

Bridging the Gap in Rural Communities



Assistant Director of the KU Center for Telemedicine, Dr. Eve-Lynn Nelson recently presented a historical summary of Kansas' child telemental health programs as part of a major Federal Interdepartmental Rural Behavioral Health Workgroup effort entitled: "*Bridging the Gap in Rural Communities: Accessing Behavioral Health Services through Telehealth.*"

This presentation is one in a series of "webinars" supported by funding through the "Rural Portal: Healthy Children and Families" program, a federal initiative lead by the US Department of Health and Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and other federal agencies associated with rural mental health. This initiative's purpose is to enhance communication between grantees for child-assistive programs and to provide a dynamic resource for gathering grantees, individuals, families, youth, community and state partners who are working to transform rural behavioral health.

In addition to describing Kansas' extensive experience with telemental health, Dr. Nelson collaborated with Jennifer Kitson to describe the *Safe Schools/Healthy Students* telemental health experiences in Hays, KS, where students were able to access outreach psychology services through the Hays Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Ms. Kitson is currently the technical assistance specialist for the National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention.

Seventy-six sites participated in the webinar, with an audience drawn largely from federal agencies and grantees associated with federal grant programs. Dr. Nelson's webinar and other resources can be found at www.promoteprevent.org/rural, or by contacting Gordon Alloway at KU's Telemedicine Center, galloway@kumc.edu.

Hosting Leadership Kansas



KU's Telemedicine Center was honored to host the 2008 class of Leadership Kansas for a demonstration of telemedicine technology on June 26th. Sponsored by the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Kansas' mission is to inspire people to maintain involvement in the social, business and political fabric of Kansas' communities. Each year, Leadership Kansas brings together 40 upcoming leaders from throughout Kansas

and provides them with exposure to the critical issues facing Kansas' businesses and government.

TeleKidcare pediatrician Dr. Pam Shaw and the Telemedicine Center's Assistant Director of Research, Dr. Eve-Lynn Nelson, provided an interactive telemedicine demonstration, including an opportunity to learn how pediatricians use the digital otoscope and analog stethoscope for telemedicine in Kansas. Following the demonstration, the members of Leadership Kansas brainstormed ways telemedicine might be used in their own communities.

The telemedicine demonstration was part of Leadership Kansas' tour of KU's new Heart Hospital and the KU Medical Center, including presentations on rural health programs and updates on stem cell legislation and the National Cancer Institute designation.

The Telemedicine Center has had a long relationship with Leadership Kansas. Dr. Dave Cook, Assistant Vice Chancellor for External Affairs at KUMC, is a member of the 2008 Leadership Kansas class, and Dr. Pam Shaw, TeleKidcare pediatrician, KUMC Professor, and Vice-Chair of Education in Pediatrics, was a member of Leadership Kansas' 1997 class.

Congratulations to Dr. Barnard



The entire KU Telemedicine Center staff would like to extend congratulations to Dr. Martha Underwood Barnard on having been one of only three faculty members receiving the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Classroom Teaching during the recent School of Medicine graduation ceremonies at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Dr. Barnard has not only utilized her experience as a superb clinician, psychologist and nurse to bring an exciting interdisciplinary approach to medical education but also has guided nearly an entire generation of behavioral pediatric residents in learning to combine effective behavioral strategies with the practicalities of daily pediatric practices.

Always seeking creative solutions, Dr. Barnard was the first psychologist at the KU Medical Center to use telemedicine technology for outreach purposes nearly 15 years ago. Through the Center for Telemedicine here at KU, Dr. Barnard has been particularly active in working with the Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) throughout Kansas. By allowing medical students to observe her telemedicine clinics, she has provided many KUMC students with a valuable opportunity to focus on those medical needs unique to rural families.

A pioneer in the field of pediatric psychology and primary care psychology, Dr. Barnard has always exhibited a passion for the care of chronically ill children and their families. Marilyn Thomas, executive director of the Kansas City House of Hope, was recently quoted (in the Spring, 2008, issue of *Mizzou Nursing*) as saying, "Martha has a compassionate spirit that is constantly giving back to her fellow man. She treats each person with unconditional positive regard."

Dr. Barnard is a past recipient of the KU Pediatric Chairman's Award for Extraordinary Compassion and Caring, and has been a nominee of the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

Remote Monitoring / Home Telehealth

As well as leading the way in the delivery of telemedicine and telehealth programs in Kansas, KU's Telemedicine Center is dedicated to implementing and evaluating innovative health information technologies, including

- Electronic Medical Records (EMR)
- Personal Health Records (PHR)
- Consumer wellness technology (for use both at home and away from home)
- ePrescriptions
- Electronic Medication Management
- Wireless transmission of health data



In the area of home wellness technology, the Kansas Department on Aging (KDOA) has recently announced the expansion of a telehealth wellness program in rural Kansas that is being conducted by KU's Telemedicine Center in partnership with Windsor Place

At-Home Health in Coffeyville, KS. The purpose of this project is to investigate home telehealth technology use in the context of a Kansas home care project, in order to evaluate whether or not the resulting economic outcomes are similar to what has been experienced in other states.

For the past year, approximately fifty older (> 65 years old), chronically ill men and women have monitored themselves at home for such health indicators as blood pressure, weight, pulse and blood glucose through use of a small touch-screen device (much like a small desktop computer), with the necessary peripheral devices attached. The acceptable range for each measurement was provided by their primary care physician, and their physician is routinely kept informed of their test results. The touch-screen device is designed not only to measure health indicators, but also to automatically provide helpful lifestyle information based on any changes in the data.

Beginning this Fall, the program will expand to include a total of seventy-five participants. Final results of this research will be available after 12 full months of data have been collected and analyzed.

Early indications in the first year of research are that home health monitoring may offer significant potential for reducing overall medical costs for Kansans in the future. For more information on this research initiative, contact Ryan Spaulding, Director of KU's Center for Telemedicine and Telehealth at rspaulding@kumc.edu.

Federal Resources & Grant Opportunities



For anyone with an interest in rural health issues (and that includes almost all of us), the first article in this issue of TeleNews, "Bridging the Gap in Rural Communities," mentioned a federal resource that many of you will find valuable. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), part of the US Department of Health and Human Services, is spearheading efforts designed to transform the mental health system in the United States. These efforts are part of the federal government's response to the 2003 New Freedom Commission's report that strongly stated the need for "immediate and profound changes [designed] to build a mental health care system that is both consumer and family driven and focused on recovery and resilience ..." (source: http://www.samhsa.gov/Federalactionagenda/NFC_EXECSUM.aspx).

SAMHSA has organized a collaborative effort among more than 20 Federal entities to help improve recovery opportunities for every person with mental and substance abuse disorders. This Federal interdepartmental group has specifically targeted rural health care needs with the creation of the Rural Behavioral Health Workgroup.



If you haven't checked it out already, you should go to the Internet web site for the National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention (<http://www.promoteprevent.org/>). By following the "toolkit" links on the main page and the "Grantee Events" links in the side column, you will find an amazing amount of useful funding-related information, plus detailed presentations, discussions, and educational information on rural health initiatives (much like what you are probably working on or considering) from all over the US.

New Kansas Initiative – Telestroke Program



The Telemedicine Center is pleased to announce a partnership with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Department of Neurology at the KU Medical Center to develop a telestroke project for the state of Kansas.

The purpose of the telestroke program will be to provide urgent intervention by a neurologist to stroke patients from rural hospitals. The intervention will include a determination of whether or not the patient is a candidate for "clot-busting" medication, such as tissue plasminogen activator (tPA). If so, the tPA can be administered by the local clinical team with the hopes of minimizing any long-term stroke effects and providing treatment locally.

The project will leverage high-quality video conferencing and clinical imaging capability to pilot the project in two Kansas hospitals. Once successfully operating, the service would be extended to additional facilities.

For more information or to express interest in participating, please contact KUCTT at (913) 588-2226.

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