

KEARNY COUNTY HOSPITAL COMMUNITY REPORT

A special update on our vision and leadership in rural health



A LETTER FROM THE NEW CEO

Dear Kearny County community member,

As we anticipate the new year and continue our mission for advancing rural health, I am thrilled to accept the appointment by the Board of Directors as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Kearny County Hospital.

In 2015, after learning about Kearny County Hospital's impressive work in rural health, I collaborated with former CEO Benjamin Anderson on several projects before becoming Chief Operations Officer in



David Hofmeister, CEO

August 2018. My administrative and managerial experiences in higher education have many similarities to those in healthcare. Having served as interim CEO for the last several months, and as we look to an even brighter future, I can't imagine a more exciting place to be than Kearny County Hospital.

Through new initiatives and solutions to improve the health of our community and create more cost-effective care, Kearny County Hospital has become a national model for rural health. State and federal government agencies are working to replicate our programs in other rural communities. We have established ourselves as an exemplary leader in compassionate healthcare and community wellness.

We have seen some remarkable achievements, and we have many more on the horizon. As Kearny County Hospital works to advance rural health, we are well-positioned to build upon our recent successes while continuing to serve our local and surrounding communities at the highest level possible.

With the support of all the amazing people on our team, I look forward to continuing the vision of Kearny County Hospital as a leader and innovator in rural health.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David".

David Hofmeister
Chief Executive Officer
Kearny County Hospital

**Learn more about David by
visiting our Facebook page**

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GIVING MOMS AND BABIES A HIGH 5 FOR BREASTFEEDING

Kearny County Hospital (KCH) participates in the High 5 for Mom & Baby program, which encourages five evidence-based maternity care practices that support breastfeeding success. Here's how we follow the five principles of High 5 for Mom & Baby at KCH:

- 1. Skin-to-skin after birth:** Immediate and sustained skin-to-skin contact between mother and newborn is key. Healthy, full-term newborns are dried and placed on the mother's chest, remaining in direct contact until the first feeding is attempted and/or accomplished.
- 2. Breast milk is best:** Breast milk is the only form of nutrition a newborn baby needs unless other food or drink supplements are medically necessary.
- 3. Rooming In:** Mothers and infants stay together 24 hours a day. KCH believes that the health and well-being of mother and baby are still closely linked after birth, and that care should be designed to keep them together whenever possible in a family-centered approach.
- 4. Natural nursing:** Newborns should practice nursing at the breast as often as possible, without the use of artificial nipples or pacifiers.
- 5. Breastfeeding support:** Before leaving the hospital, all mothers are provided with community resource options for support in breastfeeding. We welcome new moms to join our Pioneer Breastfeeding Network via Facebook. KCH also has seven Certified Lactation Counselors available to assist.



BETTER MATERNAL/CHILD HEALTH: HOW WE HELP

At Kearny County Hospital, we are finding new ways to provide excellent maternal/child care that helps keep both mom and baby healthy and safe:

- We strive to deliver information and knowledge that can guide mothers on healthy life choices. Given the proper resources, mothers will feel more empowered to make the best decisions for good results, whether during or after pregnancy.
- Since starting the Maternal Child Health Nurse position, we have made contact with 190 pregnant women, 25% of which were first-time mothers. Besides providing them with important educational information, we also offer or refer them to resources that best fit their individual needs, including on finances.
- Our Certified Lactation Counselors support and assist mothers with successful breastfeeding. This opportunity for guidance, which occurs during pregnancy and right after delivery, increases the chances of breastfeeding longer and more effectively, which is better for the baby.
- We place a special emphasis on child safety. The hospital has certified car seat technicians on staff who assist with proper car seat use and installation. The information that first-time parents receive on properly installing their infant's car seat could be lifesaving. We also host community events where people may come by to have their child's car seat checked.
- Because mental health is a high priority in our community, we are proud to offer our **Integrated Behavioral Health Clinic**. Of the mothers we are currently serving, 10% disclosed a mental health disorder. Our integrated mental health program allows us to work closely with them on addressing these issues. If the mother is healthy as a whole, she will have a greater ability to provide care for others, which in turn will help create healthier families.

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MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID FOR YOUTH

The Mental Health First Aid for Youth course offers guidance in assisting young people who are experiencing mental health-related issues. Participants learn the risk factors and warning signs of mental health challenges; strategies for handling crisis and non-crisis situations; and where to turn for help. Kearny County Hospital makes this training available in the surrounding area. For more information, please call our office at [620-355-7550](tel:620-355-7550) and ask for the Patient Care Team.

ON THE ROAD TO HELP CHILD VICTIMS OF ABUSE

The Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center and Kearny County Hospital have partnered to bring to Western Kansas a much-needed medical service for victims of sexual abuse. The Mobile Medical Unit is equipped to provide child abuse victims with comprehensive examinations from trained Forensic Nurses that travel to 21 underserved counties in Western Kansas. The sexual assault examination and other services for abuse are free to child victims of domestic violence, dating violence and sexual assault. Since April 2019, the Mobile Medical Unit and Nurses have provided more than 50 exams and traveled over 3,000 miles.



PAVING THE WAY FOR HEALTHIER CHOICES

Kearny County Hospital is setting an example for better food choices by pioneering the Garden to Table program right here in our community. Our hope is that by incorporating local produce, nutrition counseling and cooking classes, we can help our patients take steps toward decreasing the rates of obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Through this program, we can educate the community and provide opportunities for improved health before many of these preventable conditions take hold. With the Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, the local Wellness Coalition and KCH, we have put up greenhouses and opened a farmer's market, we're planning a community garden, and so much more.

Our goal is to make it easy and convenient to eat fresh, buy local, and plan meals around seasonal fruits and vegetables. The cooking classes are a fun way to learn what foods go well together, how easily you can make them at home, and which foods offer maximum health benefits.

To encourage physical activity, KCH and the Wellness Coalition have started a Bike Share program with more than 15 bikes that are free to check out and ride to work, to school, or just for fun. We are working on sidewalk and other walkability initiatives that will help people get from their homes to schools, grocery stores, churches, parks and restaurants more easily.

Kearny County Hospital is proud to be involved in giving our community the tools and resources they need for happier, healthier and more active lives.



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