Entering 2021, we all hoped for a more stable year relative to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, the year was still impacted by this disease that continues to wreak havoc in the workplace. Many of our members struggled to address issues of returning to the workplace, preparing for any vaccination mandates, and structuring benefit plans. All the while, they confronted the challenge of recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality staff. As we look ahead, we will continue to help members focus on areas within their control, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of healthcare, while reducing the cost.

KBGH had a successful year of training opportunities, including our annual Innovation Summit and Healthcare Roundtable. Both were virtual and well attended. In addition, we had regular webinars addressing such areas as biosimilars, compassion in the workplace, oncology treatments, and more. KBGH also began a book club that reviewed two books related to healthcare costs. We continued our HR Forums, where HR professionals from our employer members could share and learn from one another.

New members joined KBGH, and we retained all members from 2020. KBGH received funding from the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions, allowing eight employers to participate in oncology roundtables to improve support and benefits to those diagnosed with cancer. We also received funding from Catchafire, a nonprofit whose volunteer consultants advise nonprofit organizations on myriad projects. One project we did will help KBGH enhance its social media presence this year.

As we look ahead, we will continue helping members understand and prepare for elements of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, including transparency of vendors and mental health parity. In addition, we have many training opportunities planned, including the Book Club and HR Forums. Although we don't know all that 2022 will bring, we remain committed to expanding our collective voice and are thankful to each member who is part of our growing impact.

In health and gratitude,

Shelley Duncan
Executive Director
MEMBERSHIP

- Total members: 28
- Brokerage: 2
- Insurance: 2
- Pharmaceutical: 2
- Employers: 22

IMPACT

- 12 Educational Programs
- Bi-Monthly HR Forums
- Prescriptions Member Savings surpass $200K
- Improving Cancer Care & Support
  New grant enables Oncology Roundtables

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Data on Costs & Care

Employers are often unaware how their benefits stack up with those of other organizations. Our annual Employer Healthcare Trends & Costs Benchmarking Survey pulls back the veil on cost-sharing, plan types, and other topics.

How Employee Contributions Compare

- Single Plans (All plan types)
  - KBGH: 81%
  - Nationally: 19%

- Family Plans (All plan types)
  - KBGH: 53%
  - Nationally: 30%

Types of Insurance Offered

- PPOs
  - KBGH Survey: 93.3%
  - Nationally: 26%

- High-deductible health plan
  - KBGH Survey: 33.3%
  - Nationally: 22%

Survey completion rate by KBGH employer members: 55%
One of our main focuses is sharing information that helps employers and the community make more informed choices about healthcare. The KBGH holds two annual conferences – Healthcare Roundtable and Innovation Summit – to share local, regional and national expertise. Over 70 people attended the virtual events in 2021. The Innovation Summit was held January 27. Sessions included:

- Collaborative Care: Effective Strategies for Addressing Common Behavioral Health Conditions by Henry Harbin, MD, and Carol Alter, MD, System Medical Director for Behavioral Health at Baylor Scott and White Health.
- Hearing From the Front Lines of COVID-19 from Sam Antonios, MD, Chief Clinical Officer at Ascension Via Christi, and Chloe Steinshouer, MD, Medical Director for Medical ICU/Critical Care Services and Respiratory Department at Wesley Medical Center.
- Preventing Diabetes in the Workplace by Justin Moore, MD, Medical Director at the Kansas Business Group on Health.

The 43rd Healthcare Roundtable was held on July 13. Topics included:

- Health Policy in the Age of COVID-19: What to Expect from the Biden Administration and the 117th Congress by James Gelfand, JD, Senior Vice President, Health Policy at The ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC).
- Employer Strategies for Driving Health Equity by Jessica Brooks, President and Chief Executive Officer at the Pittsburgh Business Group on Health, and Randa Deaton, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Kentuckiana Health Collaborative.
- Using Value-Based Insurance Design to Increase Use of High-Value Care and Eliminate Low-Value Services by Mark Fendrick, MD, Director of the V-BID Center at the University of Michigan.
- Improving Quality and Patient Safety for Purchasers and Employers by Jill Berger, Director of Employer and Payor Engagement at The Leapfrog Group.

During the year, we offered 13 virtual educational programs that drew over 2,000 registrants. Advocacy on behalf of businesses, other employers and, ultimately, their employees and families is a commitment that we take seriously. Signed onto a letter to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services urging the CMS to continue requiring that hospitals report “Death Among Surgical Inpatients with Serious Treatable Complications” by hospital. CMS also agreed to continue payment pressure on hospitals that perform poorly on PSI-90, a bundle of hazards that cause suffering and death, like sepsis, falls, pressure ulcers, and other ailments.

Continuing a format launched in 2020, we offered regular HR Forums every other month. The forums allow for networking and idea sharing between HR and benefits professionals. Participants in the employer-only sessions were able to share successes, struggles, and strategies in administering employee benefits.

We held two All Member meetings where we updated all members on happenings within KBGH, shared about resources available to members, and discussed our plans for the future. KBGH assisted with the planning and facilitation of the 2021 Candidate Forum on Health for candidates running for Wichita City Council. The Candidate Forum on Health is designed to be an opportunity for Wichita residents to hear where candidates running for office stand on health issues in our community.
Using two federal grants, KBGH works with providers to improve health outcomes for diabetes, hypertension, and other conditions. We also help employers control costs while still providing their employees the quality healthcare that they need.

**POSITIVE DEVIANCE PROJECTS**

Often, one or two providers in a large doctors’ office perform much better than others with a specific problem like diabetes care. Why these “positive deviants” – or “bright spots” – excel is sometimes a bit mysterious. So KBGH, with the help of Bob Badgett, MD, of KU School of Medicine-Wichita, uses interviews to try to tease out what is unique about positive deviants’ care. We then use a structured meeting and methodology to try to disseminate their methods with the rest of the clinic, with a focus on the care of blood pressure, blood cholesterol, pre-diabetes, and diabetes care. Using this technique, one clinic’s rate of blood pressure control rose from roughly the national average up to 73%.

**PREVENTING DIABETES**

- A large local employer finished their pilot Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) and had very positive results. Average weight loss for the 23 participants was greater than 5%, which meets the threshold for reducing one’s risk of developing Type II Diabetes. Engagement by participants was very high: Over 84% completed weekly lessons, and participants exceeded benchmarks for tracking of food and physical activity.
- We helped two providers in Wichita and one in Colby establish in-house Diabetes Prevention Programs. This expands capacity for more participants to go through this effective and cost-saving program.
- We helped a local primary care clinic start an in-house Diabetes Self-Management Education & Support (DSMES) program. Diabetes education reduces the risk of early death in someone living with diabetes by 25%, and employers are required by the state of Kansas to cover it. Having more local programs like this available in the community expands capacity of programs to take in more patients.

**REDUCING PHARMACY COSTS**

A KBGH member has had tremendous savings after switching to Employer’s Choice Rx (ECRx) from another Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM). Through November 2021, the employer’s per member per month (PMPM) cost for their pharmacy benefit is $15.62, down from $80-plus before implementing ECRx in October 2020. Across 177 employees, the nonprofit organization saved over $136,000. In addition to that amount, they saved over $85,000 through ECRx’s Patient Assistance Program, which brought total savings to over $200,000 in their first year with the program. ECRx not only saved the employer money, but also reduced employees’ out-of-pocket spending for medications.
KBGH provides members access to resources – at a discounted rate – that lower the cost and improve the quality of employee benefits. **Employers’ Choice Rx (ECRx)** is a 100% pass-through and transparent pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) that lowers costs for employers and employees, while still improving health outcomes. One KBGH member saved over $200,000 so far by switching to ECRx.

**RightRx** identifies lower cost, therapeutic equivalent medications your employees could be taking and works behind the scenes with their provider to make the switch. RightRx works with your existing PBM and provides a 100% savings guarantee.

**STAR Captive** allows fully-insured employers to experience all the benefits of being self-insured, without all the risk. Join a pre-established group of like-minded employers to mitigate your risk during bad years, but still reap the savings during good years.

**Team IBX** forces providers of ancillary benefits (ie, life and disability insurance, dental, vision, reinsurance) to compete for your business. Team IBX has a track record of lowering the cost of benefits. For example, **employer savings average 26%** for Life and Disability.

**Quizzify** is a tool that teaches your employees to be better consumers of healthcare. Individuals with high health literacy **spend 80% less** on healthcare than those without.

**Living Connected** helps employees living with diabetes better control their condition with tools and education. These resources are included in the cost of the diabetic testing supplies bought through CCS Medical, the leading national supplier of medical supplies.
Looking Ahead: 2022

Programs are 10 to 11 a.m. second Tuesday of month. Details are subject to change.

Jan. 25 2022 Annual Innovation Summit (conference)
Feb. 8 The Pharmacist Impact on Chronic Condition Management
Feb. 22 Book Club: *The Price We Pay* by Marty Makary, MD. Session 1
March 1 Re-Imagining Mental Healthcare Delivery
March 8 Book Club: *The Price We Pay*. Session 2
March 22 Book Club: *The Price We Pay*. Session 3
April 5 Book Club: *The Price We Pay*. Session 4
April 5 Dollars and Sense: Self-Funding Made Easy – Session 1
April 12 Using Local Benchmarking Data to Take Action
April 19 Dollars and Sense: Self-Funding Made Easy – Session 2
May 10 The Prescription for Success: Selecting the Right Pharmacy Benefit Solution
June 14 Vendor Showcase
July 12 44th Annual Healthcare Roundtable
Aug. 9 Value-Based Insurance Design: Lowering Costs through High-Value Care
Sept. 13 Trends, Changes, and Requirements: Legal Update for Employers
Oct. 11 Understanding the Drivers of Rising Costs in Healthcare
Nov. 8 Addressing Health Equity in Benefit Design
Dec. 13 To Err is Human: Analyzing Hospital Safety and Quality

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The Kansas Business Group on Health (KBGH), an affiliate of the Medical Society of Sedgwick County, is a nonprofit group of employers, healthcare providers, health plan carriers, benefit consultants, and others. Our mission is to increase the value of every healthcare dollar spent by our members.