HAPPENINGS
SPECIAL EDITION: COVID-19

COMBATTING COVID-19 AT NEAR NORTH
A Message from Our Chief Executive Officer, Berneice Mills-Thomas

As our nation combats COVID-19, Near North Health Service Corporation is doing everything we can to provide the best care possible to patients and their families, while also maintaining the safety of our staff.

To slow the spread of COVID-19, Near North has followed Governor Pritzker’s stay-at-home order for all non-essential staff through April 30, 2020 by developing Near North’s first work from home policy. Near North has also taken multiple actions to maintain the health and safety of our staff and patients by implementing new cleaning procedures for our health centers, beginning daily temperature testing for all essential employees, and introducing electronic services that allow our providers to treat patients from a distance or even from the safety of their own homes (see more on Page 2).

At this time, Near North is sufficiently stocked with personal protective equipment (PPE) for our providers and staff to utilize when treating patients. Near North would like to thank the Chicago Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Public Health, and our partner hospitals and associations, for providing us with the resources needed to treat our patients safely and efficiently. Near North would also like to thank our essential health care providers and staff for working hard to be the health care heroes our nation needs right now.

While we hope that the spread of COVID-19 will slow soon, Near North will continue to follow national, state and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and best practices until advised to return to our day to day operations. On behalf of our entire Near North family, we look forward to being able to safely engage with Chicago’s communities once again in the future.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH
Near North’s Dr. Algean Garner II, Psy.D and Director of Comprehensive Services, provides his tips for dealing with a disaster

- **Take care of your body** - Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

- **Connect with others** - Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member.

- **Take breaks** - Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade.

- **Stay informed** - Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information.

- **Avoid too much exposure to news** - Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news stories.

- **Seek help when needed** - If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor.
At Near North Health Service Corporation, a patient’s health and safety is always prioritized. In an effort to safely treat patients and their families during these uncertain times, Near North has implemented a telehealth service that will allow patients’ conditions to be addressed while practicing social distancing.

According to the Health Resources and Services Association (HRSA), telehealth services are defined as the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies (such as telephones) to support long-distance clinical health care, health education, public health, and health administration. Near North will be using telehealth services specifically to provide patients with access to our providers so that their condition may be treated without risking their health and the health of others.

At this time, Near North will be providing telehealth services over the phone to current and new patients as the COVID-19 pandemic persists. Through this service, Near North’s providers will ask the patient to describe their symptoms and/or condition, and then address the issue(s) over the phone. Patients can begin employing Near North’s telehealth services by calling (312) 337-1073.

Near North has also announced that providers will begin to be available for telehealth services in the evenings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in Internal Medicine; and Tuesday and Wednesday for Pediatrics and Women’s Health.

For more information on these new services or Near North’s response to COVID-19, please visit https://www.nearnorthhealth.org/covid-19.