



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 11, 2025

**CONTACT:**

Lauren Grenlund

[Lauren.Grenlund@illinois.gov](mailto:Lauren.Grenlund@illinois.gov)

## **Olney Central College Celebrates Completion of Health Professions Center**

**Olney** – Olney Central College, the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB), and local and state officials will celebrate the completion of the new Health Professions Center with an Open House and Dedication Ceremony on December 11.

The public is invited to explore the 8,500-square-foot addition to Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall from 3 to 7 p.m., with a formal dedication ceremony at 4 p.m.

Funded through the Rebuild Illinois capital program, the \$3.5 million investment will benefit healthcare education and workforce readiness. The Health Professions Center includes two new classrooms, a six-bed nursing skills lab, two nursing simulation labs with an observation area, and a new radiography classroom and lab. The facility also offers a conference room, faculty offices, and a student commons area to support collaborative learning.

“Olney Central College’s new Health Professions Center will be a regional hub for Illinois’ future healthcare professionals — a place where they can learn, grow, and thrive through hands-on education,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Thanks to Rebuild Illinois, we’re making transformative investments in community colleges across the state, empowering Illinoisans to reach their full potential and bring their skills to our unmatched workforce.”

“The Health Professions Center will be used to help train the next generation of healthcare workers in our region,” **said Dr. Alani Frederick, Dean of Health Professions at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges**. “This building represents the commitment from IECC to ensure a student-focused education.”

“With the new simulation center, all IECC Nursing students will have the opportunity to work through real world scenarios and practice high risk, low volume events such as a cardiac arrest and postpartum hemorrhage,” Frederick emphasized. “The Nursing Skills Lab will feature flexible space which will reinforce IECC Nursing’s commitment to active learning and allowing a safe and realistic learning environment. Our Radiography Program will have access to an

energized lab, the first in IECC history. This space will allow students to practice projections in a controlled environment, ensuring that they are safe clinicians and are ready to make the most of their clinical experiences.”

Managed by the Illinois Capital Development Board, this project is the most extensive renovation to OCC’s main building since its opening in 1974. Shores Builders, the general contractor, delivered the new Health Professions Center three months ahead of schedule and within the project budget. The scope of work involved constructing a 7,820-square-foot single-story building addition and renovating 1,900 square feet of existing space within Wattleworth Hall.

Graham & Hyde Architects, Inc., the architectural and engineering firm assigned to the project, created a design that supports hands-on training, improves the connectedness of learning environments, and blends cohesively with the existing building layout.

“Investments into healthcare education at Illinois colleges is critical to strengthening our communities” **said CDB Executive Director, TJ Edwards.** “By successfully training students for in-demand careers, the new Health Professions Center will enhance the quality of care Illinoisians receive and boost economic growth.”

Olney Central College President Chris Simpson said the center reflects OCC’s ongoing dedication to providing students with a high-quality education while helping them reach their future goals.

“Olney Central College and the entire IECC district has student success at the forefront. However, much of the work in this area can be more behind the scenes,” **Simpson said.** “This new Health Professions Center is a highly visible example of our commitment to deliver exceptional education to help our students succeed. This project will play a pivotal role in helping us deliver on this mission by providing a state-of-the-art facility for our health professions students.”

In addition to state funding, OCC received more than \$400,000 in financial support from the community to complete the project. This includes the Olney Central College Foundation’s pledge of more than \$150,000 over the next five years along with contributions from the Johnsie Flock Fildes Foundation, Wabash General Hospital, the Richland County Board, and the City of Olney. OCC also received a generous gift given in memory of Phyllis Fehrenbacher by her family. Carle RMH is supporting the project through the donation of medical equipment for student use.

“The support of our donors was essential in getting this project completed,” **Simpson said.** “As a result of each of their contributions, the Olney Central College Health Professions Center will provide an excellent learning and training environment for the next generation of nurses and radiographers. Their generosity will help to open doors for our students to enter a career in the health professions.”

###

#### ***About Olney Central College***

*Olney Central College is one of four colleges within Illinois Eastern Community Colleges. Located in Olney, Illinois, OCC is committed to providing accessible, high-quality education. OCC offers a wide range of academic and career-focused programs to serve the diverse needs of its students and community. For more information on Olney Central College, visit [www.iecc.edu/occ](http://www.iecc.edu/occ).*

#### ***About the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB)***

*The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) oversees the construction of new state facilities, such as prisons, state parks, mental health institutions, and college and university projects. In addition, CDB is responsible for renovation and rehabilitation projects at over 8,770 state-owned buildings spread over more than 100 million square feet of floor space.*