

OneQuest Health commissions NKU study on economic impact of behavioral health challenges

COVINGTON, KY, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- OneQuest Health announces a new research partnership with the Center for Economic Analysis and Development (CEAD) at Northern Kentucky University to study the broader economic and fiscal impact of behavioral health and substance use challenges across the region.

The study will examine the broader economic and fiscal effects associated with behavioral health and substance use disorders, including healthcare utilization, criminal justice involvement, workforce participation and education. It will also evaluate the potential economic implications of prevention, intervention and recovery support services using published research and conservative assumptions.

"Organizations like ours have long relied on the stories of individual clients and families, people facing abuse, neglect, addiction, and other adverse experiences, to make the case for support," said Rick Wurth, CEO and Chief Philanthropy Officer of OneQuest Health. "Those stories are real, and we will always serve people at their hardest moments. But this study is about something different: a new way of interpreting our impact as an organization. We can't rely on heartstrings alone. We have to effectively demonstrate the specific ways we're making a difference in every sector of society, healthcare, the justice system, the workforce, our schools. CEAD will help us better understand that impact and provide credible information that can guide future policy and investment."



Rick W. Wurth, CEO, OneQuest Health

The research will be led by Janet Harrah, Executive Director of Outreach and Senior Director of the Center for Economic Analysis and Development at Northern Kentucky University, whose team specializes in translating regional economic data into tools for policymakers and

community leaders.

"Behavioral health and substance use challenges carry real economic weight in healthcare spending, in the justice system and in lost workforce participation. That weight is often invisible in public conversation because no one has quantified it locally," said Harrah. "Our goal is to provide policymakers, community leaders and funding partners with a data-driven assessment of the economic and fiscal effects associated with behavior health and substance use challenges, as well as what existing research indicates about the potential impact of prevention and recovery services."



Local youth stand united outside the OneQuest Health facility, symbolizing the organization's mission, "Transforming America's Health." (Photo: OneQuest Health)

The study is being underwritten by OneQuest Health Board of Trustees member Dr. Dorothy Air and her spouse, Dr. Gordon W. Air. Dr. Dorothy Air has served on the OneQuest Health Board of Trustees since 2018.

"We are deeply grateful for their investment in research that can inform future conversations

“

We have to effectively demonstrate the specific ways we're making a difference in every sector of society, healthcare, the justice system, the workforce, our schools."

Rick Wurth, CEO of OneQuest Health

about policy, funding and community needs," said Wurth.

"Through their support of this study, she and Gordon are helping us develop a clearer, data-informed understanding of the broader economic impact of behavioral health and substance use challenges in our region."

"I've served on this board long enough to see what access to care can mean for individuals and families," said Dr. Dorothy Air. "Gordon and I wanted to support research that looks beyond individual stories and helps policymakers and funders better understand the broader economic and community impact of behavioral health and

substance use challenges. We hope this study provides credible information that can guide future decisions."

The CEAD partnership builds on an already deep relationship between OneQuest Health and Northern Kentucky University. NKU nursing students complete internships at OneQuest Health

under the preceptorship of an advanced practice registered nurse, and three OneQuest Health team leaders serve as subsidized adjunct faculty teaching NKU College of Health and Human Services coursework directly on OneQuest Health's campuses.

"OneQuest Health was built on the idea that behavioral health is a community-wide issue, not just an individual one," Wurth added. "This study will help us better understand its broader economic and social impact and provide policymakers and philanthropic partners with credible information to guide future decisions."

The final report, executive summary, and stakeholder presentation are expected in January 2027.

###

[About OneQuest Health](#)

OneQuest Health is a multi-state integrated behavioral and primary care nonprofit headquartered in Covington, Kentucky, serving Kentucky, southern Ohio, and Indiana. Formerly known as CHNK Behavioral Health, the organization carries a nearly 150-year legacy of service that has evolved from its origins in child welfare into a modern, integrated care enterprise. Today, OneQuest Health employs approximately 165 professionals across Greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky, Williamstown, and Louisville, and delivered approximately 50,000 treatment services and 7,000 client and family impacts in fiscal year 2026. Learn more at onequesthealth.org.

About Northern Kentucky University

NKU is an entrepreneurial state university of more than 15,000 students on a thriving suburban campus nestled between Highland Heights, Kentucky, and bustling downtown Cincinnati. Ranked in the top 30 out of 500 universities nationwide by The Wall Street Journal for exceptional value, we are a regionally engaged university committed to delivering an innovative, student-centered education. We empower our graduates to have fulfilling careers and meaningful lives, while contributing to the economic, civic and social vitality of the region. Learn more at nku.edu.

Rick Wurth, Chief Executive Officer
OneQuest Health
+1 859-292-4177

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.