. "The updated platform will provide patients with new digital tools to better manage their symptoms, communicate with their care teams, schedule appointments and streamline access to care."

Self-Triage tool

The Self-Triage tool, formerly known as Symptom Checker, allows patients to answer a series of questions about common symptoms and then provides a recommended level of care. The tool was first made available for COVID-19 symptoms as well as muscle and joint symptoms. It now includes a range of conditions for adult and pediatric patients, including abdominal and back pain, cold and flu symptoms, diarrhea, headache and head injury, ear pain and rash, among others.

MyNM in Spanish

Patients can now select the Spanish version of MyNM when using the browser version or mobile app. Select content will be translated, including the login page, menu, FAQ, terms and conditions, message centers and billing center. NM plans to support patient messaging in Spanish in a future update.

Enhancing patient immediate care experiences

In mid-July, NM Immediate Care Centers (ICCs) will transition to a new Epic Urgent Care module to streamline the patient's visit experience:

- **On My Way:** shows information for the nearest ICC, including estimated wait times, and allows patients to add themselves to the Track Board
- **On-Demand Video Visit:** allows patients to join a virtual queue to see the next available clinician for symptoms that do not require an in-person visit
- **eCheck-in:** allows patients to submit required information before a visit

Patients may need to update the MyNM app via the App Store (for Apple devices) or Google Play (for Android devices).



Volunteer Spotlight: Jeandre Kruger

*Emergency Department,
Northwestern Memorial Hospital*

What has your volunteer experience taught you?

One of the most important lessons I have learned from many patients is that, despite the various situations one can find oneself in, one can still have joy.

How has volunteering impacted you personally?

I learned to place myself in the shoes of others and listen patiently to understand not only what they saying but also how they feel about what they are saying.

A Different Way to Treat Atrial Fibrillation

An innovative procedure called pulsed field ablation (PFA) not only reduces the risks associated with standard ablation, but also reduces treatment time and improves overall patient outcomes, according to clinical trials conducted at Northwestern Medicine.

“Our heart rhythm group has worked closely with our industry colleagues for decades on clinical trials,” says Bradley P. Knight, MD. “In this case, Northwestern Medicine was the only Chicago healthcare center that worked with two organizations, Medtronic and Boston Scientific, to serve as a site for clinical trials, testing their pulsed field ablation systems in patients.”

PFA delivers precisely controlled electric fields to target and ablate (remove) the tissue responsible for atrial fibrillation.

Read more about the clinical trial results and how this innovative procedure differs from standard ablation on [HealthBeat](#).

Transplant Access Program Pioneers Change for Black Patients

People who identify as Black make up the largest group of people in need of an organ transplant but are less likely to receive a lifesaving transplant due to a wide range of barriers leading up to the point of transplantation. Two of the biggest barriers? Access to care and trust in care.

[Dinee C. Simpson, MD](#), a transplant surgeon at Northwestern Medicine, is working to change this. Dr. Simpson is the first Black female transplant surgeon in Illinois and the founding director of the Northwestern Medicine [African American Transplant Access Program](#) (AATAP).

The program helps Black patients navigate the transplant process and achieve optimal health outcomes through kidney and liver transplantation.

“Our mission is to mitigate the disparities,” says Dr. Simpson. “I cannot claim that we will get rid of them altogether because when you look at the barriers that Black patients face, as they are published in the literature, there's a long list.”

Learn how the AATAP program is breaking barriers to transplantation on [HealthBeat](#).



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Why Blood Donation Matters and How You Can Help

According to the [American Red Cross](#), approximately **29,000** units of red blood cells are needed every day in the U.S. for surgeries, cancer treatments, accidents and chronic illnesses. When this precious resource runs low, people can't get the lifesaving treatments they need.

There are many reasons for shortages, including low donor turnout. Of the **38%** of people in the U.S. who are eligible to donate blood, only about **3%** do so. This is linked to a number of factors, including busy travel seasons, viral illnesses, natural disasters, younger donors giving less often and fewer school and workplace programs.

Typically, a single blood donation will be used for two or three patients. During their lifetime, many people will require a [blood transfusion](#). Donating now is a way to pay it forward for the future needs of others and for your future self.

To find a donation site near you, please visit nm.org/donateblood.

Protecting Your Vision in a Digital Society

How Screen Time Affects Your Eyes

While digital devices are useful for making things more efficient, they may be causing harm to your eyes in ways you have not considered. Constantly staring at a screen is detrimental to eye health and can result in retinal damage.

Read tips for reducing eye strain on [HealthBeat](#).