Illinois Health and Hospital Association

Located in Cahokia Heights, Touchette Regional Hospital serves one of the most vulnerable patient populations in Illinois. One in three Cahokia Heights residents lives in poverty, with the city's median annual household income about $33,800. Nearby East St. Louis follows a similar pattern: 33% of its population lives in poverty and the median annual household income is $35,700.

Serving communities where many residents struggle to make ends meet—and struggle with behavioral health conditions—requires keen insight into their specific health challenges and how to address them.

In mid-2024, Touchette's parent organization, Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation (SIHF), a federally qualified health center, began sending a mobile health unit to the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center (CBHC) in East St. Louis twice a month, as many of CBHC patients had medical complications in addition to behavioral and substance abuse challenges.

This first step toward supporting behavioral health patients led to an even greater opportunity to make a difference.

Touchette Regional Hospital collaborated with CBHC to identify a challenge the center had with lab services. Behavioral health conditions span anxiety disorders and depression to substance use disorders (SUDs). In low-income communities, patients managing such conditions are typically unable to keep scheduled appointments.

Leaders determined the availability of lab draw services during regular business hours would make a difference in patient care, especially as lab tests are essential for monitoring treatment and recovery among those with an SUD.

In this major step forward in March 2025, Touchette Regional Hospital stood up a lab draw location at CBHC to support patient care for both behavioral health and SUD patients. The hospital-staffed lab served 1,051 patients—over 5 patients per day—primarily Medicaid and self-pay individuals over the first 10 months of this new service. The effort brings a needed service to the underserved communities Touchette Regional Hospital and CBHC serve.