

**ADAPTING FOR TOMORROW:
DRIVING CHANGE +
BUILDING RESILIENCE**

SEPTEMBER 23-24, 2025

WELCOME

The Kansas Public Health Association's annual Public Health Conference of Kansas brings together public health professionals from diverse disciplines and geographic locations to collaborate on improving the public health infrastructure in Kansas. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from expert speakers as well as network with colleagues from around the state. The 2025 conference theme is Adapting for Tomorrow: Driving Change & Building Resilience.

Conference Objectives:

- Facilitate meaningful connections between Kansas public health system players, including policy makers, the governmental workforce, academic partners and students, advocacy organizations, non-profit agencies, healthcare providers, and foundations.
- Challenge attendees to drive change in Kansas as they adapt and continue to be resilient.
- Provide attendees with a deeper understanding of the importance of civic engagement, on multiple levels, to health outcomes in Kansas.
- Inspire attendees to take action to advocate for a strong public health system that is equitable and accessible to all Kansans.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

KPHA Director at Large: Kendra Baldrige, Director of the Bureau of Community Health Systems at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment

KPHA Director at Large: Cristi Cain, Director of Local Public Health Program at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment

KPHA ARGC Delegate: Eldonna Chesnut, Division Director of Child Care Licensing at the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment

KPHA Ex-Officio: Daniel Craig, Cancer Outreach Coordinator at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center

KPHA Past President: Ruaa Hassaballa, Health Equity Strategist, American Academy of Family Physicians

KPHA Director at Large: Allison Koonce, Supervisor of Community Outreach and Engagement at the Lawrence Memorial Hospital dba LMH Health

KPHA President: Stephen Maheux, Program Manager of Emergency Preparedness at the Johnson County Department of Health and Environment

KPHA Member: Samiyah Para-Cremer Moore, Senior Analyst and Portfolio Strategist at the Kansas Health Institute

KPHA Secretary: Sheena Schmidt, Senior Analyst & Strategy Team Leader at the Kansas Health Institute

KPHA Executive Director: Sanna Schneeberger, Consultant with NDS Consultants

WSU Conference Coordinator: Joanna Stringer, Conference Coordinator of the Workforce, Professional, and Community Education Department at Wichita State University

SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

THANK YOU!

GOLD SPONSOR



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSOR



EXHIBITORS



JUNTOS

SEPTEMBER 23

TUESDAY

8:00 AM Registration Open | Room 142
Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

9:30 AM Welcome by Stephen Maheux, KPHA President | Room 180

9:45 AM U.S. Health Policy: A Way Forward by Dr. Georges Benjamin | Room 180

10:45 AM Break, Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

11:00 AM Breakout Session No. 1

Room 130	Room 132	Room 137	Room 138	Room 180
<p>The Pulse of Our People: Insights from Employee Engagement</p> <p>- Derik Flerlage and Juliane Walker</p>	<p>Power and Societal Rules: Incorporating Structural Determinants in Health Promotion Efforts</p> <p>- Wyatt Beckman, Avanthi Chatrathi, Viktoria Sterkhova and Rebecca Andrade</p>	<p>Tularemia in Kansas- The Veterinarian's Role in One Health Management</p> <p>- Kate KuKanich</p>	<p>Doulas & Lactation Consultants: A Team Approach to Breastfeeding Support</p> <p>- Brenda Bandy and Sapphire Garcia</p>	<p>Spotlight on New Grads and Early Career Professionals Entering Public Health</p> <p>- Dr. Georges Benjamin</p>

12:00 PM Lunch & Awards Ceremony | Room 180

1:30 PM Breakout Session No. 2

Room 130	Room 132	Room 137	Room 138
<p>Building Bridges: Leveraging Collaboration in a Community-Led Network</p> <p>- Mandi LaRue and Loretta Severin</p>	<p>A Day on the Hill: What Meeting 5 of 6 Kansas Members of Congress Taught Me About Public Health Advocacy</p> <p>- Ruaa Hassaballa</p>	<p>From the Heart, Reaches the Heart: Establishing the Kansas Birth Equity Network</p> <p>- Oluoma Obi</p>	<p>Sifting through the Static: Transforming Fragmented Maternal Health Data</p> <p>- Mariah Chrans</p>

2:30 PM Break, Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

3:00 PM Breakout Session No. 3

Room 130	Room 132	Room 137	Room 138
<p>Alleviating Mental Health Workforce Needs Through a Community Health Worker Training</p> <p>- Elizabeth Ablah and Amanda Aguila</p>	<p>What Happened to Health in Kansas? A Delphi Study on Systemic Drivers and Strategic Priorities for Reversing Kansas' Health Decline</p> <p>- Kevin Kovach</p>	<p>Leveraging Data to Advance Maternal Health Equity</p> <p>- Sonia Jordan and Virginia Barnes</p>	<p>Growing HOPE: Collaborative Innovations in Crisis Intervention and Perinatal Mental Health</p> <p>- Cari Ahlers-Schmidt and Jessica Provines</p>

4:00 PM Break, Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

4:15 PM A Fireside Chat: Public Health – Driving Change and Building Resilience | Room 180

5:15 PM Closing Remarks | Room 180

5:30 PM Day 1 Adjourn

SEPTEMBER 24 WEDNESDAY

8:00 AM Registration Open | Room 142
Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

8:30 AM Welcome by Sanna Schneeberger, KPHA Executive Director | Room 180

8:45 AM Now is the Time for Courage by R. Shawn Martin (*virtual*) | Room 180

9:45 AM Break, Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

10:15 AM Breakout Session No. 4

Room 130	Room 132	Room 138
The Social Construction of Anti-Fatness and its Public Health Implications - Oluoma Obi	Charting Our Course: Strategic Planning for Growth, Collaboration, and Community Connection - Candice Sauers and Jason Tiller	Prevention: the Key to it All - Hillary Zwetzig and Troy Daugherty

11:15 AM Break, Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

11:30 AM Lunch & KPHA Membership Meeting | Room 180

12:45 PM Breakout Session No. 5

Room 130	Room 132	Room 138
Utilizing Community Health Workers and Community-Based Organizations for Overdose Prevention Efforts - Kaylee Hervey and Joshua Gaines	Resilient By Design: Elevating Public Health Workforces through Organizational Well-Being - Juliane Walker	Co-Creating Stories of Public Health Value: A Hands-On Workshop Using the Collaborative Storytelling Model - Kevin Kovach

1:45 PM Break, Visit Exhibitors & Posters | Room 185

2:00 PM Leading Health by Ed O'Malley | Room 180

3:15 PM Closing Remarks and Prize Winners | Room 180

3:30 PM Conference Adjourn







In a time when evidence-based practice is challenged, how can public health and family medicine stay motivated, drive change, and build resilience? Shawn Martin will share strategies for advocacy, partnerships, and incremental wins that build into lasting systems change. *This session will be presented virtually.*



BREAKOUT SESSION

No. 1

TULAREMIA IN KANSAS- THE VETERINARIAN'S ROLE IN ONE HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Kate KuKanich, DVM, PhD, Dip ACVIM (SAIM), Kansas State University College of Vet Med

Tularemia, caused by *Francisella tularensis*, is an important zoonotic pathogen in Kansas and surrounding states, with Kansas having the highest human incidence (0.9 per 100,000 residents) of all U.S. states in 2022. A 2024 survey of Kansas veterinarians (N=109) and technicians (N=19), found that 43% of responding veterinarians have diagnosed tularemia in Kansas cats and 13% in Kansas dogs. Most human and veterinary cases result from tick bites or exposure to infected rabbits or rodents. Outdoor cats and pets who hunt are at an increased risk. Clinical signs of tularemia in pets mimic those in people and include: fever, lethargy, anorexia, enlarged lymph nodes, and oral ulcers (especially in cats), with more severe disease including icterus, hepatosplenomegaly, and pneumonia. Early recognition, diagnostic confirmation and treatment are essential for good outcome and prevention of further spread. Pet owners and veterinary personnel can acquire tularemia from infected pets. Seven percent (8/109) of Kansas veterinarians report having had tularemia themselves, thus personal protective equipment, including gloves, mask, eye and face protection is important within the veterinary hospital setting to minimize transmission. Veterinarians also must educate pet owners about zoonotic potential, as tularemia can be transmitted via scratch, bite, or even face-snuggling with an infected pet. Keeping cats indoors and using tick preventatives for both dogs and cats will also decrease risk of infection for pets and exposure for people. Reporting is required when tularemia is diagnosed in people, but not animals; however, voluntary reporting allows a coordinated One Health response.

DOULAS & LACTATION CONSULTANTS: A TEAM APPROACH TO BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Brenda Bandy, BCLC,, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition and Sapphire Garcia, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Doulas and lactation consultants offer complementary yet distinct support for families during pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period. This session will explore how doulas and lactation consultants work together to support families. Both are vital members of the team to support new families and improve infant and maternal health outcomes. Did you know there are different types of doulas and lactation support providers? We will help you understand the various trainings and credentials for doulas and lactation consultants. You will leave with a better understanding of their roles so you are better equipped to serve families during pregnancy through the early weeks after birth.

THE PULSE OF OUR PEOPLE: INSIGHTS FROM EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Derik Flerlage, Bureau of Family Health & Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention KDHE and Juliane Walker, Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute - Center for Public Health Initiatives

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, public health organizations across the country have experienced significant shifts in staffing, leadership, and connection. At the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Bureau of Family Health (BFH), these realities were no different. Like many, the Bureau faced the impact of pandemic-era burnout, turnover, and the challenge of supporting early-career staff working in complex, evolving systems. Amidst this landscape, new leadership joined the BFH team and felt it was an opportunity to hear from staff, building upon the Bureau's strong foundation and investing in connection and shared purpose. To guide this effort, BFH partnered with Wichita State University's Community Engagement Institute to co-create a tailored employee engagement interview assessment. Drawing on insights from *The Power of Hidden Teams* and *Nine Lies About Work*, the assessment process focused on what matters most to teams including mission alignment, mutual support, recognition, clarity, and confidence in the future. More than 80 staff members participated in one-on-one interviews, offering candid reflections that illuminated both strengths and opportunities. Results were shared back with the full Bureau during a retreat, reinforcing transparency and sparking ongoing dialogue. This collaborative approach not only honored the experience of staff but also equipped leadership with practical insights to support a thriving, connected workplace. In this session, attendees will learn how to apply a similar approach to support workforce engagement and well-being, especially during times of transition. Participants will leave with tools to build trust, elevate staff voice, and cultivate a positive, values-driven culture.

POWER AND SOCIETAL RULES: INCORPORATING STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS IN HEALTH PROMOTION EFFORTS

Wyatt Beckman, MPH, Kansas Health Institute; Avanthi Chatrathi, MPH, Kansas Health Institute; Viktoria Sterkhova, MPH, Kansas Health Institute and Rebecca Andrade, MA, Kansas Health Institute

In 2025, a new Model of Health was released by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute as part of the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps data release. The new model includes a recognition of the influence power and societal rules play in shaping community conditions. In KHI's technical assistance efforts across the state, we have seen a growing interest and capacity for addressing community conditions – often thought of as the social determinants of health. Discussions of power and societal rules, which include factors such as underlying value, beliefs, laws, policies, and institutional practices, have been less common. Collectively, power and societal rules can be seen as the structural determinants of health. This dynamic, interactive presentation will address that gap by building the knowledge and capacity for incorporating power and societal rules into health promotion efforts. The session will help audience members connect their existing understanding of social determinants of health to the underlying structural determinants of health. The instructional design will incorporate several components to further understanding, collaboration and practical application, including: 1) presentation of the new model, 2) group discussions with colleagues and peers in other counties, 3) stakeholder mapping activity, and 4) a take-home resource guide to support continued exploration, discussion and utilization of CHR&R tools and resources.

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW GRADS AND EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONALS ENTERING PUBLIC HEALTH

Dr. Georges Benjamin

If you are a new MPH grad or early career professional and would love small group discussion time with your peers and APHA executive director Dr. Georges Benjamin - this is your session.

BREAKOUT SESSION

No. 2

FROM THE HEART, REACHES THE HEART: ESTABLISHING THE KANSAS BIRTH EQUITY NETWORK

Oluoma Obi, MPH, Kansas Birth Equity Network

The Kansas Birth Equity Network is a community-centered initiative working to improve Black maternal, paternal, and child health across Kansas. Launched in 2021, KBEN brings together diverse stakeholders (including community members, birth workers, healthcare professionals, and more) to co-create solutions that improve the health of Black families. This workshop will explore how KBEN has successfully built and sustained a community-centered network within an academic medical center. We will outline the strategies used to cultivate and sustain authentic partnerships with community stakeholders. We will also share practical approaches to fostering trust, ensuring shared decision-making, shifting power dynamics, elevating Black parental voices, and translating community input into research. Participants will leave with adaptable strategies for centering community voices in research with a focus on equity and long-term sustainability.

A DAY ON THE HILL: WHAT MEETING 5 OF 6 KANSAS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TAUGHT ME ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCACY

Ruaa Hassaballa, MPH, MA, American Academy of Family Physicians

Adapting for tomorrow begins with how we show up today—strategically, authentically, and with the courage to speak truth in spaces where decisions are made. This session offers a reflection from Ruaa Hassaballa, on a day spent on Capitol Hill as part of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's State Leadership Team. During this visit, she met with five of the six congressional offices representing Kansas, amplifying the voices of local Kansan communities to influence national conversations on diplomacy, public health, and health equity. Participants will gain practical strategies for navigating policy environments, crafting advocacy messages that resonate across political lines, and building bridges in divided spaces. The session will explore how to stay grounded in purpose while advancing equity and resilience through systems-level change.

BUILDING BRIDGES: LEVERAGING COLLABORATION IN A COMMUNITY-LED NETWORK

Mandi LaRue, LMSW, Johnson County Department of Health and Environment and Loretta Severin, Research Project Manager, University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research

Public health leaders collaborating across county and state lines have transformed how families experience resource connections in the Kansas City region. Uniting under a shared vision, they leveraged the Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS) and an adaptive collaboration framework to enhance organizational and community resilience within their public health-driven referral system. Community providers recognized that cross-county organizations, situated on either side of the state line, were directing families into separate referral pathways, creating unnecessary barriers to services. In response to this challenge, public health leadership from three agencies stepped forward to co-lead a collaborative, community-centered approach that empowers partners to share ownership and influence the direction of their shared referral network. The success of their strategies is reflected in the network's impact. Since launching in March 2022, the Greater Kansas City Metro IRIS referral network (comprised of partners spanning 10 counties in the Greater Kansas City region) has engaged over 220 active organizations and strategically diversified its referral landscape to include community resources from all sectors. As a result, collaborating partners have facilitated more than 9,000 referrals, connecting over 5,000 families to services. This session will focus on the innovative change management strategies the Greater Kansas City Metro IRIS leadership team implemented, how they identified the need for change, and their partner-centered engagement strategies that fostered organizational buy-in. Attendees will leave this presentation with insights on the role of public health as leaders of cross-sector innovations and methods for centering community needs while navigating change.

SIFTING THROUGH THE STATIC: TRANSFORMING FRAGMENTED MATERNAL HEALTH DATA

Mariah Chrans, PhD, IBCLC, Community Health Council of Wyandotte County

Cradle KC is a maternal health data-sharing network designed to transform how data is accessed and applied across sectors. In a field where critical insights are often buried in fragmented systems, Cradle KC offers a unified accessible platform that brings together clinical, community based, and academic data with one goal in mind: close the health equity gap. Maternal health data is often plentiful, but scattered, solid, and hard to access. Cradle KC is changing that. This new data-sharing network brings together clinical, community-based, and academic sources into one accessible platform, making it easier to turn data into action and improve maternal health outcomes by empowering users with the information they need when they need it. Cradle KC provides relevant maternal health data to community organizations, healthcare providers, researchers, and policymakers through a straightforward application process, empowering users with timely information to improve health outcomes. Let's explore how Cradle KC is helping communities cut through the noise, breaking down barriers, strengthening cross-sector collaboration, supporting equity driven decision making, and harness the power of shared data - for the greater good.

BREAKOUT SESSION

NO. 3

GROWING HOPE: COLLABORATIVE INNOVATIONS IN CRISIS INTERVENTION AND PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

Cari Ahlers-Schmidt, KU School of Medicine-Wichita Center for Research for Infant Birth and Survival and Jessica Provines, Wichita State University

This session highlights the development and evaluation of HOPE Kits tangible tools inspired by Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) principles that support emotional regulation, safety, and connection during moments of crisis. Created through a partnership between Wichita State University (WSU) and KU School of Medicine-Wichita, the kits are designed for use in clinical and non-clinical settings with minimal training. Presenters will share outcomes from the Growing HOPE Kit adaptation for perinatal mental health and explore how these scalable, low-barrier interventions promote provider confidence, community engagement, and cross-sector collaboration. Practical strategies for implementation and replication in diverse populations will be discussed.

LEVERAGING DATA TO ADVANCE MATERNAL HEALTH EQUITY

Sonia Jordan, MA, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas and Virginia Barnes, MPH, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas

This presentation explores how internal data analytics can drive equitable maternal health outcomes. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas conducted a multi-year analysis (2018-2024) of maternal health data, integrating internal claims data and publicly available data to identify disparities in maternal health outcomes. The findings revealed significant variation in screening rates, risk factors, and outcomes across racial, ethnic, and geographic lines. The findings led to the identification and implementation of interventions to improve maternal health in the communities we serve. This includes the development of a predictive model to identify high-risk pregnancies early in the care continuum. The presentation also outlines the benefit of data to integrating into a cycle of continuous quality improvement. This session will share key findings, demonstrate the predictive model development, and outline next steps for embedding data-driven equity strategies into maternal health initiatives.

ALLEVIATING MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE NEEDS THROUGH A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER TRAINING

Elizabeth Ablah, PhD, MPH, CPH, University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita and Amanda Aguila, PhD, MPH, University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita

Kansas ranks last nationally for mental health access, with a critical provider shortage, especially among Wichita's racial and ethnic minority communities. Furthermore, there is a need to attract diverse community members to entry-level positions in the behavioral health field. To address this, the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita partners with Mental Health America of South-Central Kansas and Communities Organizing to Promote Equity (COPE), to develop the 40-hour Community Mental Health Worker Training. The curriculum provided trainees with opportunities to improve their knowledge about a community health worker's role, identify and access community resources, enhance their ability to assess clients' needs, develop care plans, and improve their documentation skills. The program was designed to build a diverse entry-level mental health workforce. Of the 60 trainees, 87% (n = 52) identified as a racial or ethnic minority. Nearly all reported that the training improved mental health knowledge (96%) and confidence to interact with individuals diagnosed with mental illness (92%). Many planned to apply for a community mental health worker or similar role within the year, which can alleviate dire workforce needs.

WHAT HAPPENED TO HEALTH IN KANSAS? A DELPHI STUDY ON SYSTEMIC DRIVERS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR REVERSING KANSAS' HEALTH DECLINE

Kevin Kovach, Kansas Health Institute

Health in Kansas has fallen behind other states since the 1990s. Kansas was ranked as high as 8th in America's Health Rankings in 1991 but now sits at 28th. To explore why, the Kansas Health Institute (KHI) conducted a Delphi study engaging experts and leaders on health in Kansas. The study aimed to identify systemic drivers of the state's health decline and priorities for reversing this course. Using a conceptual framework that examines upstream, midstream, and downstream determinants of health, KHI conducted a mixed-methods analysis combining quantitative prioritization with in-depth qualitative insights. Participants identified 52 issues affecting health in Kansas and prioritized four key areas for reversing the state's health decline: 1. Stabilizing rural health care systems, 2. Expanding Medicaid, 3. Investing in mental health services, 4. Strengthening public health funding. Participants also described how the flow of health in Kansas had been pulled off course: Upstream: Structural forces such as putting politics before health, have resulted in policies misaligned with health, creating turbulence disrupting the entire system. Midstream: Inequities, rural decline, and cultural divisions have split the flow of health into separate paths - one for the privileged and another for those left behind. Downstream: The health care and public health systems, already strained, are buckling under the weight of neglect, contributing to outcomes that continue to fall behind. The findings underscore the urgent need for a new approach to address these challenges. This presentation will share the results and engage the audience in exploring solutions.

BREAKOUT SESSION

NO. 4

CHARTING OUR COURSE: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR GROWTH, COLLABORATION, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Candice Sauers, Saline County Health Department and Jason Tiller, Saline County Health Department

In today's rapidly evolving environment, organizations must be agile, innovative, and aligned to remain relevant. This thought leadership session focuses on the critical role that culture transformation plays in creating a group dynamic conducive to effective strategic planning. As we embark on this journey, our goal is to shift from traditional, chain-of-command type hierarchical decision-making models toward a more inclusive, collaborative culture that drives long-term success. We'll also outline the next steps for embedding these cultural principles into our daily operations, ensuring sustained progress and continuous improvement that will outlast the champions of this progress. By transforming our culture and enhancing group dynamics, we position ourselves to outline and achieve strategic objectives with greater precision, adaptability, and unity, driving lasting value for the organization, take our health department to the place we want it to go and be able to adapt our health department to the unpredictable. The key themes we will cover: Cultural transformation, Collaborative group dynamics, Building leadership skills across all levels of our organization, Aligning culture with strategy, and Increasing community outreach and transparency.

PREVENTION: THE KEY TO IT ALL

Hillary Zwetzig, Mental Health America of South Central Kansas and Troy Daugherty, Mental Health America of South Central Kansas

Our world is changing and becoming increasingly complex each and every day which creates added stress and new obstacles for our youth. The world many of us grew up in is very different from the world the youth of today is facing. Protecting and improving the mental health of our youth is paramount as our society responds to the current mental health crises. Prevention can be a key part of our response and help to increase the chances for our youth to be successful. For those of us in the mental health field we are continually searching for ways to be a part of resolving this dilemma. MHA has many prevention programs that are all evidence-based and values-driven, with the understanding that children start with an innate desire to learn and discover. The programs' goals are to nourish this desire by inspiring and engaging youth to develop skills that help create the best version of themselves. Our focus is on assisting youth to discover and utilize coping strategies and skill building tools that can help them in the 'real world'. The goal of this presentation is for the attendee to take away information regarding youth mental health, recognition of the ways in which mental health professionals need to be part of the solution team; how the MHASCK-led PATHS, PATHWAYS, Girl Empowerment, Boys to Men programs, mentoring programs are designed to increase positive outcomes; specific resources we use and how to access them, and to re-discover active listening as a tool for progress. This is a very interactive presentation which includes active listening activities.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ANTI-FATNESS AND ITS PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Oluoma Obi, MPH, University of Kansas Medical Center

Within public health and medical settings, the perception of fatness as a risk factor for negative health outcomes is ubiquitous. As a result, weight management has been a primary focus of public health efforts in the 21st century. However, there is increasing interrogation of this conclusion and the implications of weight stigma on the experiences of fat individuals. The objectives of this project were to describe how anti-fatness is constructed, its intersection with public health, elucidate provider attitudes towards fat patients, its impact on clinical care, and describe the lived experience of fat individuals at multiple ecological levels.

BREAKOUT SESSION

NO. 5

RESILIENT BY DESIGN: ELEVATING PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCES THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING

Juliane Walker, Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute-Center for Public Health Initiatives

This session will explore the development, implementation, and impact of this approach, emphasizing the shared responsibility of organizations to act on what they learn. Attendees will gain insight into actionable strategies for improving workplace culture, supporting employee health, and embedding resilience into the core of their organizations. This work underscores a broader vision where public health organizations lead by example, cultivating environments where both employees and the communities they serve can thrive.

CO-CREATING STORIES OF PUBLIC HEALTH VALUE: A HANDS-ON WORKSHOP USING THE COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING MODEL

Kevin Kovach, Kansas Health Institute

"Stories help drive change" but it can be challenging to tell our own stories of impact, value and leadership. This interactive session introduces a collaborative storytelling model designed to help surface and share our narratives that advance public health transformation. Developed through the Kansas Health Institute's Transforming Public Health for the 21st Century blog, the model draws on qualitative research, duoethnography, and systems change theory to co-create rich, practitioner-centered stories grounded in lived experience. Unlike traditional presentations, this session will serve as a working meeting. Participants will actively explore each step of the collaborative storytelling process: negotiating story topics, engaging in reflexive interviews, identifying key themes through qualitative analysis, and shaping narratives that illustrate the value of public health. The model is designed to support leadership development, systems transformation, and culture change by helping practitioners reflect on not just what they did, but why they did it, and how those experiences can inform the future of public health. Participants should be prepared to roll up their sleeves, reflect on their own experiences, and begin co-creating story elements that could form the foundation for public health storytelling efforts in their own organizations and networks. The session will offer both conceptual grounding and practical tools to take back and apply.

UTILIZING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR OVERDOSE PREVENTION EFFORTS

Kaylee Hervey, Sedgwick County Health Department and Joshua Gaines, Sedgwick County Health Department

Sedgwick County experienced a sharp increase in opioid-associated deaths, from 28 in 2018 to 90 in 2020. Emergency room visits nearly doubled the state average in 2021. In response, the Sedgwick County Health Department (SCHD) implemented the CDC-funded Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) initiative to collect timely, high-quality data to inform targeted overdose prevention and response strategies. A key component of OD2A is collaboration with Community Health Workers (CHWs), who serve as trusted connectors between public health systems and the community. SCHD also contracted community-based organizations (CBOs) to distribute harm reduction tools such as naloxone and fentanyl test strips to populations they serve, a critical part of overdose prevention strategies. Despite these strengths, implementation challenges persist, particularly around limited CBO capacity and their varying familiarity with data collection and evaluation processes. This presentation will highlight strategies and evaluation efforts to support successful overdose prevention program execution, including early collaboration and trust-building with CBOs, and the impact of CHWs. Strengthening relationships and linkage to care are critical to advancing overdose prevention efforts and improving health outcomes in Sedgwick County.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

ROOM 185

TITLE OF PRESENTATION	AUTHORS	AFFILIATION
Current Practices for Interprofessional Education	Amy Chesser and Alice Ukoha	Wichita State University
Assessing Adaptive Leadership in Veterinary Medicine: A Study of Public Health Preparedness	Isabella Hinojosa and McKenzie Ghrist	Kansas State University
Strengthening the Industry: Assessing Applied Learning to Address Public Health Workforce Gaps and Enhance Student Preparedness	Madeleine Pike, Isabella Hinojosa, Olivia Shruck, McKenzie Ghrist, and Dr. Ellyn Mulcahy	Kansas State University
Theory to Action: Using TPB to Strengthen Mental Health Outreach in Higher Education	Janvi Aggarwal and Sultana Jahan	Kansas State University
Assessing Mosquito Ecology and Disease Risk Across Kansas Landscapes	Isabella Hinojosa	Kansas State University; Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Structuring Interoperability to Eliminate Double Data Entry and Improve Reporting Processes at Sedgwick County Health Department	Blake Strahl	Sedgwick County Health Department
Multi-Prong Avian Flu Communications and Outreach Tailored to Spanish-Preferring Rural Dairy Workers	Mariana Ramirez and Mariana Hildreth	University of Kansas Medical Center
Understanding Occupational Fatalities and Injuries in Kansas: Data and Insights	Kaci Cink and Wen-Chieh Lin	Kansas Health Institute



**SIGN UP
FOR OUR
MAILING
LIST!**



Learn more about the Regional Health Equity Council



Join the movement for Health Equity!

**Kat Istas, DrPH, MPH
RHEC Co-Chair**



**Ruaa Hassaballa, MPH, MA
RHEC Co-Chair**





Iowa | Kansas | Missouri | Nebraska



Suspenders4Hope
Mental Health Advocate

Midwestern Public Health Training Center

Check us out at www.mphtc.org

Student Field Placements

- \$3,500 stipend payment
- Experiential learning for students, remote options
- WSU, KU-MPH, K-State students should apply
- **Applications OPEN!**

Behavioral Health Prevention

- FREE Suicide Prevention Training (Live or online) LHD staff, community members, and CHA/CHIP needs, Wellness tools, and more..

Recommended Training and Resources

- Find links on the MPHTC website to more than 50 one courses
- Access to resources to help public health workers

Workforce Development Assessment / PHWINS

- Identify skills-based needs
- Develop organizational capacity
- Compare with regional and national data

For more information, contact Suzanne Hawley: suzanne.hawley@wichita.edu



**WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY**
COLLEGE OF
HEALTH PROFESSIONS
Department of
Public Health Sciences

For WSU Certificate/Undergrad/Graduate Programs,
go to: www.wichita.edu/academics/health_professions/phs



College of
Public Health



**SAINT LOUIS
UNIVERSITY**



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER™
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

AWARD WINNERS

Samuel J. Crumbine Medal: Brenda Bandy

Special Service Award: Jason Tiller & Kimberly Weaver

Dorothy Wooden Award: Toni Irvin & Shelly Schneider

Virginia Lockhart Health Education Award: Dr. Danielle Jones & Jasmin Moore

Emerging Leader Award: Madylin Mikko

Policymaker of the Year Award: Becky Tuttle

KPHA President's Award: Randy Bowman

Corporate Public Health Award: Kansas Action for Children

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Nursing

Wichita State University College of Health Professions is approved as a provider of continuing nursing education by the Kansas State Board of Nursing. This course offering is approved for 11.1 contact hours applicable for RN, LPN or LMHT relicensure. Kansas State Board of Nursing provider number: LT 0090-0327.

Social Work

Wichita State University School of Social Work is approved as a provider of continuing social work education by the Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board. This program has been approved for 9.25 contact hours applicable for relicensure (BSRB approval #05-001).

Certificates

Certificates will be emailed within 45 days upon completion of the conference evaluation, provided that registration has been paid and the conference evaluation has been complete.

CONFERENCE EVALUATION

Thank you for being a part of KPHA's Annual Public Health Conference of Kansas. Your insights help us improve future events. Please take a moment to complete the conference evaluation by scanning the QR code. Your feedback is important to us, and we truly appreciate your time and input.



JOIN US NEXT YEAR FOR
KPHA'S ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH
CONFERENCE OF KANSAS
FALL 2026



#KPHAKS25