

## NORTHSHORE HEALTH TEAMS WITH PORTAGE TOWNSHIP YMCA TO EXPAND HEALTH, WELLNESS OUTREACH



**“Cooking Matters instructor and participant measure out ingredients for the recipe being prepared during the free cooking class.”  
Photo courtesy of Erin Robles.**

January ushered in a new, two-year partnership that’s bringing expanded health and wellness services to Portage Township. The collaboration between NorthShore Health Centers and Portage Township YMCA offers programs at and through the YMCA aimed at enhancing the health of the community.

The evidence-based programs include Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring; Healthy Weight and Your Child; and Enhance@Fitness, an exercise and fall prevention program geared towards adults with chronic mobility conditions such as arthritis. The Portage Township YMCA will also connect NorthShore patients with nutrition-related programming that includes Cooking Matters, a free 6-week class designed to teach families how to prepare a healthy meal on a budget. In addition to Cooking Matters, the YMCA provides free, healthy supper for school-aged children Monday through Friday from 4:00PM to 6:00PM.

“We’re in discussions about other programs that may be added, expanding those services as the partnership evolves,” said Shannon Burhan, president and CEO of Portage Township YMCA.



**Shannon Burhan, YMCA CEO**

With 5,600 members as well as non-members in various programs, the Portage Township YMCA, now in its 44th year, also serves members from neighboring communities. Some people use programs at the Portage Township YMCA that may not be available at another area YMCA. “We also have guests who are in town visiting and may come with a local member or are a member of a Y in their hometown. We especially see an increase over the holidays,” Burhan said.

The partnership with NorthShore is working well, she said. “Members who come in know we are a community service organization so they know they can pop in (with a need or question) and our staff will connect them with NorthShore services. It’s really great because we get asked about multiple things, like negotiating health insurance or helping someone with a housing crisis. NorthShore can connect them with the resources they need.”

David Hall, CEO of NorthShore Health Centers, said: “Through this unique collaboration, we will be able to extend the continuum of care for our patients by connecting them with programs and services that will help them continue to improve their health.

“I am really excited. It’s great to see NorthShore commit to having these conversations with us and to see that our collaboration will be beneficial to the community our YMCA and NorthShore serves. NorthShore’s longtime commitment to providing Portage with quality affordable medical, dental, vision and pharmacy will allow the two organizations to share resources and leverage unique assets. That will result in new or better services for our community,” said Burhan.

The Portage Township YMCA and NorthShore Health Centers, both nonprofit organizations, share the mission for progressively building a healthier community and have teamed up in the past on community health initiatives. With a focus on community wellness and education, NorthShore will also provide health care assistance on site at the Portage Township YMCA.

“We share with NorthShore the goal of providing opportunities to build a healthier community,” said Burhan.

NorthShore’s mission is to provide the most comprehensive and quality health care, without exclusion, to everyone, every time.

Burhan said that lines up well with the YMCA’s mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.



**“School-age summer camp kids check on their newly planted sprouts in the community garden at the Y.” Photo courtesy of Erin Robles.**

At NorthShore Health Centers, preventive medicine is a priority. In accordance with the most current knowledge about effective preventive care, this includes:

- Cervical cancer screenings, Pap tests, breast cancer screenings and osteoporosis screenings for women at recommended ages
- Healthful lifestyle modifications and blood pressure reduction for patients with a hypertension diagnosis
- A1C test monitoring every three months and annual cholesterol and retina exams for diabetics
- Colon cancer screenings at recommended ages for adults
- Well-child visits, lead screening, Hgb (Hemoglobin) test and immunizations at recommended ages for children
- Optometry services for adults and children at the at Lake Station, Portage and Hammond locations, including exams, contact lens and glasses services, and management of eye infections and diseases

That’s in addition to the other real-life needs of patients, including treatment for an injury, the flu and dental problems plus routine sports physicals.

NorthShore Health Centers also provides patients with an easy-to-use, Internet-based portal for home, office or smart phone.

With 11 clinics across Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Jasper Counties, NorthShore has a team of courteous and compassionate professionals who offer a wide range of services for everyone, through private insurance and/or Medicare and Medicaid and for those who have no health insurance. NorthShore is a federally qualified health center, providing health services for many patients who didn’t have access before. NorthShore’s commitment to the communities it serves is strong, providing access to excellent, affordable health care.

NorthShore Health Centers... The Right Care for Our Community.

### Submit program suggestions

NorthShore and the YMCA are looking for community input regarding programs, screenings or educational seminars that may be of interest. For anyone wanting to provide input on a survey, visit:

- Portage Township YMCA at [ymcaofportage.org/survey](https://ymcaofportage.org/survey)
- NorthShore Health Centers at <https://northshorehealth.org/northshore-is-joining-the-y/>

