

# 25 YEAR ANNIVERSARY



**Kansas Health Foundation**

309 East Douglas • Wichita, KS 67202-3405

316-262-7676 • 800-373-7681 • [kansashealth.org](http://kansashealth.org)

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**Kansas Health Foundation**

**Dedicated to improving the health of all Kansans.**

# OUR HISTORY

The Kansas Health Foundation can trace its roots back to the 1985 sale of Wesley Medical Center. At the time, Wesley was a nonprofit hospital associated with the United Methodist Church. Facing many changes in the health care industry, hospital and community leaders helped shape a vision for how the hospital's resources could be used to prevent disease instead of waiting to treat it once it occurs. This led to Wesley being sold to the for-profit Hospital Corporation of America (HCA).

The sale's profits went to two organizations focused on improving health in the state: the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund and the Wesley Foundation (now the Kansas Health Foundation).

With a \$200 million endowment and a focus on helping countless generations of Kansans, our Foundation set out to make a difference across the state. "We understood it was a tremendous opportunity to be a positive force for health in Kansas," said the late C.Q. Chandler, former chair emeritus of the Kansas Health Foundation.



## The early years.

The large endowment from Wesley's sale earned our Foundation a spot on the list of the 40 largest grant-making foundations in the country, and we ranked as one of the top 10 U.S. health-care foundations at that time.

At first, our grant-making was a small fraction of what it is today, but with about \$1 million in unrestricted funds each year, the Kansas Health Foundation still endeavored to make a long-term impact on our state's health. Some of our first grants went to the Breast Cancer Detection Project at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita and the Wichita Eye Foundation.

In 1988, the Kansas Health Foundation held town-hall style meetings in 40 communities across Kansas, and that feedback influenced our strategic plan for many years. Instead of funding medical research, our Foundation adopted a "back to the basics" plan, developing and supporting major initiatives in areas including public health, leadership and health policy.

## 1990-1999

In the 1990s, very favorable investment climates allowed our Foundation's asset base to flourish. Our grant-making expanded accordingly, averaging about \$15 million annually.

With those additional resources, our Foundation's work spread more broadly across the state as we built interlocking programs designed to touch many lives. The Kansas Health Foundation continued to cultivate relationships with hundreds of organizations, agencies and community



leaders. Those partnerships remain strong today. Our commitment to strengthening Kansas' public health system grew in this decade. The Kansas Health Foundation helped to establish Masters in Public Health programs at the state's largest universities, and we funded many projects to raise awareness about the importance of public health.

Two of our programs that continue to bear much fruit across the state – the Kansas Community Leadership Initiative and the Giving Resources to Our World (GROW) Healthy Kansas Initiative – were planted in the 1990s. We also debuted our Leadership Fellows program as well as numerous projects focused on the health and well-being of Kansas children.

## 2000-2010

Over the past 10 years, the Kansas Health Foundation has expanded our strategic funding priorities and established two organizations that further our goals in the areas of leadership and public policy. You'll find more information about our current focus areas, the Kansas Leadership Center and the Kansas Health Institute later in this brochure.

We have also directed some Foundation resources toward the issue of tobacco control, including our Emmy-award winning Let's Take It Outside campaign that encouraged adults not to expose children to cigarette smoke. Our work with community foundations blossomed in this decade and

generated \$33 million so far that has been re-granted to local nonprofits and projects. In addition, the Kansas Health Foundation feels proud of our strides toward improving the healthy behaviors of Kansans and our successful efforts to expand Kansans' access to health care.

## The future.

Looking down the road, the Kansas Health Foundation possesses a number of keys that we believe will help us accomplish our mission of improving the health of all Kansans forever. At the end of 2009, the Foundation's asset base was over \$445 million, we continue to expand our network of partners, and as always, we have a deeply dedicated board, staff and team of advisers.

Our Foundation owes a debt of gratitude to thousands of Kansans: the people who blazed the trail to make the Kansas Health Foundation a reality; the men and women who have given years of time and energy to further our mission and help us use the Foundation's money wisely; and all those who have partnered with us through the years to make Kansas a healthier place to live. Today, the Kansas Health Foundation stands on the bedrock created by their hard work. We could never have come this far without all of them and their efforts.

With hopeful hearts, the board and staff of the Kansas Health Foundation will continue to reach for our goals with drive and determination. We remain devoted to our mission of improving the health of all Kansans. Our Foundation feels so privileged to have this opportunity and commitment to serve Kansas, and we seek to be a significant partner in

## OUR FOCUS AREAS

### Promoting the healthy behaviors of Kansans.

Our efforts in this area center on promoting three key behaviors – ensuring proper nutrition, increasing physical activity and decreasing tobacco use – that are directly related to the leading causes of death in Kansas and the nation.



### Strengthening the public health system.

A strong public health system is vital to help protect people from disease, disability and premature death. Our Foundation seeks to strengthen and connect the critical components of the system in Kansas by addressing issues such as public health education, work force development for public health professionals and bioterrorism preparedness.

### Providing health data and information to policymakers.

We work to ensure that accurate and adequate information is accessible to local and state leaders and policymakers so they can make

informed decisions. To further this effort, we founded and will continue to fund the Kansas Health Institute. As an independent, nonprofit health policy and research organization based in Topeka, KHI leads our effort of providing health data to policymakers. To find out more, go to [www.khi.org](http://www.khi.org).

### Growing community philanthropy.

Most of our funding in this area supports the Giving Resources to Our World (GROW) Healthy Kansas initiative. The Kansas Health Foundation designed this \$60 million, 20-year program so we can work with community foundations statewide to keep local resources local. The first decade of this program is wrapping up, and

our 10 current GROW I foundations have increased their assets from \$19 million to about \$95 million and given \$33 million to their communities so far. Our second phase of GROW will spread the benefits of strong community foundations to many more areas of our state.

### Improving access to health care for Kansas children.

This is our newest focus area. While the Kansas Health Foundation will not be providing funding for direct medical care, our early priorities in this area will include enrollment and retention in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), known as HealthWave.

### Building civic leadership.

Nurturing leadership skills and training helps individuals to make changes possible in Kansas organizations and communities, so we founded the Kansas Leadership Center in 2007. This Wichita-based organization dedicates itself to supporting and building leaders throughout the state. To learn more, go to [kansasleadershipcenter.org](http://kansasleadershipcenter.org).



## APPLY FOR GRANTS



### Recognition Grants

Does your school, church or nonprofit group have an idea for a project that would improve the health and well-being of your community, but you need some money to make it happen? The Kansas Health Foundation's Recognition Grant program could help turn your ideas into reality. Using a competitive application process, this program awards up to \$25,000 per organization. Each year, we award as much as \$2 million to Recognition Grant projects.

**For more details, go to**  
[www.kansashealth.org/recgrants/](http://www.kansashealth.org/recgrants/)

### Letters of Inquiry

We are always open to hearing from Kansas nonprofits doing innovative work that fits into our focus areas, so the Foundation accepts one-page letters of inquiry from organizations that believe they have a project fitting this description.

**To learn more about this process, go to**  
[www.kansashealth.org/impact/grants.html](http://www.kansashealth.org/impact/grants.html)

