Each year, Medical News takes stock of the local healthcare sector by sitting down and talking with a group of healthcare leaders. These interviews provide an insight into the challenges and accomplishments of the past year as well as a preview of the year to come. The healthcare landscape continues to change, but Kentucky remains at the forefront of healthcare innovation.

With the gubernatorial election behind us and the election of a Republican governor for only the second time in recent history, Kentucky is poised for significant change. How Kentucky’s new leadership will address the affordable care act is top of mind for many of our leaders, specifically if Governor Bevin will dismantle kynect or roll back expanded Medicaid. Either decision may have implications on the workforce and payments to local healthcare providers.

While our leaders ponder the future, they are working to address the current state of healthcare. A common theme among our leaders is innovation. Companies like Passport are diversifying their portfolio by adding new products and Kentucky Space is looking beyond earth to create new methods for addressing our healthcare challenges.

Workforce development is also a consistent theme in our interviews. The Affordable Care Act increased the number of people using the healthcare system and our leaders are working hard to make sure there are enough resources to serve the growing population. Schools like Spencerian College are working to help provide a well-trained workforce by reaching students while they are in high school and our healthcare systems are working with local institutions to develop the next generation of healthcare leaders.

There are many challenges ahead, but our region has the leaders to create new solutions and improve the delivery of care. We hope you enjoy the conversations we had with our healthcare leaders.

For a more in depth conversation, please take a moment to check out the interviews in their entirety at medicalnews.md.
25th edition of the KY KIDS COUNT County Data Book released

The 25th edition of 2015 Kentucky KIDS COUNT County Data Book was released recently by Kentucky Youth Advocates.

The 2015 County Data Book ranks all Kentucky counties on overall child well-being based on 16 indicators which relate to economic security, education, health and family and community strength. It is important to note that some indicators included in the 2015 rankings are different than those included in the 2014 County Data Book. Therefore, current rankings should not be compared to last year’s rankings.

The counties with the highest overall child well-being rankings include (in order) Oldham, Boone, Spencer, Edmonson and Calloway Counties. Owsley, Wolfe, Martin, Breathitt and Clay Counties have the most room for improvement, scoring at the bottom of the list.

Passport, Kosair get Jefferson Co. moving with GoNoodle

Passport Health Plan is joining Kosair Children’s Hospital to make GoNoodle available to all Jefferson County public and private schools. Through this sponsorship, more than 67,000 students in 178 schools now have access to a premium version of GoNoodle for three years (through the 2017-18 school year).

GoNoodle gets kids moving with short bursts of physical activity delivered through online movement videos and games. It is an interactive resource used in classrooms to increase students’ physical activity and improve academic performance. Through online physical activity breaks, GoNoodle makes it easy for teachers and parents to get kids moving, which helps improve their behavior, focus, and engagement. Funding from Passport Health Plan and Kosair Children’s Hospital – through the Children’s Hospital Foundation – has made it available for use in public and private elementary schools, as well as in students’ homes.

Passport becomes sponsor of “CATS in the Community”

Passport Health Plan has signed on to be the presenting sponsor of the University of Kentucky “CATS in the Community” group of student-athletes who participate in community service events. “CATS in the Community” offers student-athletes the opportunity to volunteer their time to help those in the community. During the 2014-15 academic year, student-athletes volunteered over 4,300 hours of their time to community service in addition to going to class, attending practice, studying and traveling to tournaments.

UK College of Nursing opens Wilmore Health clinic

A new community health center in Wilmore operated by the University of Kentucky College of Nursing celebrated its grand opening in November.

The Phyllis D. Corbitt Community Health Center, named for a former family practice physician in the community, is the first fee-for-service health clinic operated by nurse practitioners from the college.

In addition to fulfilling a need for accessible basic health services in Jessamine County, the clinic provides a space where students from the UK College of Nursing can train under faculty in a clinical setting. In a recent report titled, “The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health,” the Institute of Medicine challenged the next generation of nurses to practice to the full extent of their knowledge and training. The new clinic accomplishes this objective by allowing students to see the range of health services a nurse practitioner is able to deliver in a small community. Services include treatment for respiratory infections, allergies, sore throats, common colds and skin infections. In addition it provides school, sports and pre-employment physicals, immunizations and health education and counseling.

Practitioners at the Phyllis D. Corbitt Community Health Center collaborate with Dr. Sam Matheny in the UK Department of Family and Community Medicine on cases requiring more complex care. The clinic will operate under a limited services licensure and accepts most insurance providers.
Possible sale of bankrupt Clinton Co. Hospital

The bankrupt Clinton County Hospital in Albany is discussing a sale to the parent firm of the Bowling Green Medical Center, which already owns several hospitals in south-central Kentucky.

The hospital’s directors voted last month to initiate discussions regarding a potential acquisition by Commonwealth Health Corporation (CHC), a not-for-profit parent company of the Medical Centers in Bowling Green, Scottsville and Franklin.

The hospital asked CHC to evaluate operations at Clinton County Hospital to determine the feasibility of Commonwealth Health Corporation assuming ownership and operation of Clinton County Hospital.

The hospital went into Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization more than a year ago, after being unable to repay a $15 million U.S. Department of Agriculture loan that it received to expand and modernize the hospital. The project was completed in 2008. The hospital has blamed its problems on federal budget cuts and changes in Medicare and Medicaid, which provide more than 80 percent of the hospital’s revenue — particularly the managed-care companies that oversee Medicaid.

USDA recently forgave more than half the $18 million in accumulated debt, leaving $8,465,000 still owed.

Inscope Medical Solutions, a University of Louisville MBA program company, has developed an innovative laryngoscope that is the first all-in-one intubation solution to provide a clear view of every airway. They took home the $100,000 Vogt prize in late November.

Fifteen percent of intubations have complications. Inscope’s One-Scope device combines a video camera, a light and suction. They have been working with local EMS workers to test the product.

Demo Day for the Vogt Awards saw five manufacturing companies compete at the Pointe in Butchertown in Louisville, Ky. The companies pitched their startups after spending 10 weeks in a Lean Startup course held by Nucleus. Each company also received a $20,000 development grant, coaching by industry mentors, and resources from FirstBuild, LVL1 and the J.B. Speed School of Engineering.

Baptist gets USDA grant to buy telehealth equipment

Baptist Healthcare System is getting a $182,566 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to install teleconferencing and telehealth equipment for five facilities in medically underserved areas in southeastern Kentucky.

The grants from USDA Rural Development’s Distance Learning and Telemedicine program will be held at Knox County Hospital, Pineville Community Hospital and Baptist Health Richmond as well as primary care clinics in Williamsburg and London, reaching approximately 5,000 people.
Meet New Albany otolaryngologist Dr. Vasu Kakarlapudi

Why did you become a doctor?
I like science, but also enjoy working with people and felt medicine was a perfect mix.

Why did you choose this particular specialty?
I enjoy surgery, but also the ability to manage both medical and surgical issues in the same anatomical area. ENT offers the ability to do that and treat patients of all age groups with challenging intricate and delicate procedures and surgery.

Balloon sinus dilation is a prime example of an intricate procedure that can be done (now in the office) when medical management is not successful. Chronic sinus infections are common in the Ohio Valley, and balloon sinus dilation is an advanced technique to make the natural sinus openings larger so that mucous can flow out easier and air can go in. This can help alleviate sinus pressure and decrease chances of and severity of sinus infections. This can be done in the office with light sedation, using numbing medication in the nose. Most patients experience minimal discomfort comparable to a dental filling. Patients can go back to work the next day.

What is the biggest misconception about your field?
Patients often don’t understand that ENTs are surgeons. I often get asked where I am going to send them to have their surgery done.

What is your motto?
Life is all about balance.

What’s the best advice you ever received? Who gave it to you?
Don’t worry about things you cannot control. My chairman in residency.

Who are your heroes in healthcare?
An economist.

VNA Nazareth Home Care celebrates anniversary

This month VNA Nazareth Home Care, the fifth longest running home care agency in the U.S., will celebrate its 125th anniversary. In honor of this landmark anniversary, Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer proclaimed November 21, 2015 as VNA Nazareth Home Care Day.

Originally founded in 1890 in Louisville, Ky. as King’s Daughters Association of Louisville, the focus on care was on expectant mothers, as well as babies who were in need of clean milk. In 1915 the Daughters Association of Louisville transitioned to the District Nurse Associate in cooperation with the National Public Health Nursing Association before becoming the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) in the 1930s.

Kentucky LEADS implements statewide lung cancer program

The Kentucky LEADS (Lung Cancer. Education. Awareness. Detection. Survivorship) Collaborative is a joint effort of the University of Kentucky, University of Louisville and Lung Cancer Alliance. The Kentucky LEADS announced details of three programs to improve prevention, early detection and survivorship care aimed at reducing the burden of lung cancer in Kentucky. The project is supported by a $7 million grant from the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation’s Bridging Cancer Care initiative.

Lexington Clinic held a ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening for its newest location, Lexington Clinic Beaumont. The new location combines the services of Lexington Clinic Palomar Family Health Centre and First Choice Walk-In Urgent Care in one facility.
The University of Louisville’s Brandeis School of Law honored Demetrius Holloway with the Alumni Fellow Award. Holloway, primarily works with the Employment Law Service Group but also is an affiliated member of the Business Litigation and Torts & Insurance Practice Service Groups.

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Event calendar

Helping to Improve Quality Healthcare through Patient Activation

Date: December 1
Time: 7:30 – 10 a.m.; Breakfast 7:30 – 8 a.m.
Location: Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, 1640 Lyndon Farm Court, Suite 100, Louisville, Ky. 40223
Information: An interactive session on improving healthcare quality through patient activation. Jan Berger, MD, medical director of the Midwest Business Group on Health and CEO of Health Intelligence Partners, will provide an overview of patient activation and its importance to quality care.
To register: kcollaborative.org

Healthcare Transformation Survival Seminar Series

Dec. 2, 11
Dates and Locations: December 2: UK Chandler Hospital, Pavilion A, Lexington, Ky.; December 11: Baptist Health Paducah Heart Center Auditorium, Paducah, Ky.
Information: Sponsored by Kentucky Regional Extension Center. An in-depth look at the new Stage 3 Meaningful Use requirements. This seminar will also cover the latest happenings around Value-Based Payment Models, HIPAA Privacy & Security, Patient-Centered Medical Home and the Kentucky Health Information Exchange.
To register: Visit kentuckyrec.com

Health Enterprises Network Annual Holiday Reception

Date: December 3
Time: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Location: Kindred Healthcare Corporate Headquarters, 680 South Fourth St., Louisville, Ky. 40202
Information: This event is at no charge for members of the Health Enterprises Network, their invited guest and other selected guests.
To register: Register@HealthEnterprisesNetwork.com or (502) 625-0149

Articulation & Transfer Development Work Tank Meeting

Date: December 4
Time: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Location: Medtech College, 1648 McGrathiana Pkwy, Suite 200, Lexington, Ky. 40511
To register: Visit kycareercolleges.org

Health for a Change: Rules and Resources for Advocacy During a State Budget Session

Date: December 16
Time: 1 - 2 p.m.
Information: Presenters from the Alliance for Justice and Kentucky Center for Economic Policy will discuss the differences between advocacy and lobbying, as well as share resources and tips to assist you in providing input during a budget session.
To register: Visit healthy-ky.org

Cyber Security and Data Protection Seminar

Date: December 17
Time: 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Location: Griffin Gate Marriott, 1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, Ky. 40511
To register: Contact Lori Jo Goff at (502) 848-8727 or lgoff@kychamber.com

Scoppechio Healthcare awarded Baptist Health account

Baptist Health Kentucky, a full-spectrum health system, has announced plans to further its wellness and growth mission through the appointment of Scoppechio Healthcare, a division of Kentucky’s largest full service ad agency, as its new agency-of-record (AOR). Baptist had worked since 2012 with Prairie Dog TCG, an agency based in Kansas City, Mo.

Currently the Baptist Health family consists of eight hospitals (seven owned and one managed) and more than 170 outpatient facilities, physician practices and services. Baptist’s physician network includes more than 450 employed physicians and more than 1,600 independent physicians.

Scoppechio Healthcare’s scope of work will include account management, strategic planning, creative execution, digital and performance media, and public relations initiatives.

Kentucky College of Optometry at UPike set to enroll first class

The Kentucky College of Optometry, part of the University of Pikeville, has received preliminary accreditation, allowing it to recruit students for its first class next fall.

The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education notified the university of the approval. ACOE will review the school annually during its first three academic years, and a request for full accreditation will be made by the university not less than 12 months prior to graduation of the program’s first class.

The college will be the 22nd in the nation and will admit 60 students per class, for a four-year total of 240.

Central Appalachia has the highest incidences of severe vision loss from other factors such as diabetes and hypertension and Owsley County leads the nation with more than 18 percent. UPike, as the university calls itself, also has a college of osteopathic medicine and a school of nursing.

Hall Render expands with offices in Dallas, Seattle

Hall Render has increased its national presence by expanding into the South and Pacific Northwest with the addition of offices in Dallas and the Seattle area. With existing offices in Denver, Detroit, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., Hall Render counsels hospitals and other healthcare organizations on issues including healthcare reform, HIPAA, information security, business transactions and labor and employment.
UofL’s Trover Campus a national model

The University of Louisville School of Medicine has been working to increase the number of physicians in rural communities by training doctors at Trover Campus at Baptist Health Madisonville for 17 years. William Crump, MD, associate dean for the Trover Campus, and his colleagues at UofL have assembled data to demonstrate that their efforts are paying off. The physicians who spent the last two years of medical school at the rural location are much more likely to ultimately practice in a rural setting.

In a study published online last week in The Journal of Rural Health, Crump reveals that 45 percent of the physicians who completed medical school at the rural campus now practice in rural areas, compared with only seven percent of graduates who remained on the urban campus.

Almost two-thirds of Kentucky’s counties are considered health professional shortage areas, meaning they have far too few primary care physicians. The University of Louisville focused on correcting this shortage by establishing the Trover Campus in Madisonville, Ky. It was believed that training students from small towns in a small town would more likely produce physicians for the small towns, and now this concept has been proven. Trover Campus was only the second in the United States to be placed in such a small town.

14 Stites & Harbison lawyers named ‘stars’

The 2016 edition of Benchmark Litigation named 14 Stites & Harbison attorneys as “Litigation Stars” and two as “Future Stars” in Kentucky. The guide honors the firms and attorneys who have demonstrated the ability to consistently handle complex, high-stakes cases in multiple jurisdictions. Stites & Harbison’s honorees include the following from Kentucky:

**Litigation Stars**
- Thad Barnes: Intellectual Property
- Bethany Breetz: Appellate
- Carol Dan Browning: Antitrust, Environmental, Health Care, Product Liability and Professional Liability
- Philip Collier: General Commercial
- Charles “Mike” Cronan IV: Appellate, General Commercial, Health Care and Intellectual Property
- Daniel Danford: General Commercial and Product Liability
- Douglass Farnsley: Medical Malpractice

**Future Stars**
- Andrew Beshear
- David Owsley II

Since 2008, Benchmark Litigation has been the definitive guide to America’s leading litigation firms and attorneys. The guide is exclusively focused on the U.S. litigation market. Recognition is based on extensive interviews with litigators and their clients over a six-month period to identify the leading litigators and firms. Honorees at both the national and state levels are based on these interviews.
Delta Dental of Kentucky may partner with 2016 Kentucky Oral Health Summit

Delta Dental of Kentucky participated as a signature sponsor and speaker at Kentucky Oral Health Coalition’s (KOHC) 2015 Kentucky Oral Health Summit in late November.

The summit brought together hundreds of leaders from diverse fields in the oral health community, including state and local policy makers, health advocates, health professionals, educators, and students, to increase the dental awareness and to develop strategies to deal with the widespread dental access issues in Kentucky. The creation of this event was intended to take action to ensure that oral health remains a priority in Kentucky.

Delta Dental of Kentucky’s president and CEO, Cliff Maesaka, MD, presented Governor Beshear’s office with the Kentucky Oral Health Champion Award. In addition, Maesaka spoke to the summit crowd about the current state of oral health in Kentucky. Forty-three percent of Kentucky’s children have severe early childhood decay before reaching the age of five, and approximately 39 percent of these children have never visited a dentist. In response to this need, he announced Delta Dental of Kentucky’s plans in funding a statewide project to research the oral health of youth in the Commonwealth.

National background checks required on certain healthcare hires

Gov. Steve Beshear recently signed an emergency regulation requiring certain healthcare providers to obtain national criminal background checks on new employees and other individuals who provide direct one-on-one care to elderly residents or patients in order to obtain or renew the facility’s license to operate in the commonwealth.

Effective Jan. 1, 2016, approximately 1,300 providers will be required to obtain national background checks for all new employees. These providers include nursing homes, intermediate care facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID); adult day healthcare programs; assisted living communities; home health agencies; hospice; personal services agencies; providers of home and community-based services; personal care homes; and staffing agencies, including nursing pools that have contracts to provide staff to one or more of the listed employer types.

US WorldMeds gets a new home

Louisville-based specialty pharmaceutical company expects to move into its newly constructed, 52,800-square-foot headquarters on Springdale Road in east Louisville, near the Paddock Shops this December. The company previously worked out of leased space on Dupont Circle, with employees spread across several floors.

The Louisville-based specialty pharmaceutical company was organized in 2001 by CEO P. Breckinridge Jones and has about 125 employees. Of those, 77 are based in the Louisville market. Others are field-based sales, medical, education and reimbursement specialists.

Nazareth Home to purchase Sacred Heart Village

Mercy Health, a Catholic Health Ministry serving Ohio and Kentucky, and Nazareth Home announced that Nazareth Home will purchase Sacred Heart Village, Mercy Health’s senior living facility located in Louisville, Ky. in January 2016.

UK HealthCare earns recognition from The Joint Commission

UK HealthCare has been recognized as a 2014 Top Performer on Key Quality Measures in seven categories by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in the United States.

UK HealthCare — which includes the University of Kentucky Chandler Hospital, UK Good Samaritan Hospital and Kentucky Children’s Hospital — was recognized as part of The Joint Commission’s 2015 annual report “America’s Hospitals: Improving Quality and Safety,” for attaining and sustaining excellence in accountability measure performance for:

- Heart Attacks
- Heart Failure
- Pneumonia
- Surgical Care
- Children’s Asthma
- Stroke
- Perinatal Care
Christopher Roszman  
Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer at Seven Counties Services

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
I began my professional career as a staff accountant for Ernst & Young in Lexington, Ky. It was an environment that taught me how to be detailed, accurate and effectively manage multiple projects at one time to meet hard set deadlines. It also trained me how to think logically and critically in a business environment. At that time, Ernst & Young had a significant healthcare practice, and I ended up specializing with their healthcare clients more by accident, than conscious choice.

What is your very best skill — the thing that sets you apart from others?
I am an optimist and my goal is to impart that optimism on others I work with.

What was the most significant event/development at Seven Counties Services in 2015?
The successful implementation of our electronic health record/billing system, designed by NetSmart, for Community Mental Health Centers such as Seven Counties. Anyone involved in healthcare will understand what an undertaking this was and I am so proud of our teams’ unavering dedication to implementing a new comprehensive EHR. This was a tremendous project involving hundreds of people, working together for a common and important goal.

While the implementation of our EHR was largely behind the scenes, the rollout of our new Seven Counties brand was very public.

James Jackson, MD  
Chief Medical Officer at Family Health Centers, Inc.

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
I had a summer job mopping floors and holding retractors in the surgery department of a community hospital. It was fascinating to watch how the surgeons handled the intense pressure of operating on another human being. Some had short tempers and treated the staff badly in the heat of the moment. Others managed to treat the nursing staff with respect and courtesy in spite of the often extreme pressure. Whenever I am tempted to lose my temper or treat a coworker disrespectfully during a stressful moment, I remember those surgeons and what it felt like to work in that environment.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to make basic healthcare available to every member of society and, frankly, the United States has failed miserably at this.

What is your very best skill — the thing that sets you apart from others?
For a leader to be effective, (s)he needs to be seen as having legitimacy by the people that (s)he supervises. I have spent more than 22 years providing direct patient care at Family Health Centers and I continue to see patients every week. Because we regularly face the same challenges, I hope the medical staff sees me as a colleague as well as a leader.

What was the most significant event/development at Family Health Centers in 2015?
We opened a new site earlier this year with expanded capacity. Because of the Affordable Care Act, a huge percentage of our patients gained health insurance for the first time. Expanding services and meeting the needs of more patients has been very stressful but also very exciting for us.

If you could eliminate one of the healthcare industry’s problems overnight, which would it be?
I believe we have a moral responsibility to make basic healthcare available to every member of society and, frankly, the United States has failed miserably at this. The Affordable Care Act is a step in the right direction, but because of political realities, it is also extremely complex. A single payer system that covers all of us would be a good start.

How do you revitalize yourself?
I know it sounds corny, but I really enjoy spending time working around the house, going to estate sales and exercising.
Ernest Dreher IV (Ernie)
Vice President of Architecture/Planning at TEG Architects

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
My first job in healthcare planning and design was 20 years ago when I began my career at TEG Architects. My first project was at Tri-County Baptist Hospital in LaGrange, Ky. to renovate their existing obstetrics department. It is truly amazing how the decisions that are made through design can have a huge impact on lives.

The take away from that particular project that I still use today is how to work with the client to make sure that all solutions and options are thoroughly investigated to provide them with the best possible outcome within their project budget.

What is your very best skill – the thing that sets you apart from others?
My two very best skills are problem solving and communication. This is what I do each and every day for my clients and staff at TEG. As a third generation architect, I learned the importance of those two skills from my father while working in his architectural firm when I was starting my career.

Where do you do your best thinking?
My best thinking and planning for the day is when I sit down at my desk. Once I get to the office, I put together my to do list for the day and spend the first hour getting as much as I can accomplished before the day starts.

What was the most significant event/development at TEG in 2015?
For the past four years, TEG has been consulting for and master planning healthcare projects throughout the county at a conceptual/schematic level. Now, we are seeing these planned projects turning into production of construction documents. We have also seen the size and complexity of our projects increase as well.

How do you revitalize yourself?
I revitalize myself by socializing with good friends and engaging in family activities.

What's one piece of advice you remember most clearly?
While in high school at Cathedral Prep in Erie, Pennsylvania, Father Hahn always stressed to us, “Never say, I wish I would have.” That is how I conduct my life and career.

Kris Kimel
President of Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation, Founder of Kentucky Space and Exomedicine Institute and Co-Founder of Space Tango

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
In my position with the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation (KSTC), I have been involved with a range of health and biomedical R&D projects and companies. Now, through our work in space including the Exomedicine Institute, I am directly engaged in working with biomedical professionals and entrepreneurs from around the world, understanding disease processes and pursuing novel solutions in the microgravity environment of space for applications on Earth.

How do you approach management and leadership in your organization?
We employ a very open and flat management strategy that encourages disruptive thinking, creativity, delegated decision making and group/individual accountability to achieve success.

As a leader, we all face many challenges. What challenges do you face in your role that are unique because you work in healthcare?
The speed at which new information is developed and technology is coming on-line presents enormous research, execution and competitive pressures on every aspect of the enterprise. These challenges are compounded by the fact that in the case of Exomedicine we are fundamentally engaged in a new frontier of biomedicine. The big question we are pursuing the answer for is, “What if the next breakthrough in medicine isn’t on the planet Earth?”

The big question we are pursuing the answer for … “What if the next breakthrough in medicine isn’t on the planet Earth?”
The installation of Tango Lab-1 Lab on ISS will exponentially increase our research and thus commercialization opportunities.

If you could eliminate one of the healthcare industry’s problems overnight, which would it be?
The vast myriad of inefficiencies.

How do you revitalize yourself?
Reading, running, spending time alone and taking part in the IdeaFestival, where I get to surround myself with all sorts of interesting people and ideas.

What’s one piece of advice you remember most clearly?
There is no such thing as useless knowledge.

EDUCATION: Master’s Degree from the University Kentucky
HOBBIES: Reading, running and playing tennis.

Full interview online at medicalnews.md
When it comes to healthcare law, does your law firm even have a pulse?

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?

After graduate school, I moved from Los Angeles to Southwest Florida and quickly found a job as a patient educator in the Staff Development and Patient Education Department of a 400 bed regional medical center. Within weeks of my arrival, the director of the department suddenly resigned. I asked to step in as the interim director while a national search ensued and ultimately was selected for the job.

It was a great first experience for a number of reasons and there are four things I learned that still stand out for me today. First, be quick to identify opportunity and step up when you know you have something to offer. That’s how I obtained the job in spite of others who had more tenure and experience.

Second, the CEO became my mentor and I experienced the value of mentorship. He shared his insights and allowed me to participate in diverse meetings and projects as an opportunity to learn. Today I make time to be a mentor. Developing others and encouraging them to be their best is important. As well, I always have one or two mentors of my own – people who challenge me, give advice and help me to be my best.

Third, I learned the importance of hiring talent that will bring unique skills to the business and that will supplement the existing team. Like most hospitals, our leadership team had predominately worked in healthcare and many had been promoted from within. One of the first individuals I hired was a management/leadership trainer from a technology company. His experience and application of basic management principles from another industry helped hospital managers to better understand their role. He brought perspective that in those days couldn’t be found within the hospital.

Finally, I took away the importance of closing any gaps in understanding between the finance and clinical departments. During the preparation of the annual budget, I paired myself with the finance department to train our clinical leaders in budget preparation. In reality, I facilitated mutual understanding and respect for profitability, efficiency and most importantly clinical excellence.

Where do you do your best thinking?

When I am able to walk, I do my best thinking. I like to be active and am always multi-tasking. Walking fulfills my need to multi-task but settles my mind from other distractions. Sometimes, I plan to walk and talk with a friend, confidant or mentor to stimulate really great thinking.

EDUCATION: Master of Public Health from the University of California Los Angeles; Bachelor of Science from Syracuse University

HOBBIES: Skiing, hiking and most any outdoor activity. When I’m indoors, I read.
Alfonso “Al” Cornish
System Vice President of Learning & Organizational Development; Chief Learning Officer at Norton Healthcare

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
My current role with Norton Healthcare was my first venture into healthcare. I quickly learned that healthcare is an incredibly complex business. What I try to do, to the extent possible, is make this field seem less complex to those we educate.

Leadership is about leading people; employee development is about providing as many different learning experiences to help employees either improve their performance or prepare for greater responsibility in the organization. Everything we do is focused on ensuring that everyone who comes in contact with the patient is delivering the best possible care. We try to echo the words of our CEO, Steve Williams, that every Norton employee is either providing direct patient care or supporting someone who does.

What is your very best skill — the thing that sets you apart from others?
I think my best skill is my ability to get along with anyone. It is particularly handy in the work that I do. I have to be able to very quickly connect with employees, patients, guests and vendors/suppliers and meet them where they are.

My father said “If you are going to do something, it deserves to be done right the first time.” Every time I attempt to do anything, be it routine or innovative, that is the thought that guides my planning and execution.

Where do you do your best thinking?
I do my best thinking during quiet times. While they are few and far between, I use every opportunity I get to reflect and write as my creativity flows best in these situations. I think my best skill is my ability to get along with anyone. It is particularly handy in the work that I do. I have to be able to very quickly connect with employees, patients, guests and vendors/suppliers and meet them where they are.

leadership development at Norton Healthcare in 2015?
The continued growth of patients due to the Affordable Care Act’s implementation. The results have been that we are now facing staffing issues.

If you could eliminate one of the healthcare industry’s problems overnight, which would it be?
Nursing shortages – we are starting to see challenges as a result of the increase in patients.

Linda Blair
Dean and Chief Academic Officer at Spencerian College

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
My first job in healthcare was as a staff nurse on the psychiatric unit at Veterans Hospital in Louisville, Ky. In that position I learned a lot about effective communication and handling challenging interactions. I use those skills daily in my current position. I learned a great respect for our veterans and the value of having a good mentor. I had a wonderful mentor and I try daily to mentor others in my current position.

How do you approach management and leadership in your organization?
I like to think that I lead by example and that I don’t micromanage. I have a highly skilled academic team and I am their cheerleader. Each of our medical programs is directed by an individual with excellent experience in their field and skill as an educator. I work very closely with the executive director of our college, Jan Gordon. I am her backup and she is mine.

What was the most significant event/development at Spencerian College in 2015?
The most significant event at Spencerian College in 2015 has been the unique partnerships with Hardin County and Oldham County High Schools. The development at Spencerian College in 2015?
The most significant event at Spencerian College in 2015 has been the unique partnerships with Hardin County and Oldham County High Schools. Hardin County students utilized Go To Meeting to reach their goal. I always share this advice with our students to begin the college experience while in high school without the tuition commitment.

What’s one piece of advice you remember most clearly?
You can only eat an elephant one bite at a time. That advice is something that has helped me throughout my career and in all aspects of my life. No matter how daunting a project might be, if you consistently work on it and don’t let yourself be overwhelmed, you will be able to reach your goal. I always share this advice with our students at orientation.

EDUCATION: B.S. in Nursing and Masters in Education from Spalding University
HOBBIES: My hobbies are following the activities of my two teenage grandchildren, Brad and Blair. That takes me to the soccer field, plays, musical performances and a variety of dance shows and competitions.
Emily Beauregard
Executive Director at Kentucky Voices for Health

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
My first job in healthcare was with Family Health Centers in Louisville. I actually moved to Louisville after college to participate in a program called Louisville, Ky. Urban Corps, which is similar to Americorps. I started out at Family Health Centers’ Phoenix Healthcare for the Homeless site and developed a program to get medications to patients experiencing homelessness at no cost. That experience sparked my passion for public health.

How do you approach management and leadership at Kentucky Voices for Health (KVH)?
Leading a coalition is a lot different than leading a single organization. I strive to work as a partner with KVH’s member organizations while at the same time facilitate our shared goals and initiatives.

But we wouldn’t need a coalition like KVH if the challenges to Kentucky’s health were easy to solve. I feel like I’m in the right place at a very difficult time.

As a leader, we all face many challenges. What challenges do you face in your role that are unique because you work in healthcare?
We all operate in a world of unknowns and that’s not unique to healthcare. But stepping into this role as we are faced with an uncertain future for Kynect and Medicaid expansion has been a real challenge. But we wouldn’t need a coalition like KVH if the challenges to Kentucky’s health were easy to solve. I feel like I’m in the right place at a very difficult time.

What opportunities do you see for Kentucky Voices for Health in 2016? Challenges?
Without a doubt, access to care is going to be the biggest challenge we face in 2016. But with that comes a real opportunity for legislators, business leaders, providers, consumers and advocates to come together and work with the new Administration to develop a solution that’s right for Kentucky. I want to be sure we get that opportunity.

If you could eliminate one of the healthcare industry’s problems overnight, which would it be?
Silos that separate the body, mind, mouth and eyes into completely different systems of care. We need regulations, licensure and payment models that encourage integrated care so we can start treating the whole person again.

EDUCATION: Studied nonprofit management as an undergraduate at Indiana University and received a master’s in public health from University of Illinois at Chicago.

HOBBIES: Hiking, reading, cooking and traveling.

Full interview online at medicalnews.md

Protecting even your weakest link.

Today more than ever, your company can face serious consequences should a data breach occur. You deserve legal counsel with proven experience in the field. From advising on federal and state data security and privacy regulations to handling incident response when a breach happens, the Certified Information Privacy Professional (CIPP/US) attorneys at Stites & Harbison understand your unique needs. For more information about how we can help, visit stites.com
Cindy Stowe
Dean and Professor at Sullivan University College of Pharmacy

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
My first job in healthcare was as a pharmacy intern. Everyone has a story – listen closely, and learn how to put people at ease or defuse a situation.

What is your very best skill – the thing that sets you apart from others?
Listening, empowering and removing barriers.

As a leader, we all face many challenges. What challenges do you face in your role that are unique because you work in healthcare?
Educating future generations of pharmacists with the knowledge, skill, attitude and behavior to adapt, innovate and lead over a 40-50 year career.

Dan Goulson, MD
Vice President of Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer at St. Joseph Hospital, a part of KentuckyOne Health

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
My first job didn’t pay anything but was as a paramedic volunteering for the local rescue squad while I was in medical school. I would take overnight calls in the station once every 10 nights. It was my first confirmation that I really enjoy taking care of people. It was also the first time that I could see that healthcare is complex and depends on the teamwork of a huge number of individuals. Most importantly, it was where I met my wife who started off being my paramedic partner and ended up being partner for life!

Where do you do your best thinking?
I do my best thinking when I can get up on the metaphorical balcony. Ronald Heifetz talks in Harvard Business Review about periodically moving off of the dance floor, where it is hard to see what anyone other than your partner is doing, and getting on the balcony over the dance floor where it is easier to see what is really going on. If you can take a step back from the action, there is a completely different perspective that emerges.

How do you approach management and leadership Sullivan University College of Pharmacy (SUCOP)?
I think I do my best thinking in environments with open dialogue with a willingness to challenge the status quo. We have the opportunity to more effectively collaborate and partner to enhance patient outcomes through improved pharmacy practice models and richer learning experiences for our students. Challenges? A financially viable model to allow pharmacists to practice at the top of their license.

What opportunities do you see for SUCOP in 2016?
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Where do you do your best thinking?
I do my best thinking in environments with open dialogue with a willingness to challenge the status quo.

What was the most significant event/development at SUCOP in 2015?
Admission of the class of 2018 and graduation of the class of 2015 – the impact that these practitioners will make on the lives of their patients and communities are immeasurable.

What was the most significant event/development in your organization in 2015?
In 2015 KentuckyOne Health made significant progress in our long-term financial strength, with a system-wide financial improvement of more than $142 million in the fiscal year. The positive financial performance was achieved through increased patient volume and enhanced operating performance. We also implemented an innovative primary care and access strategy, including five new ambulatory sites and 108 new providers, a virtual primary care program (Anywhere Care) and a retail partnership with Walgreens.

How do you revitalize yourself?
I am a sports fan and enjoy attending college football and basketball games. I attend the NCAA Men’s Final Four each year! On a day-to-day basis, I like to get out of the office for lunch, take walks and get out of town on the weekends…to refocus, rest and relax.

What’s one piece of advice you remember most clearly?
Work hard, genuinely care about people, be honest and be fearless.

EDUCATION: B.S. in Pharmacy and Doctor of Pharmacy from the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy

HOBBIES: Attending sporting events, traveling, reading, hiking, biking, and gardening.

Dan Goulson, MD
Vice President of Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer at St. Joseph Hospital, a part of KentuckyOne Health

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
My first job didn’t pay anything but was as a paramedic volunteering for the local rescue squad while I was in medical school. I would take overnight calls in the station once every 10 nights. It was my first confirmation that I really enjoy taking care of people. It was also the first time that I could see that healthcare is complex and depends on the teamwork of a huge number of individuals. Most importantly, it was where I met my wife who started off being my paramedic partner and ended up being partner for life!

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What’s one piece of advice you remember most clearly?
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EDUCATION: MD from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine; Residency in Anesthesiology at the University of Wisconsin

HOBBIES: Travel, hiking and camping.
**HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP**

David Henley
Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer, Risk Management Leader and Culture Leader at University Health Care, Inc. dba Passport Health Plan

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**How do you approach management and leadership at Passport Health Plan?**

My management and leadership style can best be characterized as servant leadership. Servant leadership is a term loosely used to suggest that a leader’s primary role is to serve others, especially employees. Therefore, I focus on what I call the 3 Ps: People, Purpose and Passion. This means that as a leader, I protect and support the People (employees), make sure they understand our Purpose and I inspire Passion for what we do.

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**What is your very best skill—the thing that sets you apart from others?**

I am always looking for ways to bring value to the organization for which I am affiliated whether that affiliation is through employment, serving as a board member or being a volunteer. I think I best bring value as an idea generator. I often find that one of the most important skills organizations lack or do not pay enough attention to is strategy. Therefore, I primarily focus on generating ideas about strategy. The other area I focus on is challenging best practices. My thought is that if we settle for the best practice, we will slow down an organization’s ability to find innovative solutions to the challenges of their business.

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**Where do you do your best thinking?**

I do my best thinking at church. Some of my best ideas and solutions to problems have come while singing hymns, listening to the message or sitting quietly.

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**What was the most significant event/development at Passport Health Plan in 2015?**

The most significant event for Passport Health plan in 2015 was our decision to re-enter the Medicare Advantage market. We recognize that a significant segment of our members are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid and that these members represent a large portion of healthcare costs because they tend to be the sickest of the sick. Therefore, in order to truly make an impact on the health of Kentuckians, we are making available a Medicare Advantage Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP).

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**How do you revitalize yourself?**

I revitalize myself through exercise (mainly running), music and volunteer activities. I have been running for most of my life and have run eight marathons. Also, I really enjoy listening to music, especially Brazilian style music. But what really revitalizes me is my volunteer work. There is a saying that you get back what you give. I find that my volunteer work with kids helps me unplug and that helping them takes my mind off the challenges in my own life. Making children and teens smile...now that’s revitalization.

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**EDUCATION:** Juris Doctor from the University of Nebraska College of Law; Bachelor of Science in Business & Economics from Louisiana State University

**HOBBIES:** Exercise (mainly running), music and volunteer activities.
How do you approach management and leadership at Owensboro Health?
All communications and relationships, especially in healthcare, must first lead with respect. It’s just fundamental to what we do. Everything in healthcare emanates from the bedside and everything else, quality and safety processes, human resource initiatives, even marketing plans, really exist to support and optimize the patient and family care that takes place at the bedside.

If there is a particular project to complete or a goal to be met, I try to collect all the needed data, but remind myself to continue to listen and to keep an open mind. That can take a project in an unanticipated direction, but it is vital in developing a good action plan, and ultimately, in building consensus if the plan is to succeed.

What is your very best skill—the thing that sets you apart from others?
I’m a hard worker. I grew up on a farm with hardworking parents, and was the oldest of seven children. I don’t really know any other way.

What opportunities do you see for your company in 2016? What challenges?
The opportunities are to continue to grow as a regional healthcare presence through outreach, especially through enhanced access to outpatient services, and the development of mutually beneficial relationships with regional employers. The challenges are to maintain and seek to improve our high standards of patient care and patient satisfaction, and to continue to be proactive, and even hopeful, in a healthcare landscape that it extremely volatile.

How do you revitalize yourself?
I would have to say it is through farming. It’s such a part of who I am. I spend a good deal of my spare time there, and my wife, Janice, is fine with it because she knows how nurturing it is for me. Our grandchildren (Annie, 7 and Daniel, 3) live in Louisville, Ky., but they both just love the farm. That has been great for all of us. Daniel’s “show and tell” at preschool always involves some piece of farm equipment, and his favorite color is “John Deere green!”

What’s one piece of advice that you remember most clearly?
The two great men who had the most influence on my life were my late father, Bill Scherm, and Dr. Hiram C. Polk, Jr., who was the chairman of the Department of Surgery at the University of Louisville where I was trained. They both taught me to take responsibility for my actions and decisions. It has served me well throughout my life because when you know you are going to have to take responsibility, you try very hard to get things right the first time.

If you could eliminate one of the healthcare industry’s problems overnight, which would it be?
That’s a pretty tough choice, but it would be so beneficial to have a universal, user-friendly, efficient, and highly-effective electronic health record.

Michael Scherm, MD
Executive VP and Chief Medical Officer at Owensboro Health

I’m a hard worker. I grew up on a farm with hardworking parents, and was the oldest of seven children.
What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
Director of Spirituality for Signature HealthCARE. So many things – I witnessed the daily challenges and suffering endured by the elders, families and employees whom we serve. Because of this, because I hate suffering, I realized just how bold one could be to bring in a new vision of healthcare delivery intersected with clinical and therapy (a formal intervention of the spiritual within the framework of the careplan).

I learned to fight against the notion that spirituality in a for-profit world couldn’t be done, to go back in when the battle was at its most fierce, the power of evidence and its impact on corporate data points and benchmarks, to pivot when needed and how to shift strategies.

I saw the power of having the critical conversation, the momentum behind a good vision and the needed framework to impact change (Kotter’s model for change). I learned at a whole new level that I don’t like to be told I can’t do something especially if it is salient to the overall mission of the company.

I learned at a whole new level that I don’t like to be told I can’t do something especially if it is salient to the overall mission of the company.

How do you approach management and leadership at Signature HealthCARE?
I try to balance oversight and accountability while granting my team members the right amount of autonomy. I want them to feel empowered to put their talents to best use, and to be able to learn. I am a tough leader with high expectations. I don’t like squandered talent nor the inability to execute at a particular pace. Multi-tasking is a must in the fast paced realm of healthcare and that is not an innate quality and must be learned.

What is your very best skill – the thing that sets you apart from others?
Bold fearlessness. Occasionally it gets me in trouble, but more often than not, it helps me get things accomplished.

How do you revitalize yourself?
Yoga, writing. It’s hard to find time, but I love to travel. Most recently, short trips to London for Wimbledon and a writing trip to India with all its exquisite diversions and glorious peoples. Half my family lives in West Hollywood, so I try to spend Easter and other holidays out there.

What’s one piece of advice you remember most clearly?
To be intelligent or have brilliance has its limitations; it is persistence within one’s own truth regardless of noise that yields the desires of the heart.

Dianne Timmering
Vice President of Spirituality and Legislative Affairs at Signature HealthCARE

EDUCATION:
Executive MBA in Health Sector Management and Policy from the University of Miami; MFA from Spalding University; B.A. in Communications and Business from Vanderbilt University

HOBBIES:
Writing, reading, traveling and fashion.

Full interview online at medicalnews.md
Daniel Eichenberger, MD
President and CEO at Floyd Memorial Hospital and Health Services

What was your first job in healthcare? What did you take away from that job that you use today?
I began working at Floyd Memorial in 1978 in Environmental Services emptying garbage, picking up linens, stripping, waxing and performing routine floor care. I learned how important everyone’s job is in healthcare, from entry level positions to upper level administration. It has kept me grounded and focused on decisions and how they affect everyone and not just select groups.

Keep a positive attitude and do things right the first time.

How do you approach management and leadership at Floyd Memorial?
I am primarily a faith-driven, servant leader. I strive to display many qualities of successful leaders including character, commitment, competence, focus, discernment, initiative, passion, problem solving, responsibility, positive attitude and self-discipline. I believe I am an honest and fair leader, and always responsive to my peers, the hospital staff, patients and families. My time-management skills are exceptional and I perform well in a fast-paced environment. I hold my team accountable for projects and actions and provide valuable feedback upon solicitation. My organizational skills are exceptional, displayed at the present time by juggling the CMO/CMIO, CEO position and physician duties on a daily basis.

What is your very best skill – the thing that sets you apart from others?
My best skill is my ability to make decisions confidently, efficiently and consistently based on sound moral principles and a wide range of knowledge and experience. I multitask extremely well and have exceptional time-management skills.

What was the most significant event/development at Floyd Memorial in 2015?
The most significant event was educating and convincing the Board of Trustees of the need to proactively seek out a merger/affiliation while we are in a position of strength. It has allowed us to be very selective in our partner selection and presented us with exceptional offers which will set up our hospital for long term success meeting the needs of the county and surrounding areas.

How do you revitalize yourself?
I love reading and studying Christian apologetics and I regularly read Maxwell’s leadership bible for encouragement and guidance. In October and November I look forward to deer hunting and love watching nature come to life in the mornings with the sunrise.

What’s one piece of advice you remember most clearly?
Do everything to the best of your abilities as a gift back to God. Keep a positive attitude and do things right the first time.

EDUCATION: MD from the University Of Louisville School of Medicine; MBA in Health Care Management from Indiana Wesleyan University

HOBBIES: I enjoy hunting, bass fishing and teaching and playing cards with friends. I also enjoy movies and date nights with my wife. We love spending time with our grandkids and encouraging their music and activities.

Full interview online at medicalnews.md

Dear Primary Care & ObGyn Provider, Hospitalist, Community Health Center Director and APRN:

You and your team play THE pivotal role in the prevention and early detection of colorectal cancer (CRC) among our community. In Kentucky, the single most important factor screening which influences the patient to be screened is the recommendation from their primary care physician.

Although screening rates have markedly improved in Kentucky, much work remains to be done as CRC remains the second most common cause of cancer related deaths and the leading cause of cancer deaths among non-smokers over the age of 50.

Remember, the best screening strategy is one that gets the job done and there is not the ‘gold standard colonoscopy’ concept anymore.

Normal risk individuals have several options for screening in addition to screening colonoscopy every 10 years or flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years. They include non-invasive fecal testing which include both annual FIT (Fecal Immunochemical Test) and every 3 years multi-target stool DNA tests. For individuals determined to be at high risk, screening colonoscopy remains the preferred screening strategy. Currently, screening is recommended between the ages of 50 and 75 for normal risk individuals.

Eliminating system barriers around CRC screening such as out-of-pocket expenses and non-economic burdens are being managed though the implementation of the ACA and are being advanced with recent KY state legislation (KY HB 69/SB61) effective January 1, 2016 that allows for 100 percent coverage when billed with CPT code 82247, importantly, without cost share to the member. By expanding to noninvasive fecal testing options, we can reduce non-economic burdens by including tests that require no bowel prep and are not affected by diet or medications. We can meet the national goal of screening 80 percent of our population by 2018!

Whichever primary strategy you choose to use for your patients, recognize that you have many choices to offer and this promotes compliance. Therefore, it is extremely important to offer your normal risk patients a choice that includes either screening colonoscopy or noninvasive fecal testing (FIT or mt-SDNA). Studies have demonstrated increased CRC screening compliance within practices that offer both choices to patients. The non-invasive FIT test can be performed in the privacy of the patient’s own home and is preferred by many patients.

It is important to be aware that the newer noninvasive fecal testing-based strategies are equivalent to a colonoscopy-based strategy in their ability to reduce CRC mortality in conjunction with colonoscopy for positive results.

Remember, the best screening strategy is the one that gets the job done and there is not the ‘gold standard colonoscopy’ concept anymore.

Of note, GUAIAC- based fecal testing is no longer recommended for colorectal cancer screening and should be transitioned to the non-invasive fecal testing choices listed above.

Professional society recommendations and ACS recommendations are meaningless without your personal recommendation. Let’s meet the challenge and work together to make colon cancer disease of our past!

Divya Cantor, MD, MBA, FACOG
Senior Clinical Officer KY
Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield

Whitney Jones, MD
Founder, Colon Cancer Prevention Project
Founder, KY Cancer Foundation
Clinical Professor, University of Louisville
KentuckyOne Health was first in Kentucky to perform open heart surgery, first with transcatheter aortic valve replacement, first with ventricular assist devices, first with MitraClip procedure. We perform the most technologically advanced heart procedures in the region, because with each new first, we give more people a second chance at life. See all of our firsts at KentuckyOneHealth.org/Heart.

Jewish Heart Care and Saint Joseph Heart Institute are now known as KentuckyOne Health Heart and Vascular Care.

KentuckyOne Health. The one name in heart care.
At Spencerian College, we teach our students the skills and self-confidence they need to thrive. Our highly skilled graduates are ready to contribute to your healthcare organization’s success!

Qualified personnel available in these programs:
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LEXINGTON, Ky. (Jan. 24, 2014) — Chang-Guo Zhan, professor in the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy’s Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, received a three-year, $1.8 million National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant to develop a therapeutic treatment for cocaine overdose.

The development of an anti-cocaine medication for the treatment of cocaine overdose has challenged the scientific community for years. In fact, there is no current FDA-approved anti-cocaine overdose medication on the market.

"According to federal data, cocaine is the No. 1 illicit drug responsible for drug overdose related emergency department visits," Zhan said. "More than half a million people visit emergency rooms across the country each year due to cocaine overdose."

This new grant is the fourth in a series of investigator-initiated research project (R01) awards that Zhan has received from the NIH to continue to discover and develop a cocaine abuse therapy. In previous work, Zhan has developed unique computational design approaches to generate high activity variants of butyrylcholinesterase (BChE), a naturally occurring human enzyme that rapidly transforms cocaine into biologically inactive metabolites.

Zhan and his collaborators have improved BChE catalytic activity specifically against cocaine by 4,000 times. The focus of this new grant is to optimize and stabilize these high-activity BChE variants. The hope is that at the end of this grant, this therapy will be ready for clinical development.

"Dr. Zhan’s lab is at the leading-edge of cocaine overdose therapy," said Linda Dwoskin, associate dean for research at the UK College of Pharmacy. "This grant is the culmination of the pre-clinical, innovative and groundbreaking work that has been taking place in Dr. Zhan’s laboratory for many years. The next step will be to move this potential therapy into clinical use and make it available to those who need it."