Where are the certified nurse-midwives in rural Kansas?

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Background

- Kansas is facing an obstetric provider shortage in rural communities
- Little is known about the extent to which certified nurse midwives practice in rural Kansas hospitals

Goals of research

- Determine the number and geographic distribution of certified nurse midwives residing and practicing in rural hospitals in Kansas
- Anticipated trends in the CNM workforce in rural Kansas hospitals in the coming 5 years
Methods

- Electronic surveys were distributed to senior hospital administrators to 99 hospitals in 83 of the 99 non-urban counties in Kansas between June to July 2019
- Rising M2 medical students taking part in the STORM (Summer Training Option in Rural Medicine) program collected the data
- Closed and open-ended questions for quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Kansas State Board of Nursing (KSBN) Data Mailing List
- “University of Kansas Medical Center Institutional Review Board approved (STUDY00143982)."
Results

- 60 of the 99 surveys were returned (61% response rate)
  - No statistical difference between survey responders and non-responders
- 37 hospitals reported having OB services
  - 29 labor & delivery; 8 prenatal care only
  - 1 hospital reported having CNM workforce
  - 4 hospitals were planning on hiring CNMs within next 12 months
- 80% agreed CNMs increase women’s access to health care in rural Kansas (32 of 40 surveys)
Results: 5 year anticipated trends

- 86% did NOT anticipate the number of CNMs at their hospitals to increase over the next 5 years (50 of 58 surveys)

Why?
- Preference for hiring physicians to cover OB services
- Lack of interest by physicians and/or hospitals
- Not hospital practice to employ CNMs
- Lack of patient volume
- Lack of CNMs in the area
Results: CNM geographic distribution in KS

NOTE: Urban county: > 150 residents per square mile, such as counties surrounding & including Kansas City

TAKE HOME:
6 urban* counties: 73% of CMN workforce (52 of 71 CNMs)
99 non-urban counties; 27% of CNM workforce (19 of 71 CNMs)
Results: 5 year anticipated trends, continued

- 14% did anticipate the number of CNMs at their hospitals to increase over the next 5 years (8 of 58 surveys)

- Why?

  “Access and usage is likely to increase in rural and frontier areas where having full-time physician coverage is a challenge” (Administrator, private hospital in North Central, KS)

  “As the volume increases, the CNMs will be helpful with the coverage in the rural setting” (CEO, Critical access hospital in North Central, KS)
Discussion and next steps

- Low penetrance of CNMs into rural and frontier workforce

- More research is needed to understand the factors limiting CNM expansion in rural Kansas.
  
  Rural job opportunities?
  
  Lack of hospital recruiting efforts?
  
  Lack of interest by CMNs to live rurally?

- Future research: surveying rural OBGYN and full-scope family physicians regarding their perspectives on increasing CNMs in rural hospitals.
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