

The Passavant Sewing Ladies stitch what's needed to support the community. For decades, these healthcare heroes have volunteered their time and talent on pillowcases and blankets for pediatric patients, as well as alterations on scrubs for physicians and nurses.

Now, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the group of about 15 women has turned its focus to cloth face masks.

With face coverings recommended to slow the virus' spread, the Passavant Sewing Ladies are creating masks for Jacksonville Memorial Hospital (formerly Passavant Area Hospital) employees in non-clinical roles and for visitors—when they're allowed back in the hospital.

"It feels good to do something for someone else," said Marcella Million, who's volunteered at Jacksonville for the past two years.

Million and the other women have been working from home, like so many Illinoisans. The Passavant Sewing Ladies typically work in the hospital, one of the few volunteer sewing groups to do so. The change, though, was part of a hospital directive to protect these healthcare heroes, who are older and more vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19.

"Sewing these masks at home still feels good," Million said. "It's worthwhile and it's a good feeling to participate in something so important, to help someone else."

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