

Sunflower Health Plan, Centene Foundation and KU Endowment Announce \$500,000 Grant to the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center - Feb 28, 2024

Funding to Help Address Imbalances in Kansas Healthcare Workforce

LENEXA, Kan., Feb. 28, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- [Sunflower Health Plan](#) ("Sunflower"), a managed care organization established to deliver quality healthcare in the state of Kansas and a wholly owned subsidiary of the [Centene Corporation](#) (NYSE: CNC), the [Centene Foundation](#) and KU Endowment today announced a new partnership that includes a \$500,000 grant to the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center to build a centralized data collection and exchange system.

The project is one part of Sunflower's strategy to help address shortages in healthcare workforce staff across multiple specialties within Kansas, but especially in rural areas where services can be difficult to access.

"Nurses play an integral role in healthcare delivery and the overall health outcomes of Kansans," said Alissa Zerr, DNP, MPH, RN, CENP, Sunflower Health Plan vice president of population health. "Sunflower Health Plan is honored to sponsor, participate in and support the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center, and we believe its collaborative intention and comprehensive plan will advance the healthcare workforce across the state for decades to come."

The Kansas Nursing Workforce Center, based at the University of Kansas School of Nursing, will leverage the data warehouse to address systemic challenges in nurse recruitment, retention and student access to nursing programs. This initiative seeks to modernize information gathering to enable researchers to pose more insightful questions. The collected data will then be used to create dashboards and reports for enhanced understanding and decision-making around developing the Kansas nursing workforce.

Once built, the data warehouse will help the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center to develop better models for projections of nurse supply and demand and deliver long- and short-term projections. The data will also answer questions about patient care and the value of the nursing profession.

"The Kansas Nursing Workforce Center is grateful for the funding that will allow us to create our data infrastructure," said Amy Garcia, DNP, MSN, RN, FAAN, co-director of the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center. "This gift enables us to build a central source for nursing workforce information, something our stakeholders requested during our statewide listening sessions. People asked us to collect and analyze specific information to help them solve the chronic supply and demand imbalance found in the Kansas nursing workforce, and this data warehouse will make that possible."

As part of this effort, the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center will collect and analyze:

- Nurse licensure data with a deep understanding of nurse demographics and specialties.
- Labor data on nursing jobs and nurses in the workforce.
- Commerce data on pathways to nursing and healthcare in the community.
- Population-level health outcomes data.

"We provide nursing services to severely injured and chronically ill pediatric and adult patients in their homes, so I see the amazing impact nurses make every day in Kansas," said Matt Johnston, director of business operations at Maxim Healthcare Services. "As the healthcare system evolves, it is imperative to recognize our current frontline nurses while also investing in future nurses who will take care of the next generation of Kansans."

About Sunflower Health Plan:

[Sunflower Health Plan](#) ("Sunflower") is a managed care organization established to deliver quality healthcare in the state of Kansas through local, regional and community-based resources, and a wholly owned subsidiary of the [Centene Corporation](#) (NYSE: CNC). Sunflower is committed to improving the health of its beneficiaries through focused, compassionate, and coordinated care in an approach based on the core belief that quality healthcare is best delivered locally. For more information, please visit [Sunflower's website](#).

About the Centene Foundation:

The Centene Foundation ("the Foundation"), a private nonprofit focused on investing in economically challenged communities, is the philanthropic arm of [Centene Corporation](#). The Foundation supports projects and initiatives strategically aligned with Centene's mission-driven culture and enhances the work Centene is doing to remove the barriers to wellness underserved and low-income populations face. The Foundation is committed to addressing social determinants of health and improving health equity in three distinct areas of focus: healthcare access, social services and education. To learn more, visit the Centene Foundation's [website](#).

About the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center:

The [Kansas Nursing Workforce Center](#), based at the University of Kansas School of Nursing, ensures Kansans have access to nurses when and where they need them. It will support nurses both individually and as part of the health care team. The Kansas Nursing Workforce Center will use science and evidence-based practices to examine nursing workforce information, provide solutions, and generate new knowledge to support nurses. It also will represent the state of Kansas as a member of the National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers. To learn more, visit the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center's [website](#).

About the University of Kansas School of Nursing:

The KU School of Nursing, designated a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education by the National League for Nursing (NLN), prepares hundreds of students each year for successful nursing careers as clinical nurses, advanced practice nurses, educators, leaders, administrators, scholars and researchers. Its award-winning programs are offered at campuses in Kansas City, Kansas, and Salina, Kansas, as well as online.

About KU Endowment:

KU Endowment is the independent, nonprofit organization serving as the official fundraising and fund-management organization for KU. Founded in 1891, KU Endowment was the first foundation of its kind at a U.S. public university.

SOURCE Sunflower Health Plan

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<https://investors.centene.com/2024-02-28-Sunflower-Health-Plan,-Centene-Foundation-and-KU-Endowment-Announce-500,000-Grant-to-the-Kansas-Nursing-Workforce-Center>