

# Lena Esmail Launches “Care Closer to Home” Personal Pledge to Expand Healthcare Access

Youngstown, Ohio healthcare leader Lena Esmail is encouraging individuals, schools, employers, and communities to take practical steps that make healthcare easier to access before small problems become major ones.

**Youngstown, Ohio Jun 15, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com))** - Nurse practitioner and QuickMed CEO Lena Esmail has announced the launch of her new personal initiative, the “Care Closer to Home” Pledge, a commitment focused on improving healthcare access through community-based solutions, preventive care, and local action.

The pledge comes at a time when healthcare access remains a growing challenge across the United States. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the nation could face a shortage of more than 55,000 primary care physicians by 2036. Meanwhile, the Health Resources and Services Administration estimates that more than 100 million Americans live in areas with primary care shortages. The CDC also reports that millions of students experience chronic absenteeism each year, with health issues being one of the leading contributors.

For Esmail, the issue is personal.

“My heart is here,” she said. “I grew up on the North Side. I worked at almost every place on Belmont Avenue you can imagine. To be able to see my impact in curbing inequity in care here is amazing.”

Throughout her career, Esmail has focused on bringing healthcare closer to the communities that need it most through neighborhood clinics, urgent care centers, primary care practices, and school-based health programs.

“I kept seeing people use emergency rooms for things that could have been treated much earlier,” she said. “The issue wasn’t always medical. The issue was access.”

She believes meaningful progress does not always require large-scale reform.

“You don’t always need bigger buildings,” Esmail said. “Sometimes you just need to make care easier to reach.”

The new pledge reflects that philosophy.

## The Care Closer to Home Pledge

Esmail is committing to seven specific actions:

### 1. Expand Community-Based Care

I will continue prioritizing healthcare services in neighborhoods where access is limited.

### 2. Support School-Based Health Programs

I will advocate for healthcare access inside schools whenever possible.

### 3. Promote Preventive Care

I will encourage earlier intervention and routine health screenings to catch problems before they become emergencies.

### 4. Listen to Patients First

I will continue designing healthcare services around how people actually live, work, and seek care.

### 5. Strengthen Nurse-Led Care Models

I will support the growth and development of nurse practitioners and advanced practice providers.

### 6. Reduce Barriers to Care

I will look for practical ways to simplify access, scheduling, and community outreach.

### 7. Stay Connected to Local Communities

I will continue meeting with patients, providers, educators, and community leaders to understand healthcare needs firsthand.

“Healthcare has to fit into real life,” Esmail said. “People work. They take care of their families. Systems have to adapt to that reality.”

### Why This Matters Right Now

Several trends make healthcare access an urgent issue:

- More than **100 million Americans** live in federally designated primary care shortage areas.
- The U.S. could face a shortage of **55,200 primary care physicians** within the next decade.
- More than **14 million students** are considered chronically absent from school each year.
- Over **385,000 nurse practitioners** now provide care across the United States, helping fill critical access gaps.
- Studies have shown that community-based clinics can reduce unnecessary emergency room visits and improve preventive care utilization.

### Do-It-Yourself Healthcare Access Toolkit

Esmail is encouraging individuals to take action in their own communities without spending money.

### 10 Actions Anyone Can Take Today

- Schedule any overdue preventive health screenings.
- Learn where your nearest community clinic is located.
- Share local healthcare resources with friends and family.
- Ask your child's school about available health services.
- Encourage a family member to establish a primary care relationship.
- Keep a written list of medications and health conditions.
- Attend local health fairs and community wellness events.

- Check blood pressure regularly at free community stations.
- Volunteer with local organizations that support community health.
- Speak with local leaders about healthcare access needs in your neighborhood.

## **30-Day Care Closer to Home Progress Tracker**

Use this simple checklist during the next month:

### **Week 1**

- Identify local healthcare resources
- Review personal preventive care needs

### **Week 2**

- Share healthcare information with one friend or family member
- Learn about local school or community health programs

### **Week 3**

- Attend a health-related community event or educational program
- Support someone who needs help accessing care

### **Week 4**

- Complete one preventive health action
- Create a personal healthcare plan for the next six months

## **Join the Pledge**

Esmail is encouraging individuals, healthcare providers, educators, employers, and community leaders to adopt the Care Closer to Home mindset.

“Sometimes the biggest improvements start with the smallest decisions,” she said. “If more people take one step toward improving access in their own community, those steps add up quickly.”

Individuals are encouraged to take the pledge, use the toolkit, and share it with others who care about improving healthcare access.

To read the full interview, visit the website [here](#).

## **About Lena Esmail**

Lena Esmail is a nurse practitioner, healthcare executive, and CEO of QuickMed. Based in the

Youngstown, Ohio region, she is known for her work expanding community-based healthcare, urgent care, primary care, and school-based health programs throughout Ohio. Her work focuses on improving healthcare access, reducing barriers to care, and strengthening local healthcare systems.

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