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**Foundation advances Kansans' health**

BY PHYLLIS JACOBS GRIEKSPoor

The Kansas Health Foundation has awarded more than \$297 million in grants to organizations working to improve the health of Kansas since it was founded in 1985, Mary Campuzano, the foundation's vice president for programs, said Tuesday.

Campuzano, addressing the Wichita Independent Business Association's monthly luncheon, said the foundation's assets total \$480 million, more than double its starting assets of \$200 million. The foundation got its financial start from the sale of Wesley Medical Center to Hospital Corporation of America.

Campuzano said the foundation maintains a low profile, working to enable other nonprofit organizations to do the visible work that supports its mission of improving the health of Kansans. The foundation supports programs aimed at changing unhealthy behaviors, promoting healthy ones and developing a social structure that supports good health, she said.

It does not support typical health-industry roles such as genetic research, or direct medical care such as benefits to the uninsured or medical education.

"Our mission is less specific than individual programs," Campuzano said. "We do expect that the overall health of Kansas will improve as the result of our work."

While many people may not be familiar with the foundation, some of the education campaigns it has funded are well known. "Take a Second. Make a Difference," "Reach Out & Read" and "Grow Up with Me" are campaigns aimed at improving the lives of children. "Take it Outside" was aimed at making the public more aware of the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Kansas Health Foundation has also supported education in public health. It has provided funding for a master's degree program in public health at the University of Kansas School of Medicine and Wichita State University. It also began the behavioral risk factor survey program now operated by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

In addition, the Kansas Health Institute provides objective data to educate public officials and lawmakers on issues of public health.

"We do not lobby for specific programs, and none of our funding is for lobbyists," Campuzano said. "Instead, we concentrate on making objective data available to help facilitate good decisions."