



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Health Care Collaborative (HCC) of Rural Missouri to be a Key Partner in a \$224,598 Engagement Award by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute**

LEXINGTON, MO (March 2015) - The Health Care Collaborative (HCC) of Rural Missouri has teamed with researchers from the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare Center for Children & Families on a Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). The award focuses on rural patient and provider perspectives on the patient centered medical home model.

Amy Mendenhall, professor in social welfare and Director of the School of Social Welfare's Center for Children and Families, will lead the engagement project in collaboration with KU research staff, Cheryl Holmes and Michelle Levy. The project will focus on how to implement patient centered medical homes in rural areas so that the model can be successful in rural and frontier areas while supporting the outcomes that rural patient's value.

"The patient centered medical home model has been identified nationally as an effective way to improve patient outcomes but there has been little work focusing specifically on patient centered medical homes in rural areas," Mendenhall explained. "And so our work this year is going to explore which outcomes are most important to rural patients and caregivers, how patient centered medical homes help with these outcomes, and what are the factors that impact development and implementation of patient centered medical homes in rural areas."

The project is being conducted in collaboration with multiple community partners from Kansas and Missouri. These partners include: REACH Healthcare Foundation, Thrive Allen County, Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri, and Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas. Qualis Health will provide consultation. Additionally, patients and caregivers from local communities as well as representatives from state and national patient, caregiver, and provider groups will be active participants in all of the work done throughout the project.

“To be a part of this project is a great opportunity for Lafayette County. This allows for our rural patients and caregivers to be actively involved in guiding this process,” noted Christy Merrick, Health Literacy & Social Equity Coordinator for HCC. “Their perspective and life experiences will add a richness to the process that would have been lost without them.” Additionally, Toniann Richard, Executive Director of HCC will add to the discussion from the perspective of the rural health network and the Live Well Community Health Centers of Waverly and Concordia, both federally qualified health centers.

The project is part of a portfolio of projects approved for PCORI funding to help develop a skilled community of patients and other stakeholders from across the entire healthcare enterprise and to involve them meaningfully in every aspect of PCORI’s work.

“This project was selected for Engagement Award funding not only for its commitment to engaging patients and other stakeholders, but also for its potential to increase the usefulness and trustworthiness of the information we produce and facilitate its dissemination and uptake,” said Jean Slutsky, PCORI’s Chief Engagement and Dissemination Officer. “We look forward to following the project’s progress and working with KU School of Social Welfare to share the results.”

The School of Social Welfare’s project and the other projects approved for funding by the PCORI Engagement Award Program were selected through a highly competitive review process in which applications were assessed for their ability to meet PCORI’s engagement goals and objectives, as well as program criteria. PCORI has awarded over \$3 million to support 18 projects to date through this program. For more information about PCORI’s funding to support engagement efforts, visit <http://www.pcori.org/content/eugene-washington-pcori-engagement-awards/>.

### **More about PCORI**

PCORI is an independent, non-profit organization authorized by Congress in 2010 to fund comparative effectiveness research that will provide patients, their caregivers, and clinicians with the evidence needed to make better-informed health and healthcare decisions. PCORI is committed to seeking input from a broad range of stakeholders to guide its work.

### **More about the Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri**

The HCC develops, implements, and supports countywide, and in some instances, regional programs that help create access to health education, awareness, and prevention and treatment services. The HCC also owns and operates the Live Well Com-

munity Health Centers of Concordia and Waverly, two full-service health clinics accepting all insurances, Medicaid, and Medicare, and offers a sliding-fee scale based on income for those uninsured. For more information, visit [www.hccnetwork.org](http://www.hccnetwork.org) or visit our office at 825 S. Business Hwy 13 in Lexington.

### **More about the Center for Children & Families**

The Center for Children & Families (CCF) is a research and training center in the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare composed of faculty, staff and students actively involved in research, evaluation, policy analysis, program planning and training in areas relevant to children and families. Research initiatives and activities include children's mental health, child welfare, children's health, family wellbeing and community outreach.