

Kansas City University Hosts HHS Roundtable to Advance Nutrition Education in Medical Training

KANSAS CITY, MO, UNITED STATES, July 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Kansas City University](#) (KCU) hosted a regional roundtable as part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [Nutrition Initiative](#), bringing together federal, academic, health care and community leaders to explore how stronger nutrition education can better prepare future physicians to prevent and manage chronic disease.

The discussion highlighted growing national momentum to strengthen nutrition education across the medical education continuum, fueled by increasing recognition of nutrition's role in improving health outcomes and sustained advocacy from medical students, residents and physicians for more comprehensive nutrition training.

"This was really a collaboration. This was an opportunity to listen," said Samuel Watters, senior advisor at HHS.

"We let the medical schools lead. We didn't dictate the science or the curriculum, and what we got was 73 of the nation's leading medical schools agreeing to provide 40 hours of nutrition education, or the competency equivalent, beginning this fall. There's tremendous interest in this topic, and it's something that's been decades in the making."

The conversation emphasized that meaningful progress would require pairing physician



Kansas City University Logo



Participants in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Nutrition Initiative gather on the KCU Skyline Terrace following a regional roundtable exploring how enhanced nutrition education can better prepare future physicians to prevent and manage chronic disease.

education with broader efforts to improve access to healthy foods and support healthier communities.

"Nutrition is a cornerstone of disease prevention, health promotion and whole-person care," said Marc B. Hahn, DO, president and CEO of KCU. "As educators, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to ensure future physicians understand how nutrition influences the prevention and management of many of the chronic diseases that challenge our nation today."

At KCU, the initiative builds on the University's ongoing commitment to preparing physicians to address the complex factors that influence health outcomes, including nutrition, prevention and patient education.

"Students have been asking for this for a long time," said Joshua Cox, DO, FACOFP, interim provost at KCU. "This initiative gives us an opportunity to take a deeper look at what we're already doing and take it to the next level."

For KCU second-year osteopathic medical student Christy Finley, the need for stronger nutrition education is personal. After experiencing unresolved stomach pain as a teenager, she saw firsthand the impact nutrition could have on health.

"Nutrition allowed me to get my life back," Finley said. "I'm here because I want to see people get healthier, and I want to see people work together. We need to share expertise and put it together."

The roundtable reinforced the importance of preparing physicians to incorporate nutrition into patient care while recognizing that lasting improvements in health outcomes require collaboration across medical education, health care and public health.

Roundtable participants included:

- Samuel Watters, senior advisor, HHS
- Jeff Kahrs, regional director, HHS
- Joshua Cox, DO, FACOFP, interim provost, KCU
- Marc Hahn, DO, president and CEO, KCU
- Robert Rodgers, PhD, assistant dean of curriculum, KCU
- Christy Finley, osteopathic medical student, KCU
- Matthew Bechtold, MD, professor of medicine, University of Missouri
- Alexander Norbash, MD, dean, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine
- Jannette Berkley-Patton, PhD, professor, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine
- Charlie Shields, president and CEO, University Health
- Jackie Gatz, senior vice president, Missouri Hospital Association
- Sarah Willson, BSN, MBA, FACHE, director, Department of Health and Senior Services
- Ben Terrell, MPH, MPA, deputy division director, Missouri Department of Health and Senior

Services

To view the event recap video, [click here](#).

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