



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

Waukegan Public Library and Abbott Unveil First Library-Based Telehealth Booth in Chicagoland Area

Waukegan, Ill. (Sept. 18, 2024) – Today, representatives from Waukegan Public Library (WPL) and the global healthcare company Abbott will host a grand opening for a new Telehealth Booth, provided with support from Abbott’s foundation, Abbott Fund. The booth is the first library-based telehealth service in the Chicagoland area, offering a quiet, private and ADA-accessible space for library patrons to connect with their preferred healthcare providers and attend health appointments virtually.

Equipped with a WiFi-enabled laptop, webcam and essential medical vitals equipment such as a scale, blood pressure monitor, thermometer and pulse monitor, the soundproof booth is designed to meet diverse healthcare needs. The booth can be reserved in advance or used on a walk-in basis during library hours, with support from the library’s trained Adult Services staff. Centrally located and easily accessible by public transportation, the library is open seven days a week, making it a convenient hub for virtual healthcare access. No library card or proof of Waukegan residency is required, ensuring this service is accessible to all.

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated the use of new digital health tools, with [95% of health centers](#) offering telehealth for medical visits. Nearly [75% of healthcare providers](#) offer telehealth services in their medical practice. But significant barriers often prevent people from accessing this innovation. Data from the [Lake County \(IL\) Broadband Plan](#) highlights that less than 75% of Waukegan households have reliable broadband internet access. And nationally, [research shows](#) that one in four Americans may not have access to technology or the internet, or the ability to use and understand information from digital devices to access care.

Integrating the booth into the library’s slate of service offerings will help bridge the community’s “digital divide” by providing access to reliable technology and removing barriers that prevent community members from seeking telehealth services.

Library Director Tiffany Verzani stated, “Providing a safe, comfortable, private and accessible place in the library for patrons to connect to healthcare services is a crucial community service. We are thrilled to partner with Abbott on this initiative and hope to inspire other area libraries to follow suit.”

“Breaking down local barriers to care requires both creative thinking and a community-focused approach to innovation,” said Kathryn McKenzie, vice president of Abbott Fund and divisional vice president of Global Citizenship and Sustainability at Abbott. “We’re proud to partner with the Waukegan Public Library on this important initiative, as part of our broader efforts to expand health access and equity in Waukegan. The telehealth booth will help address the digital divide in health by connecting people with their doctors and other healthcare providers remotely, providing convenient access to the care people need.”

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Today's grand opening event also will feature leaders from other community health organizations. In addition to the telehealth booth, the library hosts various health-related initiatives, including health fairs, information sessions in partnership with local agencies, and visits from the Rosalind Franklin Mobile Clinic. These efforts underscore our commitment to empowering community members with the resources they need to prioritize their health. We are grateful for our dedicated Adult Education staff and the support of our community partners, who share our vision of a healthier community.

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About Waukegan Public Library

The Waukegan Public Library has a long history of distinguished service in Waukegan. The library as we know it today was preceded by several operating systems, including paid and free service models developed by local associations and women's groups. The Carnegie Library was established in the early 1900s and served the community for sixty-two years.

Waukegan's current library building is located at County and Clayton Streets and is part of a governmental complex including both municipal and county buildings. The library opened for service on December 27, 1965, and was dedicated on April 19, 1966. Waukegan Public Library is a welcoming and inclusive community space that offers robust services to people of all ages. We look forward to seeing you access everything we have to offer in 2024.

A library card gives you free access to a world of ideas, art, culture, literature, history, and more. Cardholders can check out print and online collections including fiction, nonfiction, movies, videogames, Manga, and magazines. The library is not just a place to check out media—it is a community treasure. Visitors can research news, genealogy, consumer information, legal, and medical information using online databases and get homework support, too. Join us for creative programs and educational classes that can help you tap into the artist in you, find a new hobby, or reach your personal goals. Use computers, study spaces, and meeting rooms.

View all of the library's upcoming events at www.waukeganpl.org/calendar/. We know you will find something that will enrich your life and provide you with lasting memories.

To get started, download the library's app, visit us at www.waukeganpl.org, or follow us on social media @WaukeganLibrary.

About Abbott

Abbott supports the telehealth booth at the Waukegan Public Library as part of its broader work to innovate for greater access and affordability in health, the key priority of [Abbott's 2030 Sustainability Plan](#). Through its businesses and in partnership with others, Abbott and its foundation Abbott Fund are investing in communities to help remove the barriers that prevent people from living healthy lives.

Abbott is a global healthcare leader that helps people live more fully at all stages of life. Our portfolio of life-changing technologies spans the spectrum of healthcare, with leading businesses and products in diagnostics, medical devices, nutritionals and branded generic medicines. Our 114,000 colleagues serve people in more than 160 countries. Connect with us at www.abbott.com and on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#) and [YouTube](#).