



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Children's Mercy Receives *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* Centers of Excellence Award**

(June 19, 2019) – Children's Mercy Kansas City takes wellness very seriously, and for more than a decade, the health system has invested in their employees' health and well-being. Recognizing that lifestyle and making healthier food and beverage choices can prevent diseases like obesity and diabetes, Children's Mercy has made changes internally to provide healthier options and opportunities for employees to improve their health and well-being, becoming role models of healthy behaviors for patients and families.

In recognition of its long-term commitment to improving health for employees, patients, families and the communities they serve, Children's Mercy recently was presented with a 2019 *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* Centers of Excellence Award by the Kansas Hospital Association. The award and a monetary contribution to invest in the hospital's wellness activities were presented during a special recognition ceremony on June 11 at Children's Mercy Hospital Kansas.

"This award means a great deal to us," said Paul Kempinski, M.S., FACHE, president/chief executive officer. "Health care is shifting to bettering the lives and improving the health of the community at large, and we are very committed to that role. Recognitions like this give us some sense of the progress that we're making, and we are very proud to receive this award."

"Every year, the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* program becomes more timely," said Tom Bell, president and CEO of KHA. Given where society is headed, "looking at population health and systems of health, as opposed to taking care of health problems," is the right strategy. "Healthy Kansas Hospitals fits right in with trying to get out in front of problems," he said.

“I’m proud of the 8,000 employees throughout Children’s Mercy – including the thousands based in our Kansas facilities – who contribute to this work every day, not only improving the health of the communities we serve and the patients we care for, but also taking care of themselves as well, because healthy caregivers will be better caregivers,” Kempinski said.

In 2013, Children’s Mercy made the decision to stop selling added sugared beverages and to offer health-promoting food options in cafeterias, vending machines and at employee events. “Our hospital went from consuming more than 10 tons (20,000 pounds) of sugar in beverages in 2012 to none in 2013,” noted Candice Gwin, employee wellness program manager. In 2015, the hospital eliminated all fryers.

In the fall of 2018, Children’s Mercy competed against children’s hospitals in Philadelphia and Boston in a challenge involving tracking physical activities, nutrition choices and overall well-being activities. Children’s Mercy came from behind to win, with some 2,000 employees – 25 percent of the hospital’s workforce – participating, Gwin reported.

Continuing to grow the wellness program and offer things of interest to employees, Gwin announced an upcoming on-site diabetes prevention program that will be offered in partnership with the on-site Wellness Center. “We know that diabetes is prevalent in our society as it is at Children’s Mercy. So we want to offer some tools and resources to prevent this disease from occurring,” she explained.

“We are proud of this recognition from KHA, and we’re proud of what we’ve accomplished, but we also know we have a long way to go,” Kempinski said. “We’re proud to be such an important part of the health care community in the state of Kansas. We’re proud of our contributions to wellness and well-being, and we are committed to continuing that journey.”

## **About Children's Mercy Kansas City**

Founded in 1897, Children's Mercy is one of the nation's top pediatric medical centers. With not-for-profit hospitals in Missouri and Kansas, and numerous specialty clinics in both states, Children's Mercy provides the highest level of care for children from birth through the age of 21. U.S. News & World Report has repeatedly ranked Children's Mercy as one of "America's Best Children's Hospitals." For the fourth time in a row, Children's Mercy has achieved Magnet nursing designation, awarded to only about 8 percent of all hospitals nationally, for excellence in quality care. Its faculty of more than 700 pediatric subspecialists and researchers across more than 40 subspecialties are actively involved in clinical care, pediatric research, and educating the next generation of pediatric subspecialists. Thanks to generous philanthropic and volunteer support, Children's Mercy provides medical care to every child who passes through its doors, regardless of a family's ability to pay. For more information about Children's Mercy and its research, visit [childrensmercy.org](http://childrensmercy.org). For breaking news and videos, follow us on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

## **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 222 member facilities, of which 125 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA's vision is Optimal Health for Kansas.

For more information, go to [www.HealthyKansasHospitals.org](http://www.HealthyKansasHospitals.org).

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