

Report from ATA's 2008 Conference



American Telemedicine Association

annual event for the telemedicine community and is designed to showcase the latest in telehealth and health information technologies, present valuable research findings, and discuss innovative projects.

The Center for Telemedicine's contingent from the state of Kansas was, once again, a significant presence at the American Telemedicine Association's (ATA) annual meeting, recently held in Seattle, WA. This meeting is the largest, most important

Nine people from the Center for Telemedicine attended the meeting and participated in many different capacities, including making both oral and poster presentations, serving as panelists for interactive roundtables, and facilitating panel discussions. This significant level of involvement and visibility served to highlight the state of Kansas and the dynamic telehealth and research efforts in our state.

Watch future issues of *TeleNews* and the KU Center for Telemedicine web site, <http://www2.kumc.edu/telemedicine>, for additional information on new research studies presented at the ATA annual meeting by the Center for Telemedicine's Director, Dr. Ryan Spaulding, and Assistant Director for Research, Dr. Eve-Lynn Nelson.

KU Center for Telemedicine Leads ATA Initiative

ATA's Telemental Health special interest group (SIG), under direction of an Executive Committee that includes Dr. Eve-Lynn Nelson, Assistant Director for Research at the KU Center for Telemedicine, won ATA's 2008 "Best SIG" award at this year's annual meeting. The Telemental Health SIG's mission is to promote dialogue between mental health practitioners, and to improve the understanding and use of telehealth applications in the delivery of mental health services.

Dr. Nelson also is Chairperson of SIG Membership Services, and serves as Co-Chairperson of the Telemental Health Guidelines and Development project.

HITS Happenings

Telehealth was one of four progressive technologies highlighted at the KU School of Nursing's inaugural Health Information Technologies Scholars (HITS) conference on April 3-5, 2008. The highly competitive HITS program brought together over 50 nursing scholars from 27 separate national nursing institutions. The conference offered educational, networking, and mentoring sessions, enabling attendees to refine project ideas they had developed in advance and brought to the conference.

Dr. Janet Grady, prominent national telehealth speaker, provided real-life examples of using telemedicine to train nursing students for the 21st Century, including linking rural nursing classes with teleclinical observation sites hundreds of miles away. The Center for Telemedicine provided the HITS conference attendees with *TeleKidcare-in-action*, showing both the provider and school presenter sides of the KU Medical Center Pediatric Department's telemedicine outreach program. School nurses Kathy Archer and Windy Garrett, with their wealth of telehealth and community experience, were (thankfully) available to demonstrate the multiple benefits of telemedicine.

Telehealth web demonstration materials for the HITS conference were developed through the Center for Telemedicine's partnership with the Midwest Alliance for Telehealth & Technology Resources. The Center for Telemedicine also provided live demonstrations and materials at the KU School of Nursing Open House held in conjunction with this innovative, new conference.

The Health Information Technology Scholars (HITS) program strives to stimulate improvements in health care delivery through the integration of technology into academic and clinical practice. The HITS program encompasses telehealth,

e-learning, simulation, informatics, and other health care and educational technologies.

Pediatric Weight Management Now Available State-Wide



The **Healthy Hawks** Program, a key part of the KU Medical Center Pediatrics Department's extensive outreach effort, is dedicated to helping children and their families overcome issues concerning weight management in order to live healthier lives. Consisting of a multi-disciplinary pediatric clinic (for children 3 - 17 years old), **Healthy Hawks** includes a dietician, Rebecca Burton; a pediatrician, Dr. Pam Shastri; and a psychologist, Dr. Jane Sosland.

Healthy Hawks clinics will soon be available at all Kansas telemedicine sites!

When: The 2nd Wednesday of each month

Start Date: June 11th, 2008

Appointment Scheduling:

New patients: 1-hour appointments at 9:00 a.m.

Follow-up patients: 1/2-hour appointments at 10:00, 10:30, 11:00, and 11:30 a.m.

Telemedicine sites must provide: Patient registration, consent, and NPP. Height, weight, and blood pressure measurement for everyone in attendance, not just the patient. Lab work in advance, if possible (can also be ordered by Dr. Shastri after initial visit if necessary).

Costs: Patient's insurance company will be billed for services provided. Patients are responsible for any deductible amounts or co-payments.

For additional information on Healthy Hawks or the KU Medical Center Pediatrics Department, click on the following link:

<http://www2.kumc.edu/kids/HealthyHawksProgram.htm>.

Kansas Reimbursement Task Force Update

Dr. Ryan Spaulding, Director of the KU Center for Telemedicine, represented KUMC at the initial meeting of the Kansas Insurance Commission's Telemedicine Task Force on Friday, April 25, 2008. Those in attendance included several Kansas Health insurers as well as many other telemedicine stakeholders.

Kansas Commissioner of Insurance, Sandy Praeger, established the Telemedicine Task Force earlier this year to study telemedicine issues and develop appropriate policies for telemedicine-delivered health services in Kansas.

The Task Force agreed that its primary objective was to:

- Determine appropriate reimbursement mechanism(s) for interactive video consultations between a health care provider and a patient.

Issues to be considered include the type of practitioner that can be reimbursed, the type of facility that can host the patient, the CPT codes that will be reimbursed, and whether or not an originating site fee can be billed for hosting a patient.

The next step in considering these issues will be for the Task Force to conduct a survey of all Kansas health insurers regarding their current telemedicine policies. Dr. Spaulding will be assisting in the survey design, with a target date for data collection of early June.

Watch future issues of *TeleNews* for additional Telemedicine Task Force activity updates.

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