

Center for Wellbeing

IMPACT REPORT 2024-25



*AT THE HEART
OF HEALTH CARE*



Children's Mercy

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***WELCOME TO OUR SECOND CENTER FOR WELLBEING (CWB) IMPACT REPORT.
I WANT TO START THIS EDITION WITH OUR **WHY**.***

Every day, our team members show up for the children who count on us. They diagnose. They treat. They care deeply and relentlessly. The work is meaningful, fast-moving and ever evolving. It can energize you. It can stretch you. And it can ask everything of you, physically, mentally and emotionally. When the work is this important, the people doing it matter just as much.

At Children's Mercy, we believe the best care happens when team members feel purpose in what they do, connection to one another and alignment with the values that guide our organization. That belief is at the heart of the Center for Wellbeing (CWB). By investing in the health and wellbeing of our workforce, we invest in stronger teams, better care and healthier communities for one another, and those we serve.

Our multidisciplinary team brings together diverse expertise to build a culture rooted in connection and belonging, partner on meaningful workplace improvements, and elevate the voices of our frontline team members. Because wellbeing isn't an initiative — it's a mindset.

Our goal is simple and bold: to make wellbeing a vital part of every decision we make, so our people can continue doing what they do best — caring for kids.

To guide our wellbeing work, we use roadmaps created by the American Medical Association (AMA) Joy in Medicine, Dr. Lorna Breene Heroes Foundation and Magnet™ programs. These national programs provide useful tools and guidance to organizations seeking to incorporate team member wellbeing into all aspects of health care.

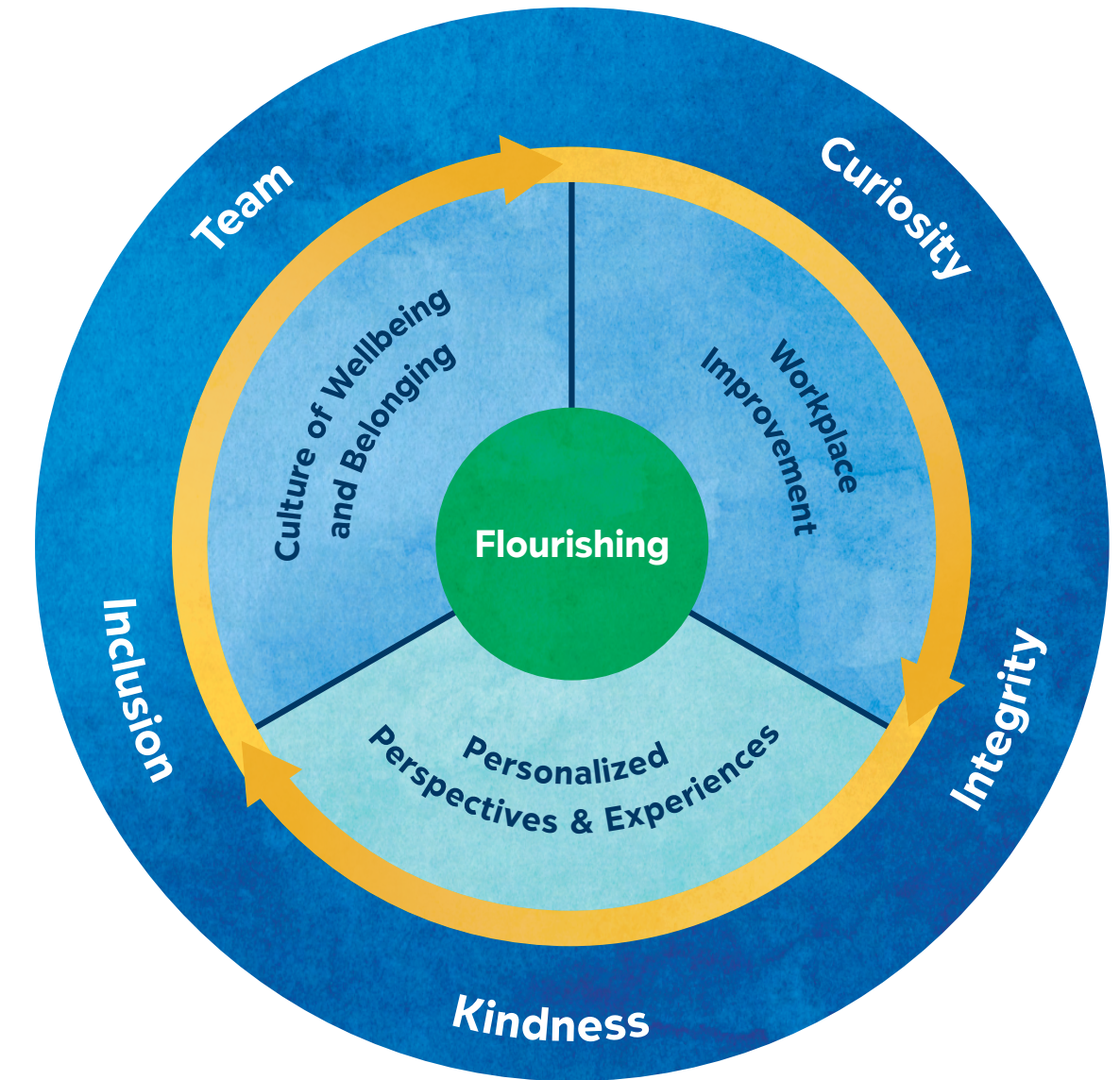
In 2025, our team achieved Gold level recognition from the AMA Joy in Medicine program, a recognition we share with only one other children's hospital. We were also recognized by the Dr. Lorna Breene Heroes Foundation for removing all stigmatizing mental health language from our credentialing and peer evaluation forms. Finally, we were recognized by Magnet™ as an exemplar organization for our wellbeing work in collaboration with our nurse work force.

Children's Mercy is a national leader among children's hospitals in health care workforce wellbeing. We are well-poised to further build on this success through continued innovation, program implementation and ongoing collaboration with our frontline staff. Our team — and more importantly, our organization — is committed to the wellbeing of our health care workers by shifting our efforts to reduce burnout from a “me” problem to a “we” problem. In doing so, we create a culture of trust and partnership which promotes flourishing at work.



Angela L. Myers MD, MPH
Angela L. Myers, MD, MPH, FAAP
Chief Wellbeing Officer

Built for the Caregivers



Model:

Flourishing at work is the core of the center's model of wellbeing.

Mission:

We care for the hearts behind the care – influencing our culture and empowering our team members with empathy, innovation, agility and unwavering support.

Vision:

A future where ALL Children's Mercy team members are connected, supported and inspired.

Just like our hospital is **Built for Kids™** with specialized care teams and resources to respond to each unique need of our pediatric patients and families, the Center for Wellbeing is **Built for the Caregivers**, all 9500+ of them, who provide that care every single day. Focusing on a culture of wellbeing, workplace improvement and personalized perspectives and experiences, the center's model is designed to care for individuals, teams and the organization.

This framework is grounded in stability yet designed with the agility to evolve. What makes our organization truly distinctive is our commitment to caregivers. Having a dedicated Center for Wellbeing reflects our belief that those who provide care deserve care themselves.

How do we do that? In the pages that follow, you will hear stories, see wellbeing in action, and learn how research strengthens wellbeing for our health care workforce — now and in the future.

Built to Elevate Support



Four Kansas City Chiefs football players (in the back row), who visited Children’s Mercy to express their gratitude to staff, pose with Perioperative Services and Anesthesia team members.

Responding to a Community Crisis

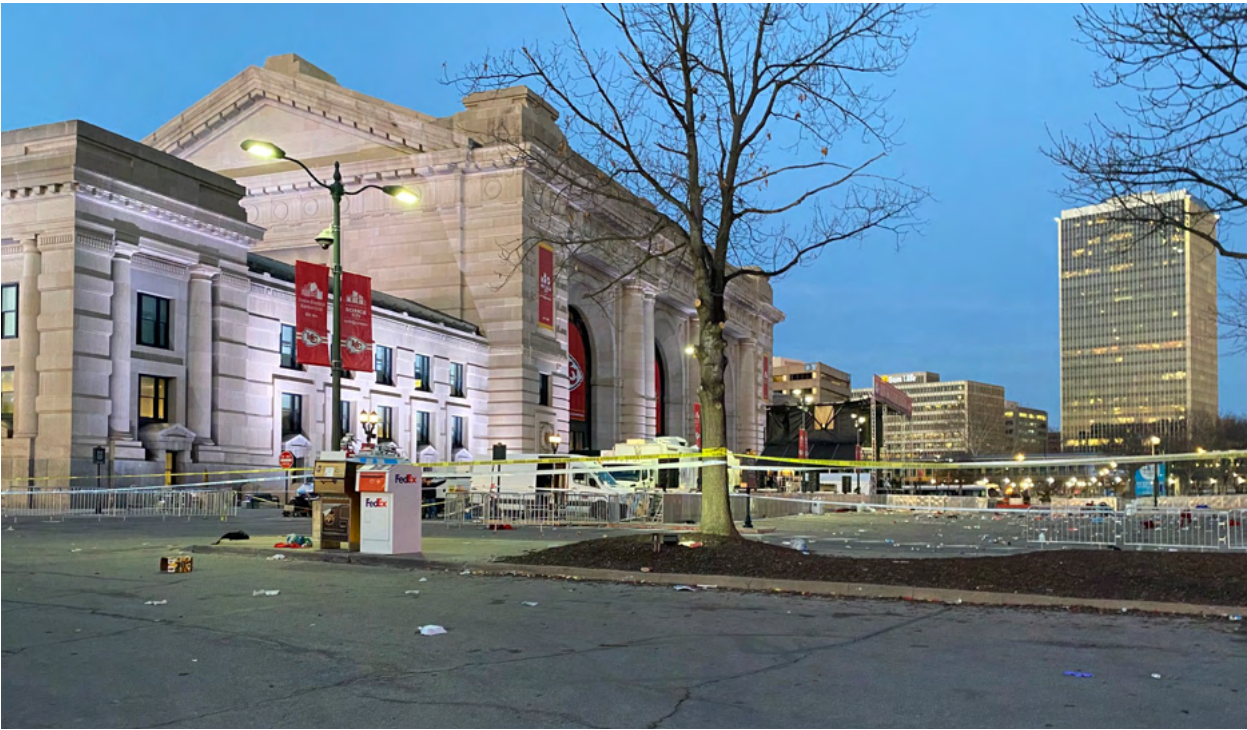
The cheers had barely faded when the sirens began. What was meant to be a day of celebration — the Kansas City Chiefs’ Super Bowl parade — turned tragic in an instant. Gunfire shattered the joy, and within minutes, the Children’s Mercy Emergency Department braced for impact.

Several children with gunshot wounds arrived in rapid succession, alongside others injured in the chaos. The hospital’s emergency response plan activated immediately, but leadership knew that clinical readiness wasn’t enough. The emotional toll on staff — nurses, physicians and techs — was profound.

As trauma teams worked tirelessly to stabilize young lives, another team mobilized quietly behind the scenes: those tasked with supporting the caregivers. Huddles formed, respite space opened, nourishment was provided, and Center for Wellbeing staff moved through the halls, offering space to breathe, cry, refuel and regroup.

In the face of unimaginable violence, Children’s Mercy didn’t just treat the wounded; they cared for the healers. Because in moments like these, supporting staff isn’t a follow-up — it’s part of the emergency response.

Post Disaster Staff Support Interventions



Center for Wellbeing team members arrived at the rally site to provide support to first responders.

ASAP: Aligning Support
Across Providers

After a distressing case, the care team gathered in a quiet room — no charts, no tasks, just voices. One nurse spoke of lingering guilt, another of helplessness. As stories unfolded, tension softened. In that shared space, they weren't just professionals — they were humans healing together.

Emotional debriefs like this offer vital release, connection and clarity. They transform silent suffering into collective strength, reminding teams that processing pain is not weakness — it's how they continue to care.

"I had the pleasure of seeing Kristin Ray in action at an ASAP debrief last night. She blew me away with how she led the conversation and guided people throughout. It was nothing short of incredible and I was beyond impressed. We are so lucky to have someone with Kristin's passion and compassion leading the way for staff wellbeing."

– Susan Widener, Senior Director, Medical/Surgical Nursing

Peer Support

After a grueling shift in the PICU, a Children's Mercy team member sat in the stairwell, overwhelmed by the weight of a patient loss. He didn't want a counselor — he wanted someone who understood the chaos, the decisions, the guilt. That's when a trained peer supporter joined him. She was a nurse, too. No scripts, no judgment — just shared experience and quiet empathy.

Through the Center for Wellbeing's peer support program, the peer supporter had been trained to listen, validate and guide without fixing. In turn, the Children's Mercy team member felt seen, not evaluated.

Caregiver + Connect

63 million Americans – one in four adults – are caregivers who provide ongoing care to a family member or friend. This support is provided across all ages and conditions, from older adults to individuals with disabilities or serious illnesses.

For many who are caregivers in their professional lives, those responsibilities do not end when their shift is over. These caregivers often experience a decline in their own physical and mental health as well as financial pressures and isolation. In 2025, the Center launched Caregiver + Connect. Once a month, for an hour, we provide space for caregivers to come together, share experiences, and support and encourage one another.



Suicide Awareness & Prevention

Suicide awareness and prevention are critical in the health care workforce, where chronic stress, burnout and emotional fatigue heighten vulnerability. The Center for Wellbeing offers training to equip leaders to recognize warning signs, foster psychological safety and respond with empathy and appropriate resources.

Empowered leaders play a vital role in creating environments where team members feel valued, connected, and safe to seek help. These efforts, combined with organizational benefits such as SupportLinc, our Employee Assistance Program, mental health providers through the TAKE Care Clinic and availability

of the Calm Health App for all employees, created a strong foundation for promotion of wellbeing. The CWB collaborates with area hospitals to host an event for Physician Suicide Awareness Day. By prioritizing mental health and cultivating a culture of support, health care organizations can reduce stigma, promote early intervention and protect the wellbeing of their teams.

"I was so impressed [by the training] and gained so much valuable information. Thank you for providing the leaders with the necessary tools to deal with this difficult subject!"

– Michelle Wehunt, Assistant Director of Nursing, 4 West



Schwartz Rounds

Schwartz Rounds is an opportunity to pause, reflect and grow based on shared stories and experiences of Children's Mercy employees across the organization. Through these stories and reflective dialogue, Schwartz Rounds offers healing, connection and a reminder: it's okay to not be okay and we are all in this together.

Highlights include:

- **It's Tough Being a Novice:** New graduate nurses gathered to share stories and accounts of their first year in nursing, lessons learned, feelings felt and everything in between.
- **Imposter Syndrome:** Three hospital leaders gathered to discuss the feelings of being an imposter they have experienced in their different roles across the span of their careers. In that circle, titles faded — only humanity remained.
- **The Day I Made a Difference:** Four team members gathered to share their stories of care and healing, reminding us all that we make a positive impact on the lives of the patients and families we serve, and in turn they do this for us too.



Dr. Angie Myers (far right), facilitates Schwartz Rounds on the topic of Imposter Syndrome, with CM leaders (L to R) Ale Quiroga, President and Children Executive Officer, Amy Fallon, President of Regional Operations, and Katie Stangler, Senior Director, Advanced Practice, Acute & Critical Care.

Individual & Team Support

After her shift, a team member sat alone in the break room, eyes fixed on the floor. A Center for Wellbeing team member quietly joined her, not to offer advice — just simply their presence. As the team member spoke, the tears came. She felt heard, not fixed.

This is what the Center for Wellbeing offers: a time to process, connect and begin healing together. In moments of crisis or distress, one act of empathetic listening can anchor an individual and ripple outward to steady the whole team.

“Thank you for reaching out the night of the event and for your willingness to come in to support staff. Also, thank you for checking in with me and for the care gift! It was not necessary but very much appreciated! The Center for Wellbeing team members have been phenomenal and I appreciate the outreach to many members of my team as we continue to work through the emotions and concerns that were brought on surrounding this event. I will continue to share these resources with my staff.”

– Deanna Porter, Director of Nursing, 6 Henson

Support Outreach

We are intentional about bringing wellbeing supports to teams and people where they are. Whether they are at one of our hospitals, clinics, outreach locations or remote workers, every single team member deserves access to wellbeing resources.

We also work to respond in real time to emergent needs and deliver resources and support in a way that is not disruptive, but conducive to busy health care environments. Our interventions can be modified to meet each team’s unique needs and requests so that people are getting what they need, when they need it.



Built with Science

Integrating wellbeing science in the development, implementation and evaluation of our work in the Center for Wellbeing shows our commitment to establishing ourselves as a leader in health care worker wellbeing. We have prioritized research on the health care worker experience related to wellbeing and burnout and the effect of research-informed interventions.

“Should I skip my break?”

During hospital rounds, team members frequently express uncertainty about whether they will be able to take a break during their shift. This recurring concern raised questions about the long-term impact of sacrificing breaks for short-term productivity.

In the summer of 2024, we conducted research to understand these experiences and to gather data illustrating the importance of work breaks for employee wellbeing. The study examined work stress recovery, an area of occupational health psychology. Existing research highlights that certain positive experiences during breaks help reduce stress, while negative experiences can intensify it.

Through the Children’s Mercy Summer Scholars Program, undergraduate student Makayla Kender joined the project as an intern to



support this work. Work breaks vary widely based on an individual’s role and personal preferences. To adequately address these nuances, the team gathered detailed, real-time data collection across different types of work and break choices among health care workers.

The conclusions were clear: our study found that an opportunity for health care workers to relax during a work break was beneficial for energy, self-regulation and work engagement. Conversely, negative thoughts about their work stressors during break time were detrimental. These findings are consistent with research outside of the health care setting and provide evidence of the importance of taking breaks and taking steps to ensure proper disconnection from work during the break.

With a Little Help From My Colleagues

Our Chief Wellbeing Officer, Angie Myers, previously held the role of Division Director for Infectious Diseases at Children’s Mercy. Kristin Ray, our Center for Wellbeing Nursing Director, was a Nursing Director in peri-operative services. They understood firsthand the challenges clinical leaders face and how isolating those leadership positions can become.

Recent researchers highlight commensality groups, a social meeting over a meal, as a promising path to building unity and wellbeing among clinical leaders. As we developed the plan for our own commensality groups at Children’s Mercy, we were faced with a critical decision: structured or unstructured discussion templates for the meeting. We chose a semi-structured approach, focusing on promoting connection through shared experiences of difficult stressors faced by leaders.

Leaders met once a month for a meal to discuss challenges they face and share insight from their own experiences to help address stressors others are facing. Over the course of our commensality group meetings, physician and nurse leaders agreed or strongly agreed the meetings were helpful with the most difficult stressor they are facing and other stressors they face at work.



Understanding Health Care Worker Burnout

In partnership with the Center for Wellbeing, Dr. Tiffany Addington developed a research study using physiologic data (e.g., heart rate variability) from wearable biodata devices like smart watches to determine if someone was experiencing burnout.

By using physiological markers that predict burnout, Tiffany was able to work with the biostatistics team in the Children’s Mercy Research Institute to build a machine learning predictive model. Their model can determine with greater than 90% specificity if someone is experiencing burnout based on their physiological data. From here, interventions and resources can be shared to work toward improvement for individuals’ health.

Built for Education and Training

The past year has been one of remarkable growth, collaboration and achievement for our team. Across multiple domains — including Graduate Medical Education (GME) support, mindfulness education initiatives such as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness Based Attention Training (MBAT), team retreats, monthly newsletters, and a wide array of internal and external presentations and education — we have demonstrated resilience, creativity and a commitment to advancing knowledge and wellbeing.

Graduate Medical Education (GME)

Residency and Fellowship are a time of extraordinary growth, challenge and responsibility. While clinical excellence and technical skills are central to training, the ability to sustain personal wellbeing is equally vital. Wellbeing is not a luxury or an afterthought — it is a core foundation of professional development and compassionate care.

Wellbeing initiatives in GME are not optional add-ons — they are essential to cultivating resilient, compassionate physicians who can thrive personally and professionally. By embedding wellbeing activities and initiatives into the fabric of training, programs affirm that thriving physicians are those who balance medical expertise with resilience, self-care and connection.

The impact of these efforts has been profound. Residents reported higher satisfaction with their educational experiences, and faculty noted improved engagement and preparedness among trainees. By prioritizing both academic excellence and humanistic care, our GME contributions have strengthened the foundation of medical education within our institution and beyond.



Building Resilience and Excellence Through Mindfulness

Health care today demands more than clinical expertise — it requires emotional resilience, clarity and compassion. Supporting personalized resilience among health care professionals is not merely a wellness initiative; it is a strategic imperative for sustaining high-quality care and organizational performance.

Mindfulness Based Attention Training (MBAT) equips busy health care workers with skills to improve focus and working memory, which in turn enhances overall wellbeing — supporting a balanced and sustainable approach to both professional and personal life.

3 MBAT COHORTS TRAINED:

10 Critical Care Team Members

8 Acute Care Team Members

12 Nonclinical Staff

MBAT complements our ongoing Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, which addresses stress, burnout and emotional fatigue in health care settings. Together, these initiatives provide practical tools to maintain focus, empathy, and mental health — critical assets in an environment defined by complexity and constant change.

3 MBSR COHORTS TRAINED:

3 Critical Care Team Members

4 Acute Care Team Members

15 Nonclinical Staff

“The MBSR program has transformed not just how I work, but how I live. I went in thinking it was just breathwork and meditation practices, but the benefits have gone far beyond what I expected. When I practice mindfulness, I sleep better, feel more energized throughout the day and am able to be present in everyday interactions. I’m more focused, a better listener and more compassionate — both with myself and with others. It’s made everyday life feel more connected and intentional, even in the smallest moments.”

– Ashley Brown, Senior Human Resources Business Partner

“I had heard nice things about the MBAT course from past participants and appreciated the opportunity to participate when this year’s course aligned with my schedule. I found it to be a great experience that will reap benefits both professionally and personally. Using the training and skills I learned allows me to be more “present” for patients, families and my fellow CM team members!”

– Greg Canty, MD, Medical Director, Sports Medicine Center, Department of Orthopedic Surgery

Stress First Aid

Stress shows up in all kinds of ways, especially in health care. Stress First Aid Training gives team members simple, practical tools to spot stress early, support one another in the moment and build resilience over time. Think of it as first aid for the hard days: a shared way to check in, connect and help each other keep going.

That idea — practical support for real-life stress — is what first sparked Children's Mercy's interest in bringing the program to team members.

In August 2024, the Center for Wellbeing met with mental health experts Patricia Watson, PhD, and Doug Walker, PhD, through the Pediatric Pandemic Network. During the visit, Dr. Watson shared the Stress First Aid Training Program, which she developed for health care workers as part of her work with the National Center for PTSD within the Veterans Administration. The program brings together leading research on the personal resources that help people stay resilient and recover from everyday stress that can build up over time. From that research came five key resources and seven simple actions people can use to support themselves and their colleagues.

Seeing the applicability of this program for Children's Mercy team members, Thomas Ayres, PhD, adapted the publicly available program and materials for use at the hospital. The Stress First Aid Training Program is used in a variety of settings. Dr. Ayres first piloted the training program to the peer support program within Children's Mercy Transport Department with support from program leaders Brenda Smith and Jennifer Habert. The value they reported to the Director of Transport and Transfer Center, Christy Dressler, led to implementing the training

in the next round of survival days, a personal and professional development series of department meetings.

Since then, the Stress First Aid Training Program has been completed at Children's Mercy with Occupational Health, ASAP Response Team, Wellbeing Ambassadors, La CASA Employee Resource Group, Graduate Medical Education, night float nursing pool, and as part of the 2025 Nurses Week Series. Stress First Aid also made an impact in the community by being invited to present at the 2025 Missouri-Kansas American Case Management Association Chapter Conference. The impact of Stress First Aid will continue to grow as both the experienced nursing fellowship and the advanced practice provider transition to practice program are embedding Stress First Aid into their curriculum for 2026.

Here's what our nurses think so far:

"Very well organized with easy steps to follow when helping yourself or others."

"Great information that I can use in both my work and home life!"

"[Stress First Aid] was pertinent to anyone, especially in health care."

"Appreciate making the time to share [Stress First Aid]. I will definitely use all of these new materials at my work but also in my community (friends & family)."

"I really appreciated the '7' C's of Stress First Aid! I plan on being more intentional with recognizing when I am stressed out to find outlets and more positive ways to channel that frustration – going for a walk out in nature, reaching out to a friend or meditation – utilizing our wellness program and various outlets."

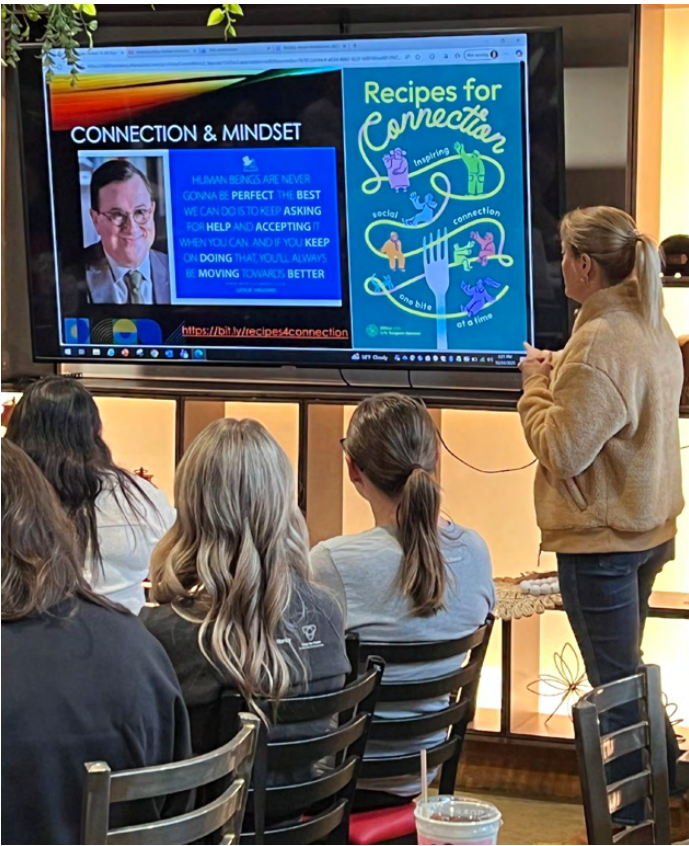
Team Retreats

Retreats are essential in nurturing collaboration, creativity and cohesion within our teams and across our community. By bringing together faculty, trainees and staff in environments designed for reflection and renewal, these gatherings provide space to pause, reconnect and reimagine collective goals. The intentional design of each retreat has allowed participants to step away from daily routines and engage in deeper conversations that strengthen trust and foster alignment.

A central focus of the retreats has been the opportunity to clarify long-term priorities and develop strategies for future initiatives. Through structured dialogue and collaborative exercises, participants have worked to align visions, identify shared objectives and chart actionable paths forward.

Retreat Topics

- Interpersonal and team connection.
- Remembering your purpose.
- Innovating improvement work ideas.
- Stress first aid and coping with acute and chronic stressors.
- Stresses we face and how we experience them.
- Stress and cognitive load that comes from a high degree of change, ambiguity and overwhelm at work.
- Building leadership skills: emotional intelligence, building trust, and exhibiting gratitude.
- Recognizing burnout and incorporating wellbeing into improvement work.
- Leadership challenges, wins and real self care.
- Time and energy spend: a wellbeing metric.



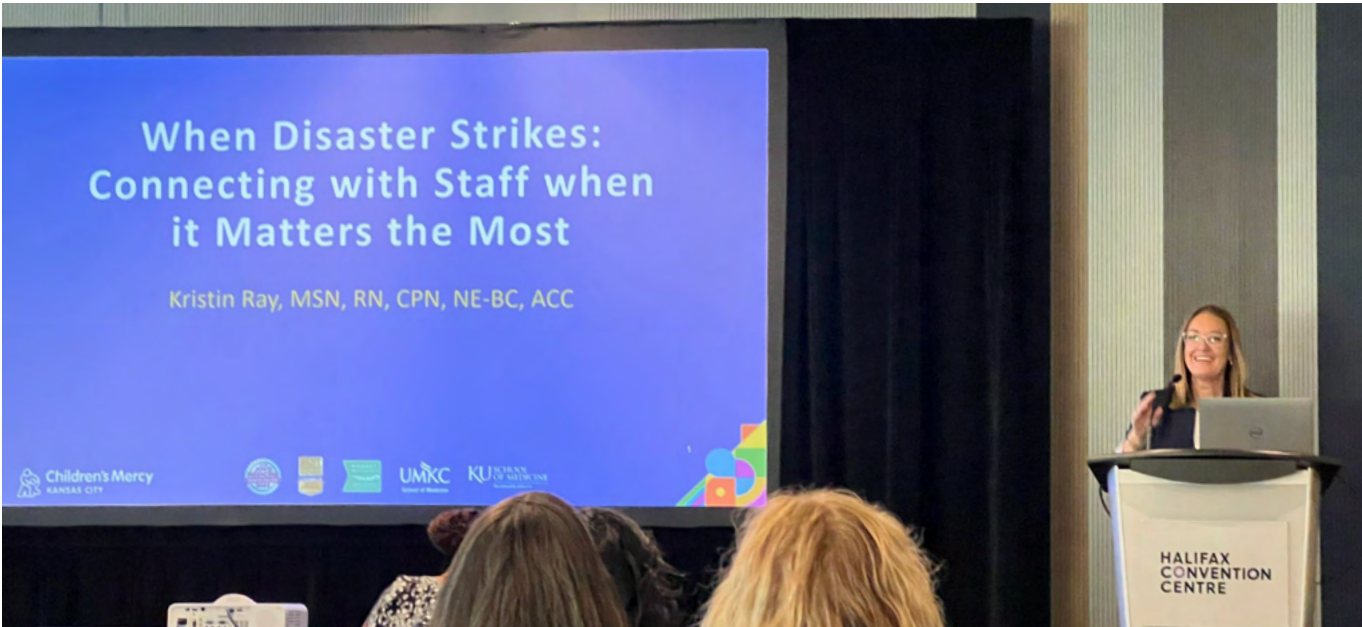
Presentations and Conferences

Prioritizing wellbeing in health care is essential for fostering a supportive environment and sustaining highly skilled team members. Across the nation, health care organizations are seeking strategies to promote staff health, clear communication and positive behaviors. At Children’s Mercy, the Center for Wellbeing actively contributed to these efforts — both within the enterprise and beyond its walls — through presentations that informed, persuaded and inspired change.

National Presentations

2024

- Ayres TB, Venz L. Daily leadership effects on fatigue and engagement: General exhaustion as a moderator. Poster presentation at Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, United States, April 2024
- Ray K. When Disaster Strikes: Connecting with Staff when it Matters the Most. Podium presentation at International Conference on Physician Health, October 2024
- Ayres MD, Laux SM, & Ayres TB. Identification of resources and support services for physicians after witnessing trauma. Poster presentation at International Conference on Physician Health 2024, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, October 2024
- Cabral R, Shenoy Anand U, Rea M, Norvell J, Myers A, Duncan JG. Mental Health Services for Physician Trainees: Results of a National Survey. Poster Presentation at International Conference on Physician Health, Nova Scotia, Canada, October 2024
- Ray K. When Disaster Strikes: Mobilizing Staff Support Efforts to Improve Emergency Response. Poster presentation at Institute for Healthcare Improvement Forum, Orlando, FL, December 2024
- Ayres, TB, Pastorek, A, Burrus, S, Myers A. Development of the Flourishing Leadership Index: A Measure of Wellbeing Supportive Leadership. Poster presentation at IHI Forum, Orlando, FL, December 2024
- Laux SM, Ayres MD, Ayres TB. Patient Portal Messaging and Physician Well-Being: A Scoping Review. Poster presentation at Institute for Healthcare Improvement Forum, Orlando, FL, December 2024



2025

- Duncan JG, Cabral R, Shenoy Anand U, Rea M, Norvell J, Myers A. Examining Mental Health Resources in Graduate Medical Education: Key Findings of a National Survey. Poster presentation at Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education, Nashville, TN, February 2025
- Davis P, Ray K, Dunleavy M, Guzman A. Meeting the Need: A Mental Health Toolkit for Disaster Response Efforts. Poster presentation at Pediatric Academic Societies, Honolulu, HI, April 2025
- Ayres TB, Burrus SA, Myers AL. Burnout, Consequences, and Identifying Potential Interventions in Healthcare Professionals. Podium presentation in McClure J Fain E. Wellness at the Heart of Healthcare: Trends in Organizational well-being Data [Symposium]. Society for Industrial and Organization Psychology Annual Conference, Denver, CO, April 2025.
- Vipond KJ, Hoflander AM, Ayres TB. In Real Time — Mobilized Wellbeing Support. Poster presentation at American Conference on Physician Health, Boston, MA, September 2025
- Myers AL, Burrus SA, Ayres TB. Promoting Wellbeing Improvement Work Through Use of Themed Organizational Survey Results. Poster presentation at American Conference on Physician Health, Boston, MA, September 2025
- Woc-Colburn L, Bryant K, Armstrong W, Ostrowsky B, Patel PK, Myers A, Yun H, Wiley Z. Women in ID: Celebrating what brings us back to joy. Symposium. IDWeek, Atlanta, GA, October 2025
- Myers AL. Wellbeing Centered Leadership. Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs Division Director Academy, Chicago, IL, October 2025
- Harris JG, Weidemann DK, Nedved A, Myers A, Burrus S. Adding a Spoonful of Joy to Your Improvement Recipe. Workshop presentation at Institute for Healthcare Improvement Forum, Anaheim, CA, December 2025

Manuscripts

- **Ray K.** Prioritizing Staff Well-Being Following a Mass Shooting. *Joint Commission Publication: Emergency Management Leader*. February 2025.
- Duncan J, Cabral R, Anand U, Norvell J, **Myers A**, Nazir N, Rea M. Examining Mental Health Resources in Graduate Medical Education: Key Findings of a National Survey. *Academic Psychiatry*. November 4, 2025.

Internal Engagement

- **Grief Conference for Professionals and the Community**
- **DEI Leader Lab: Recognize & Restore — Managing Team Member Burnout**
- **Kansas Leadership Team Gathering: Wellbeing in Health Care**
- **Experienced Nurse Fellowship: Stress First Aid**
- **Office of Faculty Development: Traumatic Stress in Health Care**
- **Office of Faculty Development: Information Overload: Managing the Onslaught of New Information and Speed of Change**
- **25th Annual Respiratory Therapy Symposium: Identifying, Recognizing and Mitigating Burnout and Adopting Gratitude Practices**
- **Ignite Leadership Summit: The Intersection of Wellbeing and Leadership**
- **Clinical Leader Academy: Leadership & Wellbeing**

Regional Impact

- **Missouri Hospital Association (MHA) and Kansas Hospital Association (KHA) Bi-state Conference:** Strategies for promoting employee wellbeing, developing emergency response plans
- **Annual Missouri and Kansas American Case Management Association Conference:** Operationalizing Stress First Aid: Work Stress Recovery Activities and Experiences
- **Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce: Building Psychological Safety When We Need it Most**
- **East Carolina University’s Occupational Health Psychology Course:** Occupational Health Psychology in Health Care: Research and Practice

Podcasts

- **Advanced Practice Perspectives |** Topic: Be at Your Best – Provider Wellbeing; Ray, Kristin
Date and Time: 10/7/2024 12:00 pm (CST)
cmkc.link/wellbeing-pod
- **The Scrubbed in Series |** Topic: Burnout and Wellbeing in Healthcare; Myers, Angela
Date and Time: 10/12/2025 11:00 am (CST)
cmkc.link/burnout-pod
- **Movement is the Medicine |** Topic: Caring for the Caregivers; Myers, Angela
Date and Time: 3/15/2025 3:00 pm (CST)
cmkc.link/movement-pod



The Little Things



While presentations, retreats, writing and crisis response are essential to our mission, the small gestures of gratitude, support and care can be just as powerful. Whether its grief books given to a team member after losing their sister, a note of appreciation to someone who needs additional support or sharing tees with our partners who help carry work across the finish line, these moments matter. The architecture of wellbeing at Children's Mercy is built from this rich tapestry of perspective and acts, big and small, and all of us joining together to life one another up.

Wellbeing Awards

The Children's Mercy Wellbeing Award recognizes individuals and teams who help build a culture of care, inclusion and resilience. These peer-nominated honorees promote wellbeing in practical, meaningful ways — from encouraging open communication and self-care to strengthening connection and team support. Through compassionate leadership, mental health advocacy, mindfulness and mentorship, they create spaces where employees feel supported, engaged and able to thrive.

2024

Individual Awardee: Rebecca "Bec" McLennan

Bec is recognized for encouraging her team to streamline processes and explore new forms of self-care that support wellbeing within the department. She also helps organize opportunities for the team to connect outside of work, creating space for fun, relaxation and stronger relationships. By encouraging open communication around wellbeing and emotions, Bec helps foster a supportive environment where team members feel comfortable, connected and cared for.

Team Awardee: Information Infrastructure Team

The Information Infrastructure Team is recognized for making wellbeing part of the team's everyday work. They empower team members to share ideas, improve processes and help shape solutions together. Through regular team retrospectives, Love Supports events and off-site activities, they create opportunities for people to be heard, connect with one another and feel supported.

2025

Individual Awardee: Jewel Akpan, Director of Multispecialty Clinics in Wichita

Jewel leads with intention and compassion to create spaces where inclusion and care are daily practices. Her work has introduced mindful initiatives and bias-awareness workshops, in addition to streamlining workflows and mentoring future leaders. Jewel's leadership shines as a model of resilience and operational excellence.

Individual Awardee: Kari Davidson, Director of Extracorporeal Support

Kari embodies leadership as she transforms the way her team experiences balance and support. She teaches mindfulness training and champions mental health leave, and leads innovative programs like Helping the Helpers. Kari redefines sustainable caregiving. Her empathetic approach fosters reflection and genuine care that inspires her team to thrive.

Team Awardee: Philanthropic Volunteer Services

The Philanthropic Volunteer Services Team is recognized for creating a culture of joy, generosity and support across the organization. Through community partnerships, comfort cart offerings, volunteer support, surge planning and process improvements, they help bring care and encouragement to the people who need it most. They also champion mentorship, coaching and other meaningful initiatives that help team members grow, connect and contribute to lasting change.

Impact and Future Direction

Through these engagements, the Center for Wellbeing continues to advance a culture of belonging and compassion — informing, persuading and inspiring change across health care systems. Looking ahead, we aim to expand our reach through additional partnerships, research dissemination and scalable programs that strengthen the wellbeing of caregivers and ultimately, the patients they serve.

Development of a Faculty Sabbatical Plan

Sabbaticals in academia date back to the 1880s and serve both institutional and individual needs. The benefits of a sabbatical include:

- Time away from clinical medicine to reflect on practice.
- An opportunity to focus on learning new clinical, research, or educational approaches.
- Time to complete scholarly work that promotes academic advancement and promotion.
- A means by which to promote faculty development and improve retention through restoration of meaning in work.

Expansion of Peer-to-Peer Support

Patient adverse events and traumatic injury of staff can lead to emotional distress or secondary traumatic stress (STS) among health care professionals. One effective strategy to mitigate STS is the deployment of peer supporters — individuals who have successfully navigated similar experiences and can provide empathetic guidance.

In 2024, the Center for Wellbeing launched the CM PEER Support Program, designed to offer Personalized Encouragement & Empathetic Reassurance to both clinical and non-clinical team members. Over the past two years, 12 multidisciplinary peer supporters have been trained to provide timely, compassionate assistance following challenging events.

Peer support fosters a sense of community and belonging, reinforcing the message that “we are all in this together.” By strengthening peer connections and creating inclusive environments, teams can enhance collective wellbeing and resilience.

Looking ahead, the Center for Wellbeing plans to expand the peer support program in the coming year, increasing accessibility and impact across the organization.

Team Members Impacted

Program	# of Team Members Impacted	# of Requests/ Sessions
Aligning Support Across Providers (ASAP) Reflections	422	47
Coffee Cart	3326	54
Educational Sessions/ Information Sharing	6444	189
Individual Support	379	379
Love Supports Adopted Team Members	587	25
Love Supports Team Members Who Adopted	322	25
Pause with Paws	3615	168
Schwartz Rounds	1226	12
Team Support (Mindfulness, Music, etc.)	3349	154
Wellbeing on Wheels (WOW) Cart	2657	377

Data from 1/1/24 – 12/31/25

Built with Special Partners

The Center for Wellbeing thrives because of the unwavering support of partners across the enterprise and the community. Their commitment — through financial investment, strategic leadership, collaborative energy, in-kind donations and countless behind-the-scenes acts of kindness and volunteer contributions — forms the backbone of everything the center is able to accomplish. This shared dedication creates the strong, agile foundation that allows wellbeing initiatives to grow, evolve and make a meaningful impact across the organization.

Your partnership is the heartbeat of our work. Thank you. None of this is possible without you!

A Look Ahead (What’s Coming)

It is a remarkable moment to be part of Children’s Mercy — a time when we are not only investing in the future of pediatric care, but also in the extraordinary people who make that future possible. As we look ahead, the center is committed to reaching every Children’s Mercy team member, accelerating wellbeing, and modernizing the very standard of wellbeing across our organization.

Standing within such an innovative and compassionate institution, we move forward with purpose and partnership. The momentum is real, the vision is clear, and together, the Center is moving full steam ahead.

A Call to Action

Let’s carry this work forward — together. Explore the supports available, take part in the wellbeing initiatives and join us in creating a culture where every team member can grow, thrive and flourish!

Center for Wellbeing Request Portal: cmkc.link/cfw-request
In-hospital number: 5-HOPE (x54673)
Externally: (816) 802-1200, press 1 and enter 54673



Meet the Team

Children's Mercy Center for Wellbeing team members are listed left to right above.

Sally Miskec, BA Office Manager	Thomas Ayres, MA, PhD Doctoral Research Faculty	Aimee Hoflander Staff Educator & Facility Dog Handler
Seth Sonnevile, MS, MDiv, BCC Program Director for Wellbeing and Inclusion	Angela Myers, MD, MPH, FAAP Chief Wellbeing Officer	Kim Vipond, LCSW, LSCSW Program Manager for Graduate Medical Education Wellbeing
Kristin Ray, MSN, RN, CPN, NE-BC, ACC Nursing Director	Hunter Facility Dog, Staff Support	Sabra Boyd, MSW, LCSW, LSCSW Senior Director

WELLBEING IS
NOT A PERK.
IT'S A PRIORITY.



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