

When COVID-19 arrived in Illinois in January 2020, Advocate Aurora Health staff knew what to do: deploy their existing plans.

“Preparing for potential epidemics and pandemics is not new [for us]. Our expert infection preventionists, physicians and nurses are trained and ready for this,” said Kristen Johnson, the system’s manager of public affairs and marketing operations. “We are prepared to provide care while maintaining a safe facility for our team members and visitors.”

The first order of business? Building a team.

Personnel from infection prevention, emergency preparedness, supply chain and other departments collaborated to ensure all Advocate Aurora facilities had ample supplies and support to protect patients and staff.

Given the winter flu season, Advocate Aurora staff were already rigorously following infection prevention measures at the system’s 28 hospitals—13 in Illinois and 15 in Wisconsin. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began in January, the Downers Grove-based system has provided staff with regular education on the latest guidance from state health agencies and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Additional preparedness measures include:

- Simulation exercises for treating COVID-19 patients, including how to accommodate a potential influx of additional patients;
- Visitor restrictions to mitigate exposure for staff and patients; and
- A new [COVID-19 website](#) to inform Advocate Aurora patients across Illinois and Wisconsin.

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