Addressing the social worker shortage

KU’s Western Kansas Master of Social Work Program seeks to address a critical shortage of social workers in Kansas in western Kansas, where some counties don’t have any credentialed social workers. Social workers provide crucial services in various settings, including community agencies, hospitals, and schools. KU partners with Fort Hays State University and Garden City Community College to provide Saturday classroom sessions in Garden City and Hays that have allowed 39 western Kansas students to obtain master’s degrees in social work. About 15 students are enrolled in the program.

Training fire and rescue personnel

Firefighters throughout the state receive training from KU’s Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. The institute uses a “mobile fire academy” concept, which brings training directly to communities in Kansas. Last year, the institute trained and certified 8,198 firefighters and served 363 Kansas communities and organizations in 92 Kansas counties. The institute’s instructors logged more than 171,000 miles within the state last year traveling to serve Kansas fire departments and trained more than 50 percent of the Kansas fire services.

PROVIDING MORE NURSES

The KU School of Nursing has a program that allows students at five community colleges across Kansas to complete a four-year bachelor of science degree in nursing (BSN) without leaving their home communities. Students at Butler, Hutchinson, Johnson County, Neosho County, and Kansas City (Kansas) community colleges can take KU courses online while completing in-person nursing courses at their community colleges. This program helps to address an ongoing nursing shortage across the state.
Through more than 50 grant-funded projects, the KU Center for Public Partnerships & Research is working to optimize the well-being of Kansas children and families. Its partners are diverse, and so are the kinds of social problems the program tackles — including reducing infant mortality rates, ensuring third-graders are reading at grade level, helping middle schoolers learn essential STEM skills, and guiding families on food assistance toward opportunities for fulfilling careers that provide a living wage. The program works to secure funding, orchestrate large-scale data efforts, and provide research, cost analysis, and evaluation expertise.

**Sharing vocal music expertise**

The KU School of Music’s Chamber Singers shared their voices with students throughout the state in a tour of eight high schools. The singers performed for students at schools in Topeka, El Dorado, Pratt, Dodge City, Cimarron, Garden City, Quinter, and Douglass. After their performances, the group of mostly KU juniors, seniors, and graduate students spent time with the high school choirs, listening to them rehearse and providing critiques.

**Watching water levels**

The Kansas Geological Survey at KU focuses on energy, water, and the environment to address natural resource challenges in Kansas. Each January, KGS measures the depths about 1,400 water wells in 47 western and central Kansas counties to determine how quickly groundwater is being depleted. It also monitors earthquakes, generates new information about the state’s geology through its geophysics and mapping programs, and tracks oil and gas production data throughout the state.

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**Serving business research needs**

Through Jayhawk Consulting, top KU business school students have provided analysis and project development assistance to more than 72 organizations and companies working in Kansas and the region. One example is Google, for which students conducted primary market research for the company’s Google Fiber high-speed internet services. The program helps KU students get real-world experience while providing direct services to Kansas businesses.

**Preserving businesses and jobs**

As rural Kansas business owners retire, it can be difficult to find new owners to keep companies’ doors open. The RedTire program at the KU School of Business seeks to match highly qualified graduates from KU with retiring business owners to ensure successful transitions. The program is assisting 82 businesses and has completed 25 transactions, helping to preserve 201 jobs in Kansas.
Diagnosing pediatric developmental needs

KU Medical Center’s Center for Child Health & Development provides pediatric developmental diagnostic clinics, feeding clinics, and some behavioral therapy clinics for children with developmental issues, including autism, throughout the state, helping families get timely care without waiting as long for an appointment or having to travel long distances to see a specialist. Pediatric developmental diagnostic clinics across the state, such as those in Pittsburg, Hays, and Dodge City, provide crucial diagnosis and treatment for children who may otherwise go without. Teams often include a child psychologist, a developmental physician, a social worker, a speech therapist, and an occupational therapist.

Preparing future pharmacists

At the KU School of Pharmacy, professionals from all areas of the pharmacy profession serve as preceptors, or mentors, to students in the Pharm.D. program. More than 400 KU students each year are placed in rotation sites across the state, working in community pharmacies, hospitals, managed care facilities, and long-term care facilities totaling over 1,600 rotations per year. While assisting these organizations in their work, students also get the opportunity to apply direct knowledge they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations as they prepare to enter the workforce.

Assisting independent living

KU’s Assistive Technology for Kansans program through KU’s Life Span Institute in Parsons operates five sites across the state. The program’s staff meets with people with disabilities or health conditions to help them acquire devices and services so they may become as independent as possible. Through the program, Kansans can take advantage of a donation, reassignment, and refurbishment program for high-cost, lightly used durable medical equipment. Local vendors return the equipment to a nearly new status, and the program matches the equipment with people who need it.

KEEPING KANSAS HEALTHY

Kansans who live many miles from KU Medical Center in Kansas City can still get access to health care through the KU Center for Telemedicine and Telehealth. For more than 25 years, the center has connected with Kansans remotely through interactive video technology. With more than 100 sites across the state, the center has conducted thousands of clinical consultations for Kansans and hosted hundreds of educational events for health professionals, teachers, students, and the public across the network.

FILLING HOLES IN THE HEALTH CARE NETWORK

Since 2004, the Kansas Recruitment and Retention Center has helped more than 200 health care providers find their home in 60 different counties in Kansas. The KU Medical Center program matches health care professionals with rural Kansas health care organizations. The center assists Kansas communities in recruiting and retaining physicians, dentists, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, dental hygienists, and allied health professionals.
The KU School of Public Affairs & Administration’s Certified Public Manager Program was established in 1993, and since then, close to 1,600 public managers from all across the state have completed this certification. The program addresses training gaps for government managers who are interested in furthering their knowledge of current management practices. In 2016, KU offered the program in Topeka, the Kansas City area, and Hays.

Training law enforcement

KU’s Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center at the former naval air station near Yoder offers basic training and continuing education for law enforcement officers throughout the state. About 400 officers each year enroll in the basic training program, while as many as 11,000 officers annually take advantage of continuing education and specialized training opportunities from the center. Since its founding in 1968, the center trains the majority of municipal, county, and state law enforcement officers in Kansas.