



BlueCross BlueShield  
**Kansas**



PATHWAYS to a  
**HEALTHY  
 KANSAS**

## ***Pathways to a Healthy Kansas Initiative Learning Session Agenda*** **April 28-29, 2022**

The agenda below outlines the two days for this learning session. The in-person learning session will be held at the [Sunflower Foundation Powerhouse Center – 5820 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Topeka, KS 66606](#). Please note the following items throughout the agenda:

*	The blue asterisk next to general sessions throughout the agenda indicates the sessions that will be available for virtual attendees. Zoom links to access these live sessions will be available via the <a href="#">learning session website</a> as the learning session approaches. All other sessions without this asterisk will only be available for in-person attendees.
<b>Analysis To Action</b>	These sessions will feature highlighted communities within our <i>Pathways</i> initiative who are actively working on specific packages that will be further discussed in the ‘Package Roundtable Discussions’ sessions. These communities have made great strides in their work and will share successes, challenges, and tips from their communities.
<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b>	Following each ‘Analysis to Action’ session, we will host breakouts to allow communities to connect with one another over the specified packages in the agenda. Come prepared with questions for other communities regarding the packages you are working on. These sessions will only be for in-person attendees.
<b>Peer Group Discussions</b>	These sessions are pre-assigned based on shared technical assistance providers.

## Thursday, April 28

Time	Powerhouse South	Powerhouse North	Tower Meeting Room
7:30 AM	<b>Registration &amp; Continental Breakfast</b>		
8:00 AM			
8:30 AM	<b>Welcome &amp; Keynote Speaker*</b> Teal Van Lanen Nick Cochart		
9:00 AM			
9:30 AM			
10:00 AM	<b>Analysis To Action*</b> Community Presentations		
10:30 AM			
11:00 AM	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b> Multimodal & Recreational Trails	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b> Resist Chapter Support Vape/Juul/Tobacco Prevention Strategies	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b> Food System Planning Safe Routes to Food Food & Farm Council
11:30 AM			
12:00 PM	<b>Lunch, provided</b>		
12:30 PM			
1:00 PM	<b>Analysis To Action*</b> Community Presentations		
1:30 PM			
2:00 PM	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b> Food Pantries	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b> Community Health Needs Assessment/Health Improvement Plan Support Coordinated Referral Network Social Risk Assessment	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b> Community Gardens School Gardens Hospital Gardens
2:30 PM			
3:00 PM	<b>Break</b>		
3:30 PM			
4:00 PM	<b>Communications Panel*</b>		
4:30 PM	<b>Closing*</b>		
5:00 PM			
5:30 PM	<b>Reception</b> Camp Cowabunga – Topeka Zoo 635 SW Gage Blvd. Topeka, KS 66606		
6:00 PM			
6:30 PM			
7:00 PM			

## Friday, April 29

Time	Powerhouse South	Powerhouse North	Tower Meeting Room	Powerhouse Board Room
7:30 AM	<b>Continental Breakfast</b>			
8:00 AM				
8:30 AM	<b>Opening</b>			
9:00 AM	<b>Peer Group Discussion 1</b>	<b>Peer Group Discussion 2</b>	<b>Peer Group Discussion 3</b>	<b>Peer Group Discussion 4</b>
9:30 AM	Pre-Assigned Groups (pg. 9)	Pre-Assigned Groups (pg. 9)	Pre-Assigned Groups (pg. 9)	Pre-Assigned Groups (pg. 9)
10:00 AM	<b>Analysis To Action*</b>			
10:30 AM	Community Presentations			
11:00 AM	<b>Package Roundtable</b>	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b>	<b>Package Roundtable Discussions</b>	
11:30 AM	<b>Discussions</b> Healthy Food Prescription Program Physical Activity Prescription Program	Placemaking Storytelling Health in All Policies (HiAP)	Farmers Market Farm to School Double Up Food Bucks Simply Produce	
12:00 PM	<b>Lunch, provided</b> Sunflower Nonprofit Center & Building Presentation			
12:30 PM				
1:00 PM	<b>Trail Talks for Beginners &amp; Beyond*</b>			
1:30 PM	Elizabeth Burger			
	<b>Community Conversations*</b>			
2:00 PM	Lisse Regehr			
2:30 PM	<b>Closing Remarks</b>			
3:00 PM				



# Session Information

Thursday, April 28

Welcome and Keynote Speaker

Powerhouse South

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

## Welcome From Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas



Virginia Barnes, MPH

Director, Blue Health Initiatives, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, Inc.

Virginia Barnes joined Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas in October of 2015 as director of Blue Health Initiatives. Blue Health Initiatives formalized the company's long-time efforts to improve the health and quality of life of all Kansans. As director, Barnes is responsible for investing in communities to create sustainable, healthy places where Kansans live, work and play in ways that improve the quality of their lives. Barnes brings to her role at Blue Cross a strong background in public health, having spent more than eight years at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) in a variety of roles.



Sunee Mickle, JD

Vice President, Government and Community Relations Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, Inc.

Sunee N. Mickle was promoted to vice president of government and community relations in April 2018. In that role, Mickle is responsible for federal administration and congressional relations, state administration and legislative relations, and regulatory relations involving the Kansas Insurance Department and other agencies. In addition, she has a leadership role in maintaining the company's position as a good corporate citizen through corporate giving, volunteerism, community partnerships and initiatives that improve the health of Kansans.

Mickle joined BCBSKS in October 2007 as director of government relations. Prior to joining the company, Mickle served as senior policy analyst for the Kansas Health Institute, and also worked for Merck & Co., Inc., and Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc., both in New Jersey.



## Keynote Presentation

### A Community Story: Turning Dreams into the Art of the Possible

Every community is unique and at the core of communities across the world there are a set of assets that, if recognized, can be the catalyst for community transformation. However, how communities engage with these assets and how communities decide to respond and activate around the challenges they face, is a choice. We know that when we build safe spaces, cultivate relationships between diverse stakeholders, and lead with a shared, bold vision for the future, we can accomplish the dreams of our communities. Our story starts with a dream and a bold statement: “Develop a community model the world will follow.” In a few short years, we have, in fact, realized that dreams are possible to achieve. From Husqvarna Sweden to Northeast Wisconsin, communities across the world are engaged in the process of developing their own unique model with our help - turning their own dreams into the Art of the Possible.



**Teal Van Lanen, MS,**  
**Co-founder Live Algoma & Kinect**

Teal has never been satisfied with the status quo. For well over a decade, she has used her skillset to develop and elevate the small rural community where she resides. Always one for adventure, Teal has embraced the opportunity to spread and scale the successful initiatives she championed in Algoma.

Teal was masterful in her approach and focused heavily on the vital conditions of health and cross-sector collaboration, while expanding the capacity of staff, students, and community members through social change and improvement science tools. In 2015, Teal co-founded the grassroots initiative Live Algoma, which earned international recognition including the Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Prize. The same year, she was named Improvement Advisor for the 100 Million Healthier Lives – SCALE Initiative led by the Institute of Healthcare Improvement. Teal has expanded her educational foundation to

parallel her career path, and she now holds a master’s degree in Educational Leadership with an emphasis on Social Justice and Equity.

In her current role, Teal co-founded KinectM1, and serves as the driving force in connecting communities dedicated to creating the conditions for all to thrive.



**Nick Cochart, MS, PhD**  
**Co-founder Live Algoma & Kinect**

Nick Cochart possesses a drive for high achievement that transcends what many people might consider “normal.” Whether it is in athletics, where he succeeded as an undersized defensive lineman with the University of Wisconsin football program, or his scholastic endeavors, where he was named Academic All Big-Ten followed by a Masters and PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, or his professional career, where he became a school district Superintendent, Nick has displayed a propensity for putting himself and the people around him in positions to succeed.

Nick presented at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Connect Program at the Capitol in Washington, D.C., to “inspire the nation (and policymakers) that community can create opportunities for better health, well-being, and equity.” He also was part of a team that

helped Algoma earn an All-America City Award in 2020 from the National Civic League. Algoma was only the tenth Wisconsin entity to earn this designation in the past 60 years.

Nick is a selfless leader who consistently elevated those around him and engages individuals who may not recognize their own potential. His passion for overcoming the challenges faced by rural communities and school systems prompted him to co-found KinectM1, as he strives to excel, and help others to excel, in a continually changing world.

## Analysis To Action

Powerhouse South

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Package:** Multimodal & Enhanced Trail Infrastructure

**Community:** Seward County



**Sarah M. Mersdorf-Foreman, LMSW**  
**Executive Director, Liberal Area Coalition for Families**

Sarah has been director of LACF for 10 years. Prior to LACF, she served as a Therapist at Southwest Guidance Center and a Parent Support Specialist with PACT, early intervention services. Sarah earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology, with a minor in Christian Studies from Friends University. She then graduated from Washburn University with her Masters of Social Work. During her time at Southwest Guidance Center, Sarah accumulated the hours and supervision necessary to test for the Clinical Social Work exam. Sarah volunteers at Grace Lutheran Church helping with the youth. She is also the chair of the Benevolent Committee for Pheasant Heaven Charities. Sarah and her husband, Nathan, recently bought a small farm and love collecting random animals for the family to enjoy. Sarah's greatest joy is being wife to Nathan for 19 years and raising their four children.

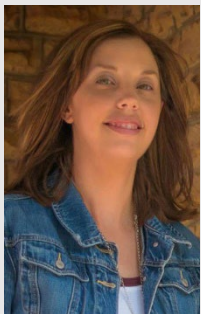


**Adriane Hatcher**  
**Communications Coordinator & Trail Coordinator, Liberal Area Coalition for Families**

Adriane has been Communications Coordinator with the Coalition since 2016. She also serves as Trail Coordinator for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas *Pathways* trail work and as a RAD-x team member. Her most frequent full-time work experience was as Executive Director of Liberal's Baker Arts Center. Adriane has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Fort Hays State University and a Certificate of Portrait Photography from the Art Institute of Pittsburg and also maintains a part-time photography business. Adriane volunteers for the Satanta Area Arts Council in Satanta as President and grant writer, and the First Southern Baptist Church of Liberal where her family attends. She assists in her husband's family business, Hatcher AgCore, selling agricultural seeds and service and they drag race across the nation as a hobby.

**Package:** Resist Chapter Support

**Community:** Jewell/Mitchell County



**Stephanie Simmons**  
**Executive Director, Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation**

Stephanie Simons in addition to her role as executive director of the Mitchell County Regional Medical Foundation provides a leadership role in tobacco prevention and cessation. She leads the North Central Kansas Health Collaborative's Chronic Disease Risk Reduction grant which has a focus on building and supporting local Resist chapters. She is also on the board of the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition which works to connect with public health experts to help prevent tobacco use in communities.

**Package:** Food System Planning

**Community:** Harvey County



**Lorrie Kessler**  
**Healthy Harvey Coalition Coordinator**

After graduating from Wichita State University with Bachelor's Degrees in History and Anthropology, Lorrie took a large side step into public health via mentoring. An Alum of the McNair Scholar's Program (part of the US Department of Education TRIO programs), she took a job working in youth substance abuse prevention and coalition development while in graduate school and found her calling. She worked as a Certified Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist with Regional Prevention Center of South Central Kansas at Mirror, Inc. for 10 years. In 2014, she joined the Harvey County Health Department as the Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Coordinator and soon added Healthy Harvey Coalition Coordinator to her job duties. Now she coordinates the Coalition and oversees the *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* Initiative in Harvey County.

**Package Roundtable 1**

Multimodal & Enhanced Trail Infrastructure

**Powerhouse South**

**Package Roundtable 2**

Resist Chapter Support  
Vape/Juul Tobacco Prevention Strategies (K-12)

**Powerhouse North**

**Package Roundtable 3**

Food System Planning  
Safe Routes to Food  
Food & Farm Council

**Tower Meeting Room**

**Analysis To Action**

Powerhouse South

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

**Package:** Food Pantries

**Community:** Barber County



**Debra Kolb**  
Director, Barber County United

Deb Kolb is a 6th generation resident of Medicine Lodge in Barber County, Kansas, where she has worked more than 20 years as a leader of community events and programs, promoting historical preservation, economic development, and tourism. As Director of Barber County United, a quality-of-life coalition, she has been instrumental in new approaches to rural wellness, including an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded program addressing mental health. As Coordinator of *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* she manages the collaborative project addressing social determinants of health across the rural county.

**Package:** Community Health Needs Assessment/Health Improvement Plan Support

**Community:** Norton County



**Caryl Hale**  
Grant Coordinator, Norton County Hospital

Caryl Hale is the grant coordinator at Norton County Hospital for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas *Pathways* grant. Caryl also is a field agent for Humanities Kansas and is currently working on the story chaser project, a rural focused stories project. Caryl has worked in health care previous to this role. Her primary background has included health and wellness initiatives including community workouts and farmers market, and work in non-profits related to sustainable agriculture as well as rural art and humanities initiatives. She attended KSU for mass communication studies and KU for pre-pharmacy.



**Katie Allen Wagner, MS**  
Executive Director, Norton Regional Health Foundation at Norton County Hospital

Katie Allen Wagner is the executive director of the Norton Regional Health Foundation and also serves as community relations director for the Norton County Hospital. In her foundation role, Katie oversees day-to-day operations of the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that aims to help make the healthy choice the easy choice among rural communities in the region. Specific to her communications role, Katie is responsible for developing and implementing a strategic communications vision and overseeing internal and external communication operations. Katie has worked in health care for six years, but her background primarily includes working in the food and agricultural industry. She holds a bachelor's degree in agricultural journalism from the University of Missouri and master's degree in agricultural communications from Texas Tech University.

University of Missouri and master's degree in agricultural communications from Texas Tech University.

**Package:** Community Gardens

**Community:** Kearny County



Jenny White

Pathways Coordinator, Kearny County Wellness Coalition

Jenny White has been the *Pathways* Coordinator in Kearny County since 2018. Working with the Kearny County Wellness Coalition, she has passed 12 new health-related policies and successfully started a Farmer’s Market and two community Gardens. For the past five years, she has served as President of Lakin PRIDE, a Kansas PRIDE organization. Jenny also co-founded Going Green, a reduce, reuse, and recycle initiative in the county. Jenny and her husband operate a coffee shop and have been enjoying the connections and civic engagement that this has brought to the community.

**Roundtable Discussions**

**Breakouts**

1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**Package Roundtable 1**

Food Pantries

**Powerhouse South**

**Package Roundtable 2**

Community Health Needs Assessment/Community Health Improvement Plan Support  
Community Coordinated Resource Referral Network  
Social Risk Assessment

**Powerhouse North**

**Package Roundtable 3**

Community Gardens  
School Gardens  
Hospital Gardens

**Tower Meeting Room**

**Communications Panel**

**Powerhouse South**

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Panelists will include our two keynote speakers – Teal Van Lanen and Nick Cochart.

We will also hear from two Pathways community members – Jody Hoener and Daphne Mertens



Teal Van Lanen, MS  
Keynote Speaker, Co-founder Live Algoma & Kinect



Nick Cochart, MS, PhD  
Keynote Speaker, Co-founder Live Algoma & Kinect





Daphne Mertens, MS  
Grant Manager, Healthier Lyon County

Since 2014 Daphne has worked alongside Healthier Lyon County Coalition’s leadership team to facilitate engagement in each of the coalition’s community health objectives. Healthier Lyon County is a program with a mission of supporting and encouraging initiatives, policies, and resources to improve the health and well-being of residents of Lyon County.

Daphne received both her undergrad and graduate degrees in health sciences at Emporia State University. Daphne currently serves on the board of CareArc, a Federally Qualified Health Center; as well as the Multi Use Pathway Planning Board, Natural Resources Advisory Board; and as a liaison to the Lyon County Food and Farm Council.



Jody Hoener, LBSW, MBA  
President and CEO, The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team, Inc.

As the leader of the Healthy Bourbon County Action Team, I have learned lessons as well as seen much success in gaining needed resources and community support for initiatives focused on addressing the social determinants of health. Living in a rural community has afforded me the opportunity to learn about building a culture of health through policy, systems, and environmental change. Our work has been recognized the prestigious Kansas State of Wellness Community Champion Award in May 2018, identified by the Kansas Hospital Association and Kansas Health Institute as a leader in the field and used in a toolbox for Kansas hospitals as an example of best practice approaches to address community health. I am passionate about addressing health outcomes, enhancing quality of life and encouraging economic growth. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time outdoors with my two teenage daughters and traveling as much as I possibly can!

## Evening Reception

Camp Cowabunga, Topeka Zoo

635 SW Gage Blvd. Topeka, KS 66606

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an evening of fun and food at the Topeka Zoo’s Camp Cowabunga. Please refer to the Zoo map handout in your packet for directions.



Douglas Kearny	<b>Peer Group 1</b> Franklin Shawnee	Grant Wichita	<b>Powerhouse South</b>
Barber Reno	<b>Peer Group 2</b> Geary Riley	Lyon Seward	<b>Powerhouse North</b>
Bourbon Dickinson	<b>Peer Group 3</b> City of Columbus Harvey	Cowley Saline	<b>Tower Meeting Room</b>
Crawford Norton	<b>Peer Group 4</b> Jewell/Mitchell Plainville	Labette & Montgomery Wilson	<b>Powerhouse Board Room</b>

**Packages:** Placemaking & Health in All Policies (HiAP)  
**Community:** Bourbon County



**Jody Hoener, LBSW, MBA**  
President and CEO, The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team, Inc.

As the leader of the Healthy Bourbon County Action Team, I have learned lessons as well as seen much success in gaining needed resources and community support for initiatives focused on addressing the social determinants of health. Living in a rural community has afforded me the opportunity to learn about building a culture of health through policy, systems, and environmental change. Our work has been recognized the prestigious Kansas State of Wellness Community Champion Award in May 2018, identified by the Kansas Hospital Association and Kansas Health Institute as a leader in the field and used in a toolbox for Kansas hospitals as an example of best practice approaches to address community health. I am passionate about addressing health outcomes, enhancing quality of life and encouraging economic growth. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time outdoors with my two teenage daughters and traveling as much as I possibly can!



**Package:** Farmers Market

**Community:** Geary County



**Susan Jagerson, MBA**

**Pathways to a Healthy Kansas Grant Coordinator, Live Well Geary County**

Susan has been the *Pathways* Grant Coordinator for LWGC since 2018, beginning with the Phase 1 initiative. She works with Geary County partners to help create healthier behaviors and improve the quality of life in the community. She loves that through *Pathways* she is able to implement projects that can truly make an impact on access to healthier foods, increased opportunities for physical activity and commercial tobacco prevention and education. Susan also is a licensed realtor in the state of Kansas.

**Package:** Healthy Food Prescription Program

**Community:** Riley County



**Vickie James, RDN/LD**

**Coordinator, Food and Farm Council of Riley County and City of Manhattan  
Co-Coordinator, Riley County Pathways to a Healthy Kansas**

Vickie, in her “semi” retirement, took on the role of establishing a city and county jointly appointed food and farm council, the Food and Farm Council of Riley County and the City of Manhattan, Kansas of which she serves as the Council Coordinator. The local food system work focuses on sustainable solutions for reducing food insecurity, and food waste along with providing opportunities for food skills education. Vickie is also a Co-Coordinator for the Riley County *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* grant. She enjoys giving back to her alma mater and currently serves on the Kansas State University College of Health and Human Sciences Advisory Board and

the Friends of McCain Board of Directors. Free time finds her on a walking trail, or enjoying time with her husband and six grandchildren.

## Trail Talk for Beginners & Beyond

Powerhouse South

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Is increasing access to trails part of your community plan for greater wellbeing? This session will cover some of the basics of “Trail building 101” (planning, funding, building) using case studies from towns that started with almost no experience or funding. The session will also dive deeper into trail topics such as creative partnerships/projects, statewide resources, and new ways to think about underserved populations. Bring your questions: Sunflower Foundation has been funding trail projects for 16 years and happy to help you think through issues and hear your ideas.



**Elizabeth E. Burger, PhD, MBA, EMT**

**Senior Program Officer, Sunflower Foundation**

Elizabeth E. Burger, PhD, MBA, EMT, is senior program officer at the Sunflower Foundation: Health Care for Kansans and oversees the Healthy Living & Active Communities portfolio. She partners with communities across Kansas with the focus: 1) equitable opportunities to be active outdoors and connect to nature; 2) healthy food access, security and system resiliency. Burger began her career in broadcast journalism but later transitioned to health. While completing graduate degrees in exercise science, health behaviors and business, she owned a personal training business and managed hospital wellness programs. After years in academia, teaching and conducting research, she discovered the ultimate challenge of philanthropy. Outside of work, Burger is a certified firefighter/EMT and volunteers for her rural fire district and other community projects. She enjoys any chance to be outdoors, especially trail running, and is working to create a

nature preserve on her family’s rural property. She believes in the power of listening to all sides and eating chocolate whenever possible.



Lisse Regehr  
President & CEO, Thrive Allen County

Lisse Regehr is the President and CEO of Thrive Allen County, a nonprofit organization that works to improve quality of life and economic conditions in Allen County, Kansas. Thrive Allen County is a countywide organization that has been instrumental in the development of more than 60 miles of new trails and routes within the past decade; lowering the uninsured rate in Allen County from 21% in 2013 to 9% in 2018; the implementation of public and safety-net transportation for Allen County residents; the creation of a free, rural bike-share program replicated throughout the nation; and overseeing the statewide Kansas CARES program that assists uninsured residents throughout Kansas apply for affordable health insurance. During Regehr's leadership, Thrive served as the administrator for Allen County's SPARK and ARPA funds, as well as

the administrator for the Community Development Block Grants for several communities throughout southeast Kansas. In addition, Regehr co-created Thrive Kansas, which exists to build capacity in rural Kansas communities to better quality of life and bring about rural revitalization efforts.

