



MEDIA RELEASE

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William Newton Hospital Receives *Healthy Kansas Hospitals Centers of Excellence Award*

(Topeka, Kan. – July 16, 2018) – William Newton Hospital in Winfield is invested in improving the health and well-being of its employees, and over the past two years has worked to increase the healthier food and beverage options available to all shifts. In recognition of the hospital's work to reduce sugary beverages, offer more fresh fruits and vegetables, and provide lower sodium and sugar snack options, the Kansas Hospital Association presented one of two 2018 Healthy Kansas Hospitals Centers of Excellence Awards to William Newton Hospital. The award and a monetary contribution to help support the hospital's wellness activities were presented during a special recognition ceremony on July 11.

"We are honored to be recognized for our efforts to support employee wellness," said Ben Quinton, chief executive officer. "We're about providing healthy options, not about forcing employees to go without salt and sugar. It's inspiring to see employees making healthy choices. It's exciting to see employees, when they take a break, go for a walk together instead of going out for a cigarette. It's encouraging," he said.

"Receiving this award validates the work the Wellness Committee has been doing," said Ruth Bumgarner, Healthways coordinator. William Newton Hospital adopted a Healthy Foods and Beverage Policy in 2016 as a direct result of joining the Healthy Kansas Hospitals initiative.

"Implementing the policy during the past two years, we've had lots of ups and downs," she noted.

"We've seen positive changes, and we've tried things that didn't work." Removing pop from the cafeteria and changing snacks available in vending machines has been "hard work." The Wellness Committee chair said, "It's hard work, but it's work worth doing."

In addition to making changes in the vending machines, the hospital is devoting a larger portion of its food budget to fresh fruits and vegetables. "We have the best salad bar in town," Bumgarner said proudly.

For the past two years, in February during Heart Health Month, the hospital has hosted a “taste-and-go” for employees with demonstrations of how to prepare several heart-healthy dishes and then they are sampled. At least two shifts of employees have participated in the “Halls and Oats” walking oatmeal bar in which employees stroll through the halls to visit various stations – dried fruits, berries and nuts – with a final stop in the cafeteria for a ladle of oatmeal, all while enjoying the music of Hall and Oates and appropriately-themed decorations. “This promotes the importance of starting the day with a good, heart-healthy breakfast,” Bumgarner explained.

“Communicating the ‘why’ is important too,” Bumgarner said. “We’re doing this because we care about the health and well-being of our employees.”

“We understand there is no quick return-on-investment with wellness,” said Quinton. “We try to think of things more long term. A healthy employee is a happy employee is a more productive employee. Helping our employees is good for everyone,” he added.

The hospital also is working to make the community healthier. Through RISE Cowley, William Newton Hospital is working with some 40 other organizations to make “Cowley County a healthier place to live and work. We’re working to increase access to healthy foods, provide more opportunities for physical activity and raise awareness of healthy behaviors,” said Sarah Bryant, director of Marketing and Business Development and a RISE Cowley steering committee member. “RISE stands for ‘Raising awareness, Improving health, Supporting collaboration and Energizing communities’,” Bryant explained. The coalition applied for and received a Pathways to a Healthy Kansas grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. The grant allows RISE Cowley to provide funding to local businesses and collaborations for activities/initiatives related to food, activity and smoking/tobacco use cessation.

About William Newton Hospital

Located in south central Kansas, William Newton Hospital is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital that serves patients in Winfield and the surrounding rural communities. Some 80 percent of its \$82 million in gross revenue comes from out-patient services. The non-for-profit community general hospital is locally managed and financially self-sufficient, receiving no tax support. The hospital is governed by a five-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Winfield City Commission. The hospital operates five rural health clinics, provides office facilities for medical staff members and offers occupational health, home health, labor and delivery, physical therapy, advanced wound care, and other general medical and surgical care for patients as well as emergency room services.

About Healthy Kansas Hospitals

The Healthy Kansas Hospitals initiative was federally funded through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Bureau of Community Health Systems FLEX Program. The Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility (FLEX) program is managed by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 217 member facilities, of which 124 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA's vision is Optimal Health for Kansas.

For more information, go to www.HealthyKansasHospitals.org.

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