



**Q2 2023**

# **Kansas Nursing Workforce Regional Meeting Report**

*Uncovering Similarities and Differences in  
Kansas Nursing Workforce Problems*

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**KU** KANSAS NURSING  
WORKFORCE CENTER  
The University of Kansas Medical Center



## Summary

The University of Kansas School of Nursing convened three regional health care stakeholder meetings in Q2 2023. Each event was co-hosted by local champions from southeast, western, and north central Kansas.

These regional meeting built on the [discussion started](#) in March.

These champions invited key stakeholders and health care leaders from their community to discuss nursing workforce challenges.

Stakeholders were drawn from government, academe, employers, insurers, and associations.

## Regional Meeting Details

- Pittsburg, KS | June 21, 2023
  - Co-Host: Pittsburg State University
    - Mary Carol Pomatto, EdD, APRN, Dean-CAS
    - Cheryl Giefer, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC
    - Amy Hite, EdD(c), DNP, APRN, FNP-C
- Hays, KS | June 22, 2023
  - Co-Host: Hays Medical Center
    - Terry Siek, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, CNO
    - Brian Pfannenstiel, MSN, RN
- Flint Hills/Junction City | June 27, 2023
  - Co-Host: Baker University & Stormont Vail Health
    - Carol Perry, MSM, BSN, RN, FACHE, SVP, CNO, Stormont Vail Health
    - Amy Kincade, MBA, BSN, RN, VP Clinical Integration, Stormont Vail Health
    - Libby Rosen, PhD, RN, IBCLC, Dean, Baker University



# Meeting Goals

The goal of these meetings was to uncover how the nursing workforce shortages affect specific areas of our state with the hope of revealing similarities and highlight differences by region, expand collaboration for problem solving, and discover what is working on a local level.

Each session began with an overview presentation, detailing the nursing workforce crisis nationally and in Kansas. Small groups were formed and asked to discuss three key questions.

## Key questions

- 1. What do you see as an immediate need for a nursing workforce center to tackle in [southeast, western, or central] Kansas?**
- 2. What can a Kansas nursing workforce center do to improve this issue from a rural/frontier perspective?**
- 3. What does success in [southeast, western, or central] Kansas look like if we have a nursing workforce center?**

A desire for a central, 'one-stop-shop' for actionable data about the nursing workforce was overwhelmingly requested. This echoed the sentiment from the initial Topeka meeting.

This report is a dissemination of additional key similarities and differences generated from those discussions.



# Top Themes

## Topeka, KS | Initial, state-wide discussion

- Data: collecting specific, actionable data that is easily accessible and disseminated — a 'one-stop-shop'
- Convene, collaborate, and build relationships among key stakeholders to find solutions, on a regular cadence
- Project a positive nursing image to the public as well as to potential students as early as middle and high school
- Improve the nursing pathways, progression, and retention
- Looking to other states for nursing workforce center best practices

## Pittsburg, KS | Southeast Kansas discussion

- Create a positive image of nursing (marketing)
- Increase student pipeline (high school or younger); recruit non-traditional students/career changers
- Create ongoing student loan forgiveness programs for rural nurses
- Make it easier to practice nursing (childcare/family leave/increase salary)
- Create even wage scale for nurses across Kansas (urban/suburban/rural/frontier)

## Hays, KS | Western Kansas discussion

- Retain existing nurses; show appreciation
- Creatively solve travel agency staffing issues (regulation, regional nursing pools)
- Increase scholarships
- Inspire more nursing students and promote rural nursing
- Create nursing leadership programs

## Junction City, KS | Flint Hills/North Central Kansas discussion

- Data (provide a centralized process for access, sharing, etc.)
- Pathways to nursing in high schools and technical schools
- Map to scholarship opportunities
- Advertising nursing like joining the army / image of nursing
- Rural clinical opportunities and standardized training



# Survey Results

After the meeting, participants were surveyed to share their impressions of the meeting and how they would like to continue to engage in this work.

All survey respondents reported that the stakeholder meeting far exceeded or slightly more than met their expectations. No one said that the meeting was below or far below their expectations.

Respondents were also invited to share what is working for them currently.

They shared...

## **Southeast Kansas Success Stories**

“We have been able to negotiate with some hospitals to ‘loan’ us a nurse as an instructor. In this case the hospital continues to pay the nurse their full-time wage. We reimburse the hospital for what we would normally pay an adjunct instructor. This program has been so successful that one of the facilities offered the same instructor for a second day/week for a second other campus.”

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“We have been educating the next generation of nurses with focus on critical thinking and coping skills in order to prevent burnout from the outset. Part of these lessons discuss the importance of advocating for appropriate staffing and mentorship as well as the value of self-care and perseverance.”

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“From a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) perspective, we are collaborating with nursing schools. With change of leadership and post Covid times, we are able to strategize more with the nursing schools. Part of this collaboration is to offer more clinical time or even some more discussion on how to build the social determinants of health into some nursing curriculum.”



## WESTERN KANSAS SUCCESS STORIES

“We are working with communities to build sign-on bonuses, relocation packages to move to town, scholarships/mentorships to entice more nurses to our rural area.”

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“We are offering sign on bonuses with a lower time commitment in order to combat high agency staffing costs. It’s not our first choice, but it is helping.”

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“We are focusing on retention for the nurses and staff we have. Part of this focus is a clinical ladder for our bedside nurses that pays out as a bonus each quarter.”

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“We offer Worked Based Learning opportunities for high schools across our area. Through this program, we can also fund work experience, training, apprenticeship, customized training, etc. for eligible participants.”

## NORTH CENTRAL KANSAS SUCCESS STORIES

“We are creating apprenticeships, preceptor academies, and clinical faculty academies, etc.”

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“We are developing creative programming with collaboration between school of nursing and health care facilities and providers of care. “

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“We’re creating an education pathway with the rural nursing shortage in mind. We know where these students practice in school is where they will likely put roots down. We wanted a mechanism to keep them local so they will license and practice locally (in the Manhattan and surrounding area).”





## Next Steps

**Thank you** to our co-hosts and to everyone who shared their success stories. We look forward to connecting these real solutions to other areas of our state.

Together, we can apply what works to build system-level change for the health of Kansans and the nurses who serve them.

To maintain the momentum, the KU School of Nursing will:

- Form the Kansas Nursing Workforce Center, guided by:  
Director, Amy Garcia, DNP, RN, FAAN;  
Co-Director, Heather Nelson-Brantley, PhD, RN, NEA-BC;  
Nurse Scientist, Barbara Polivka, PhD, RN, FAAN;  
Data Scientist, Dinesh Pal Mudaranthakam, PhD, MBA;  
Data Analyst, Alex Alsup, MA;  
Program Manager, Katie Krueger MPH;  
Marketing and Communications, Amy Curtis;  
Administration, Ellen Bietz
- Form an advisory committee and continue close collaboration with health care stakeholders to focus future priorities and activities. Expect to hear from us!
- Collect and connect success programs to create positive systemic change.

If you have questions about this report or future Kansas Nursing Workforce Center activities, please email [nursingwill@kumc.edu](mailto:nursingwill@kumc.edu) or stay up to date by [subscribing to our newsletter](#).