FINANCE CHALLENGES IN A CHANGING HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENT

By Sally McMahon

Medical News recently spoke with local healthcare finance experts to learn about the challenges they face in the changing healthcare environment in Kentucky. The executives included were Holly Hodge, Chief Financial Officer and vice president of Finance at Bluegrass Care Navigators, Adam Shewmaker, director of Healthcare Consulting Services at Dean Dorton and Dale Skaggs, director at Blue & Co. Below are the highlights.

Medical News: What trends are you seeing in healthcare, as it relates to finance, costs and revenue?

As the move towards value accelerates, the development of new value-based reimbursement methods grows. Payers and providers continue to be more willing to discuss collaborative opportunities for new services and reimbursement methodologies which bring benefits to all parties involved.

As these are often new arrangements, the background processes aren’t always in place to generate prompt reimbursement. This can lead to frustration for providers if services are being provided but reimbursement is not being received.

Downward pressures on reimbursement for hospitals and physicians are a significant trend in the marketplace. The transition from fee-for-service to quality-based reimbursement has impacted many providers, both positively and negatively throughout the nation.

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) was one of the most significant changes to Medicare reimbursement ever and physicians are adapting to the new revenue impacts.

Additionally, the cost of electronic health records and malpractice insurance have forced organizations to seek new avenues for cost savings, including outsourcing some support functions, such as accounting, billing and credentialing, that were once completed internally.

Although it seems that the rate of acquisitions has slowed some, most community hospitals and independent physicians have sought affiliations and partnerships to help shoulder the burden of population health management while providing coordinated medical care across the full continuum.

The financial influences on health systems during the implementation of a new EHR implementation or conversion are significant. These influences are typically felt the most over a three-year period (planning and implementation). The EHR has additional costs that are greater than just the cost of the EHR itself.

The implementation also affects organizations financially due to the increase in staff needed to support the EHR transition, duplicate costs of older systems as they are taken off-line, the reduction in provider productivity in both hospitals and medical group operations and the revenue cycle learning curve.

Health systems will face these challenges when moving out of the implementation phase and back into providing healthcare service phase.

Medical News: What deal or transaction (Kentucky or elsewhere) do you find most interesting? Why?

Holly Hodge, Bluegrass Care Navigators

The evolution of Haven (Amazon’s not-for-profit joint healthcare venture with JP Morgan Chase and Berkshire Hathaway) led by Dr. Atul Gawande is quite interesting. Haven’s initial goal is to lower healthcare costs and create better outcomes and greater satisfaction for their U.S. employees and families.

The 24 federally-funded health center organizations in Kentucky leverage $72,852,303 in federal investments to serve 461,552 patients, 13% of whom are uninsured and 47% of whom are covered by Medicaid.

© National Association of Community Health Centers, 2019. For more information, please contact federalaffairs@nachc.org.

Sources | Federally-Funded Delivery Site Locations: data.HRSA.gov, December 3, 2018.
Recession’s impact lingers for food-insecure rural seniors

Senior citizens in rural America are facing food insecurity, a new study shows. One in five rural seniors has difficulties getting enough to eat. According to James Ziliak, PhD, director of the University of Kentucky's Center for Poverty Research and the co-author of the study, nearly 30 percent of senior citizens living below the poverty line are food insecure or concerned they won’t have anything to eat. About half of those seniors, defined as 60 years and older, have very low food security, meaning they frequently worry about access to food. Of the top 10 states for food insecurity in seniors, nine of them are in the southeast. In Kentucky 14.8 percent of the senior population is food insecure. The study shows that while the economy has recovered since the recession, it hasn’t recovered as quickly for those in rural areas. Lack of jobs, lack of access to food and lack of income are hampering seniors’ assurance that they will have food when they want it.

Norton Healthcare receives recognition

For the second year in a row, Norton Healthcare has been identified as one of the companies liked best by female workers in Forbes’ second annual ranking of America’s Best Employers for Women. For its efforts to improve antibiotic prescribing, Norton Children’s Hospital has been named an Antimicrobial Stewardship Center of Excellence. The designation, from the Infectious Diseases Society of America, is awarded to hospitals that effectively prescribe antibiotics and combat their overuse. Norton Children’s Hospital is only the fifth pediatric hospital in the country to receive the designation.

UK to study decision-making processes behind substance use disorders

Faculty from the University of Kentucky Department of Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Behavioral Science in the College of Medicine have received two, five-year Research Project Grants (R01) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study neurobehavioral processes involved in drug use disorders. The first project, which addresses cocaine use disorder, totals over $3 million. The second project addresses opioid use disorder and totals over $3.1 million. By using a technique known as probabilistic reinforcement learning choice procedure, along with computational data modeling and neuroimaging/neuromodulation/neurorecording techniques, the researchers will reveal neurobehavioral processes underlying suboptimal choice.

Anthem Foundation helps supplement health data exchange

The Anthem Foundation has awarded the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA) a $250,000 grant to support the implementation of a health IT solution designed to streamline health data exchange between emergency department (ED) personnel and other providers. Kentucky hospitals will use the grant to launch a solution called EDie, developed by Collective Medical Technologies. The solution will help deliver critical patient information to emergency clinicians for better-informed clinical decision making and improved patient health outcomes. Hospitals throughout the state will have the opportunity to utilize the software at no cost. So far, ten Kentucky hospitals have adopted the health IT solution. An additional 28 hospitals are currently in the process of going live with the technology.

Owl Insights implements behavioral care platform with Centerstone

Owl Insights Inc., a cloud solution for measurement-based behavioral care (MBC), announced that Centerstone of America (Centerstone), a behavioral healthcare and a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC), has implemented the use of the Owl platform across facilities in Indiana and Kentucky. The Owl’s cloud-based platform enables providers to easily screen patients for behavioral health status, and track and monitor treatment progress. The use of evidence-based, patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) enhances Centerstone’s clinical confidence with the goal of improving care and outcomes for adult, child and adolescent patient populations. With successful implementations in Indiana and Kentucky, Centerstone now plans to deploy the Owl systemwide throughout its facilities in three additional states: Florida, Illinois and Tennessee.

Study examines suicide ideation, planning, attempts

Borders and Kathi Harp used data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health to examine trends in suicide ideation, planning and attempts. The nationwide survey is conducted through in-person interviews of 60,000 people who are 18 years and older. It is meant to provide information about the epidemiology of mental health across the United States. When the data were organized so rural and urban rates could be compared, Borders and Harp found that rural residents experienced higher rates at all three stages. Meaning, rural communities are more at risk of dying by suicide because they are more likely to think of suicide as an option and plan an attempt. The study didn’t examine ‘the why’ but did evaluate protective factors and risk factors.
Lung cancer screening for at-risk Kentuckians

The GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer (formerly known as Lung Cancer Alliance and the Bonnie J. Adario Lung Cancer Foundation) is conducting a statewide education campaign in partnership with the University of Kentucky to bring lung cancer screening awareness to the thousands of Kentuckians at risk for the disease.

The campaign stems from the Kentucky LEADS Collaborative (Lung Cancer, Education, Awareness, Detection, Survivorship), a project led by UK, University of Louisville and the GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer.

The Kentucky LEADS mission is to reduce the burden of lung cancer in Kentucky and beyond through the development, evaluation and dissemination of innovative, community-based interventions that focus on three key components: prevention and early detection, provider education and survivorship care.

Revon Systems to be acquired

Crestwood, Ky.-based Revon Systems reached an agreement to be acquired by ZYUS Life Sciences of Saskatoon, Canada.

Revon started as a spinoff from Crestwood-based Apellis Pharmaceuticals. The company developed a data collection platform that integrates mobile technology and connected devices with healthcare services and therapies.

UofL, Norton in talks to combine pediatric operations

The University of Louisville is in talks with Norton Healthcare about its pediatric practice. U of L and Norton Healthcare agreed to eventually come to terms on the transfer of major portions of the school’s pediatric practice to the Louisville-based hospital system.

The letter states that U of L will work with Norton Hospitals to come to terms on the transfer of tangible assets of U of L’s clinical pediatric enterprise to Norton Children’s Hospital.

The agreement also would transfer substantially all the employees in U of L Physicians, the School of Medicine and the Novak Center For Children’s Health who work on pediatrics to Norton Children’s Hospital.

Children’s Home honored for work with LGBTQ

The Children’s Home of Northern Kentucky earned “Innovator” status from the Human Rights Campaign, a Washington, D.C.-based organization focused on advancing equality issues for LGBTQ people.

The Covington-based organization was noted for its CHNK Behavioral Health program, which was started in 2016.

It is now the first Kentucky agency to earn the HRC Foundation’s All Children-All Families (ACAF) seal of recognition for its cultural competencies regarding youth and families who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. The innovator status is the top tier recognition.

Medical News is a community of people who are experts in the business of healthcare. Our healthcare leaders engage in our community in person, in print and online in order to gain insights and information to build relationships and grow their business.

Our community reflects the broad landscape of the business of healthcare - from traditionally defined healthcare businesses to all the adjacent companies that are part of the fabric that supports the industry.

In the past 25 years, we helped create experiences and share the stories that matter in the business of healthcare in our region.
Baptist Health

Christopher Squires, DO, joined Baptist Health Medical Group Women's Care.

Bingham Greenebaum Doll

Christopher W.D. Jones was promoted to co-chair of the Business Services department.

Centerstone

David Weathersby was named Chief Operating Officer. Weathersby previously served as vice president of the Child & Family Services Division.

Ellis & Badenhausen Orthopaedics

Brent Norton was promoted to executive director.

Humana

Susan Diamond was named segment president of the home business segment.

Kindred

Mark Reid has joined Kindred at Home as its new chief human resources officer.

McBrayer

Maxine Bizer is now Of Counsel in the firm's Louisville office. Bizer joins McBrayer with colleagues from Reed Weitkamp Schell & Vice.

Sandige

Ridley Sandidge, Jr., has joined as a Member in the firm's Louisville office. He previously practiced with Reed Weitkamp Schell & Vice and focuses his practice on business disputes and insurance defense.

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University of Kentucky

Peter Blackburn, MD, with the College of Medicine, has been presented with the Kentucky Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons' (KAEPS) Ophthalmologist of the Year award.

Wyatt, Tarrant & Combs

Lindsay Scott recently joined the Louisville office and will concentrate her practice in transactional and regulatory healthcare law.
Meet Cassie Mitchell, Chief Operating Officer
Clinical Services at Bluegrass Care Navigators

Medical News: Tell me about your management approach in your new role.

Cassie Mitchell: I try to live by the golden rule “do unto others as you’d have done unto you,” both personally and professionally. My DiSC personality type is I-D (Inspiring and Dominant). I value the relationship component of leadership; truly caring about those I support as people first, then as my employees. As the same time, my D supports my desire to get things done and I live by accountability with compassion. I also work hard at servant leadership, with the clear understanding you cannot pour out of an empty well so ensuring good self-care is modeling good leadership in my book.

MN: What is your very best skill — the thing that sets you apart from others?
CM: Cutting through the clutter to get at the heart of the matter, or so I am told. I asked a few of my teammates to help me here – it’s hard to identify your best skill by yourself! I thrive on working to make the complicated, simple.

MN: Where do you do your best thinking?
CM: I have a 45-minute commute one-way to and from the office each day, so I do my best thinking in the car. Some days I am on the phone (hands-free) both ways, other days I sing my heart out (and I cannot carry a note), other days I just let my mind float. Occasionally, I have one of those light bulb moments and I use talk to text to capture my thoughts because I shift into mom mode when the car enters the garage.

MN: Any final big-picture thoughts on how you’re approaching your new role, and how you want to make your mark?
CM: Well, I just hit the one-year mark in my “new role” and it remains an honor to be entrusted to support and lead our team, most of whom are out in our communities, delivering exceptional care in the home. Those folks, they are the ones making a difference in the lives of patients, families, clients, partners and each other and I get to play a supporting role in making that happen.

I hope to make my mark by improving the patient experience and access to care by creating synergy in our processes and opportunities to continually improve our complex and diverse organization. I am committed to creating and supporting an environment that supports changing and growing to serve the needs of our team and those we care for.

FAST FACTS

Hometown: Burgin, Kentucky
Family: Husband (Matt), Sons (Cole – 17 and Greyson – 15), Furry Children (Sampson and Emmett)
Hobbies: Traveling with family and friends, gardening and reading.
Currently reading: Personal — “The House We Grew Up In” by Lisa Jewell and for work — “The Vibrant Workplace: Overcoming the Obstacles to Building a Culture of Appreciation” by Dr. Paul White.
Favorite vacation spot: Trunk Bay, St. John USVI

Read Mitchell’s full profile at medicalnews.md.
Health for a Change Workshop
Infographics for Social Change

Time: 9:30 am to 3:30 pm
Info: Learn how to tell visual data stories to inspire policy change and mobilize information at the grassroots level. healthy-ky.org

National Health Center Week

Info: An annual celebration with the goal of raising awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America’s health centers over the past five decades. healthcenterweek.org

Dean Dorton: The Data-Driven Finance Leader

Location: Eppings on Eastside, 264 Walton Ave., Louisville, Ky. 40502
Info: Join Dean Dorton and Linda Pinion from Sage Intacct to learn how to use data to be a trailblazer in finance today and ready yourself for the future. deandorton.com

2019 eHealth Summit: Renovate to Innovate

Time: 7:30 am to 3 pm
Location: 1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, Ky. 40511
Info: kbic.ky.gov

Camp Evergreen

Info: A weekend retreat for bereaved families with children (ages 6 -18). Evergreen is provided under the direction of professional counselors from the Hosparuis Health Grief Counseling Center as well as trained volunteers. hosparuishealth.org

Medication Medley: What’s New and Different in the World of Pharmacy

Time: 12:30 to 5 pm
Info: kcnpm.org

Kentucky Home Care Association Annual Conference

Time: 9:45 to 11:45 am
Location: Embassy Suites by Hilton Lexington/UK Coldstream, 1801 Newtown Pike, Lexington, Ky. 40511
Info: Discussing the changes in homecare reimbursement that will go into effect January 2020. khca.net

Lexington Medical Society Golf Tournament

Time: Starts at noon
Location: Boone’s Trace National Golf Club, 175 Gleneagles Blvd., Richmond, Ky. 40475
Info: lexingtondoctors.org

2019 Annual KPMA/SPA Meeting

Info: kypsych.org

Diabetes Learning Collaborative Info. Session

Info: The Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (KDPCP) at the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) recently received a multi-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to improve diabetes clinical outcomes. Through the grant, the state of Kentucky has chosen to focus on the implementation of a Diabetes Clinical Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative (DLC). kentuckyrec.com

Heartland Hospital Medicine (HHM) Conference by UK HealthCare CECentral

Location: Lexington Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa, 1800 Newtown Pike, Lexington, Ky. 40511
Info: Improve the quality and effectiveness of the first line of care received before complex patients require transfer to the university hospital setting for more advanced care. Call 859-257-5320 or email support@cecentral.com.

Employer Roundtable: Trends in Benefit Design Evolution

Info: Scott Conrad, MD, discusses the latest strategic national perspectives of healthcare benefits, potential impacts and key considerations for implementation. Open to KHC employer members only. kycollaborative.org

Annual Kentucky SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) Conference

Location: Omni Louisville Hotel, 400 S. 2nd St., Louisville, Ky. 40202
Info: kyshrmconference.com

HAVE AN EVENT FOR OUR PRINT OR ENEWS CALENDAR?

Email news@igemedia.com
Driving collaborative innovation between BigCos, startups

In May, Health Enterprises Network hosted “Entrepreneurs & Big Cos: Mapping the Path to Collaboration and Economic Growth,” an event exploring the benefits and intricacies of working partnerships between startup companies and big and medium-sized corporations.

A panel of successful entrepreneurs and corporate innovators, moderated by Patrick Henshaw (CEO of LEAP – Louisville Entrepreneurship Acceleration Partnership), gathered to share their experience on bringing innovation to the healthcare sector through relationships between corporate and entrepreneurial entities.

Collaborative Innovation

Presenters discussed collaborative innovation from both the corporate and startup perspective. Praveen Thadani, senior vice president of Growth Strategy and Trend for Louisville-headquartered Humana, shared his perspective on balancing inherent risk when engaging startups in his role with the insurance heavyweight. “There is the element of introducing risk into the organization, when you’re partnering a startup. But you also have to realize and contextualize that the reason we [Humana] are working with a startup is to de-risk our own business.” He said, “there is something else going on in our business where we really need to know about your space, the startup space. That’s why we’re interested in you.”

Panelists agreed that collaboration with nimble, startup companies was essential to effective innovation in the healthcare space, and an especially fertile resource for large companies. Often, however, the innovative ideology between the two entities isn’t naturally harmonious.

“When we first came out of academia, we thought we would put a bunch of bells and whistles on the innovation. But when we talked to businesses, they were not interested in bells and whistles. They were interested in the bottom line.” said Angelique Johnson, CEO and Co-founder of MEMStim, a startup company that produces implantable electronics to treat neurological disorders. “Our solution was automating. What our customers cared about was a manufacturing process that could give them the price point they wanted… It might not be sexy, but you’re making a profit.”

Kevin Bramer, CEO of Lucina Health, an enterprise SaaS startup with the insurance heavyweight. “There is something else going on in our business where we really need to know about your space, the startup space.” He said, “there is something else going on in our business where we really need to know about your space, the startup space. That’s why we’re interested in you.”

Greater Louisville Inc. (GLI) is close to finishing its 2020 campaign, raising more than $6 million or 80 percent of its $7.5 million goal as of July 1 to fund regional economic development, public policy advocacy, workforce and business attraction.

Greater Louisville 2020 is an aggressive and comprehensive regional economic growth and capacity-building initiative centered around three goals:

- Recruit businesses and grow jobs.
- Recruit, grow, and retain workforce.
- Advocate for a strong business environment.

Funding allocations among the three goals of the 2020 campaign are directed by donors or granting organizations.

Tech-powered company acquires HomeHero

The new tech-powered home care player is Family Directly, launched in mid-2018 with the help of former Almost Family CEO William Yarnuth. The Louisville, Kentucky-based company acquired HomeHero toward the end of last year, but officially announced the move more recently to coincide with a takeover of the now-defunct startup’s web site.

Trilogy to fund online college for employees

Trilogy Health Services has inked a partnership with Purdue University Global that will enable its employees to earn college credits through the online college for free.

The initiative gives Trilogy’s roughly 15,000 part- and full-time employees free access to about 180 different online degrees, including associate’s, bachelor’s and master’s programs.

Under the agreement with Purdue, Trilogy is paying a discount rate for employees’ online classes, though the company can’t say exactly how much it will spend until employees start using the service.

Sullivan, Spalding Universities sign pharmacy agreement

The Sullivan University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and Spalding University have signed a Pathway Agreement partnership that will allow Spalding students to complete Sullivan’s pharmacy program at an accelerated pace while completing their Bachelor of Science degree at Spalding.

The agreement establishes a pathway in which Spalding University students who are studying natural sciences and are on a pre-pharmacy track can transfer to Sullivan University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences after three years at Spalding.

Upon completing the first year of Sullivan’s accelerated PharmD program, the students can transfer those credit hours back to Spalding for completion of their Bachelor of Science degree.

ProAssurance honored

ProAssurance Corporation has been named to the prestigious Ward’s 50 for 2019. This is the thirteenth consecutive year the Ward Group has recognized ProAssurance as one of America’s fifty top performing property-casualty insurance companies.
Sullivan University has recently developed an associate of science (A.S.) degree in community health services and enrollment is expected to begin in the fall of 2019.

Sullivan has also announced a new community health services articulation agreement with eastern Kentucky-based Addiction Recovery Care, Inc., (ARC). ARC operates a network of state-licensed residential and outpatient drug and alcohol abuse treatment centers throughout eastern Kentucky.

The agreement allows for graduates of the ARC Peer Support Specialist Academy to be awarded undergraduate elective credit that can be transferred into the community health services A.S. program, which is nearly one-third of the total credit hours for the new degree. The credits can also be applied toward bachelor's degrees offered by Sullivan.

Northern Kentucky University’s Institute for Health Innovation (IHI) is looking for aspiring entrepreneurs for its inaugural Health/Healthcare Pitch Competition, an initiative supported by the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration’s RISE grant.

NKU received one of 40 grants through the 2018 i6 Challenge, a national initiative designed to support the creation of centers of innovation and entrepreneurship. This was the first time funds from the i6 Challenge have been awarded in Kentucky.

The IHI is looking for ideas or concepts related to process and policy, population health, device and treatment, or other areas of health care. Selected finalists will pitch their ideas in August for a chance to win cash prizes ranging from $1,000 to $4,000.

The winning teams will also receive coaching and individualized support through NKU’s Small Business Development Center.

Jewish Hospital will end its heart transplant program effective Aug. 17. This only affects the heart transplant program at Jewish Hospital. It does not affect other solid organ transplant programs provided at Jewish Hospital, nor does it affect any other cardiovascular services provided at the hospital.

The Organ Procurement and Transplant Network, the organization that directs human tissue transplants in the U.S., changed how heart donation are allocated. The change resulted in fewer heart transplant cases being sent to Jewish Hospital.

The hospital has only performed one heart transplant this year. Transplant programs must perform at least 10 heart transplant procedures over a rolling 12-month period to stay in compliance with federal standards.
2030
1 in every 5 U.S. residents will be of retirement age

2035
Older adults, aged 65+, will outnumber children under the age of 18

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

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Kindred Innovations & Lacuna Health
Louisville Metro Government
Metro United Way
myFamilyChannel
RoundTower Technologies
& Maple Knoll
The Trager Institute
& The University of Louisville

**Additional presenters to be announced!**

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Wednesday, September 18, 2019
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8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Conference
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. | Cocktail Reception

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By Haylee Abrams

Kyle Bachman-Johnson was first intrigued about becoming a volunteer with the dying after watching a close family friend deal with a terminal diagnosis 15 years ago.

“It opened him up to living in a different way, knowing his time was limited,” she said. “He started to live like he had never lived before.”

After her children had grown and moved out, Johnson, who now works full-time at the University of Kentucky Libraries, took the opportunity to become a volunteer with Bluegrass Care Navigators. In her three years of volunteering, she’s found the experience highly rewarding and dismisses the notion that the work is all “doom and gloom” like some people might assume.

“The reason people are fearful, I think, is that they’re worried they’re going to do or say something wrong,” Johnson said. “Just once, just show up. Just put yourself there with an open mind and be curious. Most of us aren’t familiar with death so we need a little time and experience to get acquainted with it.”

Volunteers Needed

Currently, Bluegrass Care Navigators is looking for volunteers for the Bluegrass Hospice Care Center at UK Healthcare. The new space opened last year and is located on the third floor of the UK Markey Cancer Center’s Ben F. Roach Facility. The unit provides specialized end-of-life care for patients and their families dealing with a variety of diseases.

With campus parking at a premium, the new location is a convenient choice for UK faculty, staff and students looking for community service opportunities. For Johnson, the floor is just a five-minute walk from her office in Young Library.

“I was so excited when I found out I could walk over there,” she said. “I don’t need to worry about parking!”

The Bluegrass Hospice Care Center is also one of only a handful of hospice units located in an academic medical center. This provides a great opportunity for the campus community to learn more about hospice care.

“This is so educational for people,” Johnson said. “And it can be nourishing for you. I get so much more out of it than I give. It has taught me a great deal about myself and it helps inform my decisions.”

While Johnson enjoys working directly with patients – she has participated in Supportive Visits, Respite Care and 11th Hour volunteering – there are many other ways to help. Some volunteers do office work or make phone calls if they’re uncomfortable working directly with patients. Bluegrass Care Navigators provides training and screenings to individualize volunteers’ scheduling and assignments based on individual volunteers’ interests – essentially, you do what you want or can do.

“Volunteers are highly regarded members of our care team; they deliver that extra touch of kindness,” said Jennifer Curtis, Bluegrass Care Navigators Community Engagement Coordinator.

“Bluegrass Care Navigators provides ongoing support, mentoring and educational opportunities throughout the year ensuring volunteers feel comfortable in their chosen roles. Our team is thankful for volunteers like Kyle. They generously give their time to help our patients, families and staff.”

Ultimately, hospice care is about improving the quality of life for both the patients and their caregivers. Kyle urges people on UK’s campus and across the community to get involved and to let go of their preconceptions about hospice care.

“You’re not with dying people – you’re with people,” Johnson said. “Their bodies might be on the way out, but they’re still people and they appreciate connection.”

— Haylee Abrams is with the University of Kentucky.
Medical News partners with Health Enterprises Network to tell the healthcare story

By Ben Keeton

With over 450 companies working in the business of healthcare, Kentucky is often touted as a healthcare hub, especially as it relates to healthcare services and aging care. From large corporations like Humana and Kindred to start-up companies like RCM Brain and EdjAnalytics, the region is flush with interesting stories and potential for innovative changes that will cause ripples across the healthcare sector.

While we often see the names of the companies on buildings or hear about their work in earning reports, the stories behind the companies often go untold. Medical News is partnering with the Health Enterprises Network to explore the history of the healthcare companies and start to tell the healthcare story.

The Health Enterprises Network leads, organizes and facilitates region-wide economic growth in the healthcare sector through a theme-based approach to programming and initiatives. In early 2019, the organization shined a light on the 450 businesses with the launch of the Network Map. The Network Map includes a recorded compilation of the city’s healthcare history, laying out the story of healthcare excellence in Louisville through a timeline from the city’s origin to its modern-day evolution into the aging care epicenter of the nation.

“Creating a compelling narrative of Louisville’s historic strengths in health and aging care is essential to fostering future growth and attraction in the sector,” explained David Buschman, managing director of Health Enterprises Network. “The ‘Louisville Map of Health-Related Companies’ is a much-needed component in Louisville’s unified economic development toolbox. It’s an opportunity to come together to celebrate the city’s long history of health-related excellence and showcase the present-day connectivity of local ecosystem.”

Medical News and the Health Enterprises Network will build on this momentum with the development of a series of articles and interviews in this newspaper and a soon to be launched podcast. These interviews will focus on the leaders of the leading organizations and the history of the development of healthcare businesses in our region.

We look forward to exploring the businesses that make up the healthcare sector in our region. If there is a business or individual that you would like us to interview, please send me an email (ben@igemedia.com) and let me know.

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The 13th annual MediStar Awards

Tuesday, October 29, 2019

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Finance challenges in a changing healthcare environment

As these are often new arrangements, the background processes aren’t always in place to generate prompt reimbursement. This can lead to frustration for providers if services are being provided but reimbursement is not being received.”

— Holly Hodge, Bluegrass Care Navigators

“Long term, the plan is to share their solutions to help others. Dr. Gaware is known for being a visionary in healthcare and this organization has the potential to significantly change the current healthcare system as we know it as well as provide opportunities for healthcare providers in Kentucky to play a role in this evolution.

Adam Shewmaker, Dean Dorton

We’re seeing more physician practices forming super groups as an alternative to hospital employment. Specialties such as gastroenterology, dermatology and pediatrics have successfully developed these models and maintained their autonomy. Some of their management and administrative functions can be centralized which provides some cost sharing amongst multiple physicians.

As hospitals monitor their costs and quality outcomes, I would suspect that some physicians who are currently employed by hospitals and health systems will explore these types of arrangements in the future.

Medical News: What keeps you up at night? What can Kentucky do to create a better healthcare environment?

Holly Hodge, Bluegrass Care Navigators

Option 1: Being reimbursed for services provided is always a challenge and concern especially when it comes to new services and arrangements. While typically not causing an interruption of care, slow to arrive payments may put a financial burden on providers who must continue operationally while waiting for reimbursement. Putting processes in place to hold payers responsible for alleviating issues that prevent providers from successfully submitting claims could create a better environment.

Option 2: Kentucky ranks as one of the top 10 states for hospital readmissions for Medicare enrollees within 30 days of a discharge. Because readmission reduction program penalties assign a dollar value to each readmission, healthcare vendors willing to structure part of their contract on performance can differentiate themselves while helping their hospital partners. Developing alternatives in service delivery can provide opportunities that benefit all involved.

Adam Shewmaker, Dean Dorton

As an advisory services firm, we get to consult with our clients on an ongoing basis regarding the nature of their risks, weaknesses and opportunities. It’s one of the most rewarding aspects of what we do, but also can be the most difficult in that we have to stay abreast of key changes associated with multiple aspects of the industry.

From cybersecurity attacks and managing compliance to implementing process improvements, it takes a team approach and holistic view of a client organization to better serve them and provide value.

Any blind spots a client might have relative to change or potential negative impacts are a constant reminder of how we need to prepare ourselves with the right talent, service, and skill sets that our clients need.

Dale Skaggs, Blue & Co.

Certainly, the opioid crisis has had an impact on our clients. As Blue & Co. helps our hospital clients with their Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA), we are often seeing that the opioid crisis is creating a need to implement additional education and awareness programs for their communities and healthcare providers, as well as looking for new and creative ways to increase substance abuse prevention in the communities they serve.

We are helping our clients with developing unique strategies to reduce and manage the opioid epidemic in the communities they serve.

Medical News: Are there trends outside the healthcare industry that you would like to see applied to healthcare companies?

Holly Hodge, Bluegrass Care Navigators

Focus on creating a positive patient experience, equivalent to the customer experience in other industries, has been growing over the last few years and while some in the healthcare industry have made this a key focus area there is opportunity for growth.

As more healthcare consumers have high deductible health plans and as out-of-pocket costs continue to grow, providing an excellent patient experience becomes an important factor that consumers consider when making healthcare decisions.

The challenge with healthcare is often the regulatory environment with requirements that must be met in each encounter regardless of whether they add value to the patient experience or not.

Current reforms which focus on reducing and streamlining administrative burden may allow a shift of more resources to focus on the mission of direct patient care.

Adam Shewmaker, Dean Dorton

We’ve seen how technology companies have mastered data analytics and business intelligence to influence consumers and drive behaviors. Healthcare is starting to do much of what has been done already in other areas, such as retail and entertainment, which is to more closely connect the consumer with the overall experience.

Services such as online payment pay and access to electronic health records and test results can provide a much more user-friendly experience in the healthcare arena than in years past. Hospitals and physicians that can improve the customer (patient) experience can be a differentiator in the marketplace and positively impact revenue with some of the new reimbursement models. Healthcare entities that can successfully understand and manage their data will be better able to connect with their customers and affiliates.
National Health Center Week set for beginning of August

By Haylee Abrams

National Health Center Week (August 4-10) is an annual celebration with the goal of raising awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America’s health centers over the past five decades. Health centers serve 28 million patients in over 11,000 communities across the country. They also:

- Serve as the healthcare home for more than 28 million patients in over 11,000 communities across the country.
- Reduce healthcare costs and produce savings – on average, health centers save 24 percent per Medicaid patient when compared to other providers.
- Integrate critical medical and social services such as oral health, mental health, substance abuse, case management and translation under one roof.
- Employ over 220,000 people and generate at least $54.6 billion in total economic activity in some of the nation’s most distressed communities.
- Provide care to 1.4 million homeless patients and more than 350,000 veterans.

Health centers in Kentucky serve everyone regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. They serve everyone regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. They increase access to healthcare and provide integrated care services based on the unique needs of the communities they serve. They also:

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Health centers serve everyone regardless of ability to pay or insurance status. They increase access to healthcare and provide integrated care services based on the unique needs of the communities they serve. Health centers deliver value to and have a significant impact on America’s healthcare system.

Health centers serve 28 million patients – a number that continues to grow along with the demand for affordable primary care. In addition to their long history as healthcare homes to millions, health centers produce innovative solutions to the most pressing healthcare issues in their communities and reach beyond the walls of conventional medicine to address the social determinants of health affecting special patient populations.

This year’s NHCW 2019 will highlight how health centers are at the forefront of a nationwide shift in addressing environmental and social factors as an integral part of primary care, reaching beyond the walls of conventional medicine to address the factors that may cause sickness, such as lack of nutrition, mental illness, homelessness and substance use disorders. Community Health Centers’ success in managing chronic disease in medically vulnerable communities has helped reduce healthcare costs for American taxpayers. The 24 federally-funded health center organizations in Kentucky leverage $72,852,303 in federal investments to serve 461,552 patients, 13% of whom are uninsured and 47% of whom are covered by Medicaid.

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Health centers in Kentucky

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Grantee Organizations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Delivery Sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Grantees with PCMH Recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Grantees w/ Staff Authorized to Prescribe Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for Opioid Use Disorder</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Grantees Utilizing Telehealth</td>
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Health centers in Kentucky

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<th>Kentucky Residents</th>
<th>US Residents</th>
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<td>12%</td>
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<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Medicaid</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
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Norton Healthcare helps low-income families

Norton Healthcare is concerned that lower-income families aren’t receiving the care they need. A new grant is helping its young patients in the west end not only get medical care, but other needs as well, in one place.

A $500,000 grant from the Ulmer Family Foundation is helping the Norton Children’s Broadway location offer medical care, along with nutrition classes. Thanks to the Dare to Care Food Bank, a food pantry is offered, giving patients more resources.

UnitedHealthcare grant to fund community outreach

A new grant program from UnitedHealthcare will help a Kentucky-based community outreach group address the social determinants of health through a jobs training program.

The grant, which totals to $90,000 and has been awarded to Goodwill Industries of Kentucky (Goodwill Kentucky), will focus on jobs training for low-income individuals and those involved in the criminal justice system and who are re-entering society.

“At UnitedHealthcare, we look at an individual’s medical needs, but also at behavioral, functional and social needs, which are supported by programs like RISE,” said Amy Johnston, CEO, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Kentucky.

“The unique value that managed care offers Kentuckians includes working with community-based organizations to identify and address areas that affect health outcomes and quality of life. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Goodwill Kentucky on this program.”

The grant will specifically benefit Goodwill Kentucky RISE, which stands for Reintegrating Individuals Successfully Every Day. RISE focuses on jobs and skills training, as well as offers health and wellness education and literacy classes.

The RISE program also helps individuals get their records expunged where possible, erasing certain cases from their records. This is a key step toward getting a job for some recently incarcerated individuals.

Access to a consistent job is a key social determinant of health that impacts numerous other lifestyle factors that can affect health. Individuals with a job have a steady source of income that makes it easier to find a place to live and healthy food to eat. For some, it may also help connect them to employer-sponsored health insurance and other benefits.

The initial goal of the grant is to move 200 people through the program in one year. RISE is currently available in Jefferson County, with the possibility to expand statewide in 2020.

WellCare launches WellCare Works

WellCare of Kentucky will be offering a new online program to help members find social services and get jobs.

The program, called WellCare Works, will be accessible through WellCare’s member portal and backed by a phone help line. The program is designed not only to help members find jobs, but to complete degrees or find meaningful volunteer work.

WellCare of Kentucky is part of WellCare Health Plans.

WellCare serves approximately 445,000 Medicaid members, 14,000 Medicare Advantage plan members and 33,000 Medicare Prescription Drug Plan members in Kentucky, as of March 31.

The program will use “unique digital platforms” to help members prepare for finding jobs, including help with developing resumes, preparing for interviews and accessing one-on-one coaching.

The platform also includes a registry of more than 485,000 social support resources, including childcare, food, housing, transportation and utility assistance—critical to achieving positive health outcomes.

The launch of WellCare Works, with its emphasis on community engagement and relief for social determinants of health, follows the health plan’s most recent recognition in that area. In June, Points of Light, the world’s largest organization dedicated to volunteer service, named WellCare Health Plans as one of the 50 most community-minded companies in America for 2019.

Dare to Care Prescriptive Pantry at Family Health Centers

Community health centers have long understood the complex relationship between food, health and poverty: patients need to eat healthy food in order to be healthy, yet families and neighborhoods experiencing poverty struggle with access to healthy food.

This relationship is also well understood by Dare to Care and is the impetus for their Prescriptive Pantry Program, which addresses food insecurity by targeting healthcare providers who see low-income Louisville residents on a semi-regular basis.

Over a year ago, Dare to Care approached Family Health Centers (FHC) about becoming a new partner in this program. Patients are screened for food security at each medical and dental visit by answering two questions: 1) Have you run out of food in the last 12 months? And 2) Have you feared running out of food in the last 12 months? If a patient says ‘yes’ to either question, the staff offer them a bag of non-perishable, healthy food items.

FHC is a community health center with eight locations in low-income, medically underserved neighborhoods of Louisville. FHC provides adult and pediatric medical care, women’s health and prenatal care, along with behavioral health, social services, dental care, a discount pharmacy and health education programming to more than 40,000 patients a year. About 28,000 FHC patients live at or below the Federal Poverty Level; 23,000 patients have Medicaid, and nearly 8,400 are uninsured. No one is denied services due to inability to pay.

FHC now offers the Prescriptive Pantry at four locations and to date, has distributed more than 80,000 pounds of food, more than 10,000 bags. Dare to Care has secured grant funding to continue this program with FHC.

This program has allowed FHC to provide immediate and concrete support to thousands of patients with food insecurity, and to link patients to local food resources. In addition, the program allows providers to have more productive and inspired conversations with patients about how healthy food choices can directly impact their health, especially for diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity, which are FHC’s most common diagnosis for adult patients.
Last month, the Kentuckiana Health Collaborative sponsored a two-part webinar discussing ways that community-based organizations can partner to address social determinants of health (SDOH).

Part two focused on the innovative approaches that multiple organizations in our community are taking to improve SDOH, particularly in the area of food and housing insecurities.

Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. SDOH have an impact on health outcomes.

Health coverage alone is not enough to improve health outcomes. For example, physicians may encourage healthy eating, but may not realize how difficult that can be for some patients (i.e. not easy to get to a grocery store, may not be able to afford groceries over the whole month).

PRAPARE Pilot

Cynthia Cox, the director of Health Information Management at Family Health Centers in Louisville, Kentucky discussed the PRAPARE (Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients’ Assets, Risks, and Experiences) pilot, created by the National Association of Community Health Centers. PRAPARE is a national effort to help health centers and other providers collect the data needed to better understand and act on their patients’ social determinants of health.

In January 2018, Family Health Centers began working with the Louisville Health Advisory Board to pilot the PRAPARE tool. Use of the tool was launched in July 2018 with a small pilot group where medical assistants administered the questionnaire.

By October 2018 they expanded to a second site and included a hypertension program, lead by the health education department. Patients were screened by conversation rather than by questionnaire. A community health worker was connected if the patient had more than three needs.

In early 2019, the program expanded to seven of eight sites. The integrated behavioral health department now has clinical social workers completing the forms when a need is identified.

In June 2019 Family Health Centers launched a “no wrong door” approach to refer patients to United Community license holders. Staff can make referrals either in the electronic health records or on the Family Health Centers’ intranet site. United Community is a community-wide initiative to deploy an innovative shared technology platform to initiate and close referrals across many organizations.

The data coming out of using the PRAPARE tool is useful. But according to Cox, assessing needs is not enough. Cox explained, “Community partnerships are an important part of this project. The community must come together and wrap around the individual and address the needs. Once we do that, we will have a meaningful impact on an individual’s quality of life and health outcomes.” The Louisville Health Advisory Board is working to expand the use to other clinics throughout the community, including: Home of the Innocents, Family Community Clinic, Shawnee Christian Health, Park Duvalle and Smoketown Family Wellness Center.

News in Brief continued on page 16
Hosparus Health offers volunteer program at Kentucky State Reformatary

By Sky Kevyn Yeasayer

This is part one of a three-part series about Hosparus Health’s inmate volunteer program at the Kentucky State Reformatory, sharing stories of both the inmates who offer companionship and vigil to dying inmates, and the volunteers and staff who support the program.

On a bimonthly basis, a support team from Hosparus Health makes the short trip out to the Kentucky State Reformatory (KSR) LaGrange to meet with a group of Hosparus Health volunteers — incarcerated men in this medium security state prison.

The KSR volunteers have been trained by Hosparus Health staff, following the same training format for volunteers “on the street,” as the inmates refer to the outside world. Last year, 10 volunteers contributed just under 1,600 hours of service. The hospice inmates who are provided companionship and vigil visits are patients of the prison system, with their treatment administered by contracted medical staff of the prison.

There are two KSR staff members who oversee the hospice volunteer program, a licensed clinical social worker and a psychologist. They meet with the group during the month we don’t attend. Whenever a volunteer opening becomes available, they screen inmates to get into the program. Inmates must apply and have one year of clear conduct to become a hospice volunteer, and they must commit to a minimum of three hours each week, as well as being available as needed.

A deputy warden ultimately makes the final approval. The program guidelines are strict, and volunteers have been dismissed from the program for overstepping their boundaries. After one year of service, the volunteers receive 90 days “good time.” Most of the volunteers also have other jobs, including a legal aid, a pastoral care assistant, and a maintenance worker.

There is a waiting list for the 79 beds designated as medical care. KSR is the only prison facility in the state with a hospice program, and when the first prison volunteers began meeting with patients in October 1996, was one of a handful of prisons in the country offering hospice care.

Volunteer Tony Heitzman

Hosparus Health chaplain and current volunteer Tony Heitzman attended seminary and a pastor at St. Barnabas Catholic Church and Immaculate Heart of Mary, and then taught math at Trinity High School before beginning a career at Hospice of Louisville in 1987 as Director of Pastoral Care.

Heitzman always acknowledges inmates and offers them a friendly greeting. He knows no strangers, nor does he need or want to know what landed an inmate in prison.

Heitzman first got the call from Peter Houck, a chaplain at the prison, about starting a hospice program for the lifers who were dying about 25 years ago. The idea was originally turned down by the warden, but a couple years later when warden Walt Chapleau came to the prison, he gave permission for the program to proceed. He had received hospice care for his mother and believed in the mission to train prison inmates to work with the terminally ill.
Galen College of Nursing expands to Appalachian Regional Healthcare

Galen College of Nursing is expanding its Hazard campus at the ARH System Center in Hazard, Kentucky. These renovations will almost double the size of the campus.

Over 10,000 square feet will be added to provide advanced simulation labs, a second clinical learning lab, and a student resource center with a variety of inviting seating and study rooms, ideal for students to spend time working and studying.

University of Louisville secures millions in research funding

The University of Louisville has announced that the 950 grants awarded to faculty in 2018-19 totaled over $152 million, the most for UofL since 2012. This total represents a $14 million funding increase from the previous fiscal year.

The university’s grants come from the federal and state governments as well as private sources. Past research includes gum disease, e-cigarettes, robots and sexual assault investigations.

Grant donors this year include the National Institute of Health’s funding of a biomedical research center for advancement in state genomics research, the National Science Foundation’s donation to develop a manufacturing platform with microrobots and 3D printing, and the Kentucky Department of Education’s support of academic and behavioral improvement research.
Time to take a bold stand against e-cigarette use by kids

By Janie Heath, PhD

On June 17, CVS Health committed to over-turning youth e-cigarette use at a whole new level: The retail and healthcare giant will dedicate $10 million for strategies to prevent e-cigarette use and to educate our children about the danger.

This announcement follows a report released by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) earlier this year that stated that more than 1,550 warning letters and 240 civil money penalty actions were brought against a popular pharmacy chain for selling tobacco products to youth.

"Before entering your pharmacy chain of choice, I urge you to consider the question: is it labeling itself a health corporation while promoting and assisting in endangering our youth?"

CVS has taken a different and bolder approach. This company wants to deliver the nation’s first tobacco-free generation, and I could not be prouder of their stance and commitment to finally help stop a health epidemic that should have ended long ago.

In fact, the contribution is just a portion of its five-year $50 million Be The First Campaign – a multi-faceted approach, the goal of which is helping to create our country’s first tobacco-free generation.

It was only five years ago in 2014 that CVS, a true leader in the industry, banned all tobacco products from their shelves. Now, it is not a matter of if – but when – the other large health corporations follow suit.

Epidemic-Level Rise

From 2017 to 2018, according to the FDA’s National Youth Tobacco Survey, current e-cigarette use by high school students — defined by use of at least one day in the past 30 days—increased 78 percent, from 11.7 to 20.8 percent. That means a troubling 3.05 million American high school students used e-cigarettes in 2018.

Scott Gottlieb, the former FDA commissioner, has referred to these staggering statistics as an epidemic-level rise in e-cigarette use for youth. To make matters worse, e-cigarette companies are concealing health risks by disguising them as everyday items, such as USB drives. Further, the companies add appeal by offering flavors, including cherry, mango and crème brûlée.

The convenience and cool factor draw youth in, while the addictive properties of nicotine make them stay. The $600,000 grant CVS initiated to support the efforts of the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation to address the rising emergence of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems is bold and timely.

Each day that passes in which other retail health and pharmacy chains refuse to follow CVS means the health of more children is put at significant and severe risk. Is that the precedent and pattern of health we want for future generations? The bigger the move and the bolder it is, the healthier our children will be and the larger the benefits we will reap.

Before entering your pharmacy chain of choice, I urge you to consider the question: is it labeling itself a health corporation while promoting and assisting in endangering our youth? The clock is ticking. It’s time for all of us to take a bold stand for our children and generations to come.

— Janie Heath PhD, is Dean and Warwick Professor of Nursing at the University of Kentucky College of Nursing.

The Kentucky Pregnant Workers Act ensures women can work

By Sarah Moyer, MD

When Kentucky’s new Pregnant Workers Act goes into effect, our state will be taking a huge step toward improving birth outcomes and children’s health, by guaranteeing reasonable workplace accommodations for pregnant workers and those who have recently given birth.

Maternal health is crucial to the future health and success of a woman’s child. Babies born prematurely or at low birth weights are at much greater risk for chronic health conditions that can impact them throughout their lives, including heart disease and diabetes, as well as the ability to concentrate and thrive academically.

The relationship between the working environment and its impact on pregnancy is significant. According to 2013 U.S. Census data, 62 percent of women were working while they carried their developing child.

Our Center for Health Equity conducted a Health Impact Assessment on the Kentucky Pregnant Workers Act when it was introduced. A Health Impact Assessment is a process that brings together scientific data, health expertise and public input to identify potential health effects of proposed laws and regulations, programs, and projects.

We spoke with stakeholders and conducted a comprehensive review of existing data on the health impacts of working while pregnant to provide a more thorough understanding of how certain work environments can impact health. We also looked at evidence for the types of accommodations that can be made to reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes for pregnant workers and their developing children.

Reasonable Accommodations

What the evidence proved is that making reasonable accommodations in the workplace can improve birth outcomes and help infants flourish. For example:

- Reducing heavy lifting, bending or standing can prevent pre-term birth.
- Reducing exposure to continuously loud noises may prevent hearing loss in infants.
- Allowing a pregnant mom consistent access to water helps her maintain a healthy pregnancy.
- Providing a safe, private space for a postpartum mom to pump breastmilk helps her prevent mastitis and ensures a healthy flow of the most nutritious food source possible.

The ability to maintain employment during pregnancy is critical for the health and wellbeing of a mother and her developing child. Income provides for food, housing, and access to healthcare. Allowing pregnant workers to request reasonable accommodations for the physical transitions of pregnancy can both help alleviate health concerns and allow pregnant workers to continue earning an income during this important stage of life.

The Kentucky Pregnant Workers Act helps to ensure that any woman who can work to support her family without risking the health of her pregnancy and developing child. Workers and employers who want to learn more about the Kentucky Pregnant Workers Act can find a helpful fact sheet at abetterbalance.org/resources.

I encourage pregnant and postpartum women to speak with their employers to advocate for themselves and their developing children’s needs. When employers and employees work together to create a plan, pregnant workers stay healthy and continue to be part of a strong workforce.

— Sarah Moyer, MD, a family practice physician, is the director of the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness and Chief Health Strategist for Mayor Greg Fischer.
In Issues To Come

September

Marketing & Brand Building

November

Education/Workforce Development

October

Business of Aging

December

Healthcare Leaders

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