



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Healthy Kansas Hospitals Centers of Excellence to Clara Barton**

***An Award Ceremony will be at 10:00 a.m. on June 22 in the Turnbull Safe Room***

Topeka, Kan. – June 15, 2016 – Since April of last year, something extraordinary has been taking place at Clara Barton Hospital. Both within the hospital and far beyond, leaders and staff have become champions of change by embracing a dramatic shift in the organization’s food and beverage policy. Their ultimate goal is to lead the way to better health for all of Barton County, where chronic illnesses, many of which are tied to poor diet and lack of exercise, are on the rise.

“To have healthier communities, we as health care providers must lead by example,” says Jim Blackwell, President and CEO. “It starts with us—with the health of our hospital leadership and staff—and from there we create new opportunities to improve public health.”

Those were the driving forces behind the hospital’s pledge last year to join the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* initiative, which is a project of the Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation. The program’s goal is to help hospitals provide healthier food and beverage options throughout the facility for hospital employees, patients and visitors.

Clara Barton Hospital’s efforts as a Healthy Kansas Hospital have been exceptional—award winning, in fact. For outstanding achievements and innovation, KHERF has selected Clara Barton Hospital as one of two 2016 recipients of the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* Centers of Excellence Award. The hospital will receive the award and a monetary contribution to support its continued efforts at a special award ceremony on June 22.

Since signing the *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* pledge in 2015, Clara Barton Hospital has made significant changes to improve the health and wellness of its staff, patients and the wider community. They formed a new

Wellness Committee to implement policy changes and continuously seek out new ways to encourage nutritious eating and exercise.

Clara's Corner Café, the hospital's dining area, now stocks the salad bar with more fresh fruits and vegetables, and fewer heavy pastas. A nutritious steamer was purchased in 2012 by the hospital foundation. Tea, coffee and fruit-infused water are offered free of charge to all staff, guests and patients to reduce consumption of sugary beverages. The menu also includes fresh sandwich wraps and healthier snack options like yogurt and granola. Plans are underway for a smoothie bar that will serve winning recipes submitted by Clara Barton staff.

Going beyond the hospital walls, the Wellness Committee also works with members of the community—such as local grocery stores and community gardens—to promote healthy foods and recipes, and raise awareness about the benefits of physical activity. In addition, hospital leaders, administrators, physicians and staff have become more involved in local fitness activities, including community walks, races and Relay for Life. Clara Barton Hospital will soon host its second annual 5K.

Through new community partnerships with local organizations, including the Center for Wellness, the Be Well Barton County Committee and the local school district, Clara Barton Hospital is extending its reach in providing public education on specific health and wellness issues.

“It's about creating a healthier environment for our community and helping people take ownership of their roles in chronic disease prevention and self-management,” said Jane Schepmann, Chief Nursing Officer and head of the Wellness Committee. “We are practicing what we preach and spreading that energy out to the community, and I think that's a big part of our success so far—we are living out our mission.”

The hospital continues seeking out new opportunities to build a healthier community. With top-down leadership guiding the way, the team at Clara Barton Hospital is confident they will see ongoing success.

“The sustainability is within us as we continue to engage others, spread excitement and promote healthy behaviors from the inside out,” says Blackwell. “We see this as a platform to partner with patients and bring the whole community on board with better health.”

Schepmann adds: “We know the changes are here to stay because of the commitment of our organization. With the investments we’re making and the feel-good benefits taking hold, the wheels have already been set to stay in motion.”

### **About Clara Barton Hospital & Clinics**

Clara Barton Hospital is a 23-bed community hospital in Hoisington, Kansas. Serving more than 25,000 residents in Barton County, the hospital provides medical and surgical services at the main hospital campus and affiliated clinics. Named after the founder of the American Red Cross, Clara Barton Hospital’s mission is to meet the health care needs and improve the quality of life for the community it serves.

The *Healthy Kansas Hospitals* initiative is a project of the Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation. Established in 1969, by the Kansas Hospital Association, KHERF’s mission is to facilitate collaboration and innovation to improve health delivery for Kansas communities. The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. For more information, visit [HealthyKansasHospitals.org](http://HealthyKansasHospitals.org).

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