

# Stronger Together: Increasing Access, Optimizing Outcomes, and Setting the Standards for Telehealth Competencies



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*Providing a Bridge to Practice in Complex Healthcare Settings: A Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program*  
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## Purpose

To enhance the clinical skills, knowledge, and judgment of new primary care APRNs in complex healthcare settings, our clinical fellowship program (Building a Bridge to Practice in Complex Healthcare Settings) has implemented a robust telehealth didactic education based upon APRN competencies for telehealth and telemedicine.

## Methods and Materials

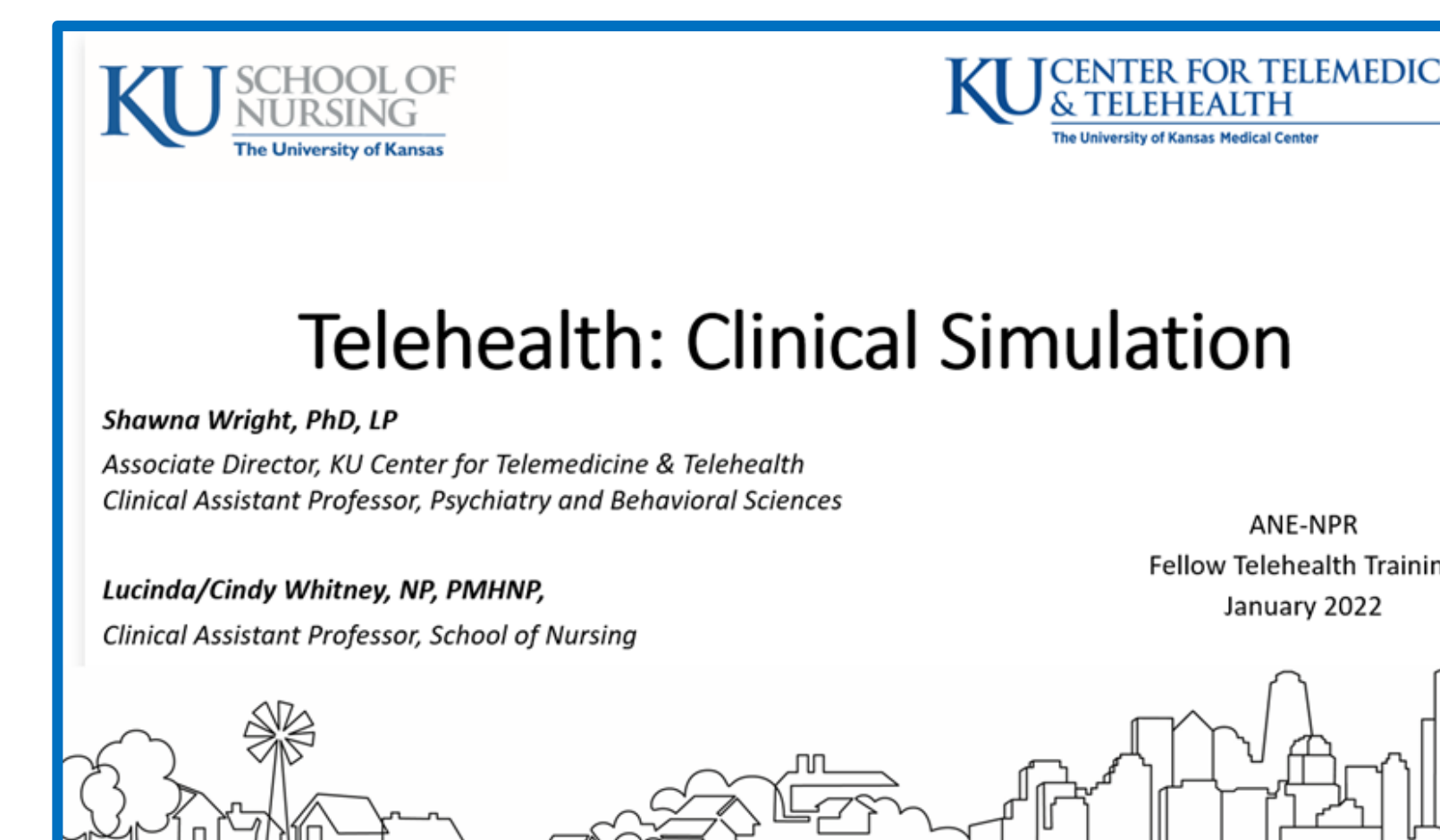
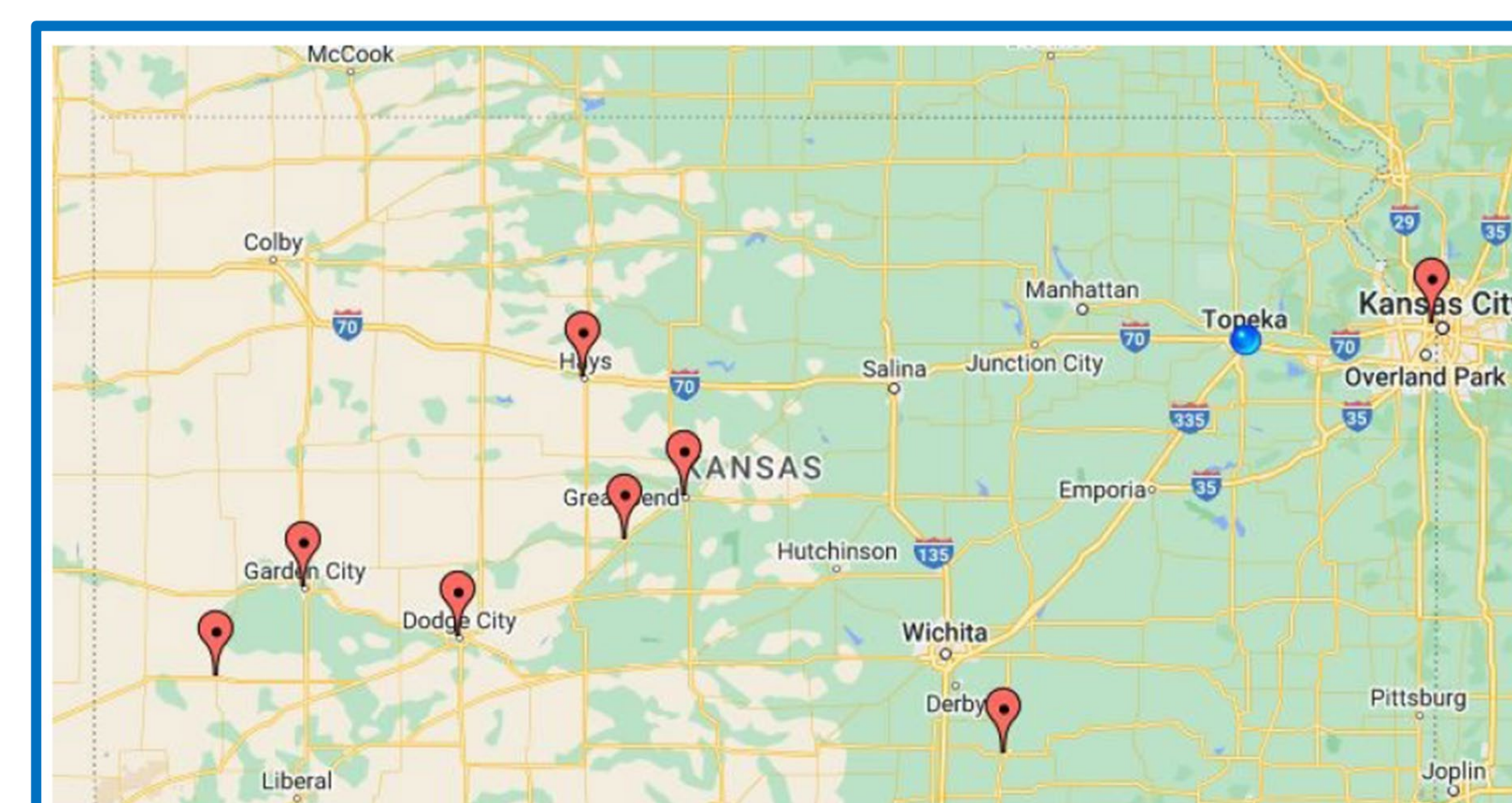
The didactic education is specific to advanced practice nursing in rural and underserved communities, including telehealth policy, regulation, best practices, and expansion of telehealth to increase access to care and improve patient outcomes. To further develop competence and confidence in telehealth practice, our fellowship has integrated application experiences, building upon the expertise of KU Center for Telemedicine & Telehealth and fellowship practice sites in rural and underserved Kansas and Missouri. With HRSA funding, the fellowship program was able to purchase the supplies for a telehealth cart for use in our telehealth didactic sessions and simulation. The cart includes state-of-the-art peripherals (scopes, assessment tools).



KUSON Advanced Practice Telehealth Competencies	
Telehealth etiquette and professionalism while videoconferencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops an effective rapport (eye contact, tone, body language, non-verbal cues)</li> <li>Establishes therapeutic relationships and environments (attire, disruptions, privacy, lighting, sound, etc.)</li> <li>Describes and mitigates own implicit and explicit biases</li> <li>Leverages technology to promote health equity and mitigate gaps in access to care</li> <li>Accommodates the patient's needs, preferences, and potential barriers to technology use (cultural, social, physical, cognitive, and linguistic/communication)</li> </ul>
An understanding of when telehealth should and should not be used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains and adapts practice in the context of limitations and benefits of telehealth</li> <li>Works with diverse populations and caregivers to evaluate and remedy patient and practice barriers to incorporating telehealth into their care</li> <li>Prepares for and escalates care when patient safety is at risk</li> </ul>
An understanding of privacy/protected health information (PHI) regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtains informed consent, including defining how privacy will be maintained</li> <li>Identifies and supports solutions that mitigate ethical problems and adheres to professional requirements in telehealth</li> </ul>
Proficiency in the use of asynchronous and synchronous telehealth technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies and can use the equipment needed for the intended service (including originating and distant sites)</li> <li>Skills in using peripherals, such as otoscope, stethoscope, and ophthalmoscope</li> <li>Practices with a wide range of evidence-based technologies</li> <li>Demonstrates how to troubleshoot basic technology failures and optimizes settings with the technology being employed</li> </ul>
Knowledge of appropriate documentation and billing of telehealth technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complies with legal and privacy regulations at the local, state, and federal levels</li> <li>Explains and discloses potential conflicts of interest to patients in the use of telehealth</li> <li>Applies appropriate billing concepts to telehealth encounters based on statutory and regulatory requirements</li> </ul>
An ability to collaborate interprofessionally using telehealth technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate understanding of all roles and works as a team member when practicing telehealth regardless of modality</li> <li>Determines situations in which patients' social supports and health care providers should be incorporated into telehealth interactions with the patients' consent to provide optimal care</li> </ul>
Proficiency in taking a history, performing an appropriate physical exam, and generating differential diagnoses using telehealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtains history (from patient, family, and/or caregiver) during an encounter and incorporates the information into differential diagnosis and the management plan</li> <li>Conducts appropriate physical examination and collects relevant data on clinical status during encounter (including guiding the patient and/or assistant)</li> <li>Incorporates patient-generated data into clinical assessment and treatment plan, while understanding data limitations and adapting accordingly</li> </ul>

## Principal Observations

The telehealth cart has been used for simulation experiences, scaffolded to build difficulty and telehealth skill for novice APRN providers. Fellows can progress from a straight-forward behavioral health visit with history-taking and verbal exam, to a simple musculoskeletal case with history-taking and brief physical exam via synchronous web-based session and concluding with a more complex primary care visit with use of peripheral devices and/or facilitation by nursing staff via synchronous web-based session. Fellows are offered ample opportunity to demonstrate competence and build confidence.



## Impact

All fellows will have telephonic and web-based telehealth experiences to allow them the opportunity to apply learned content in didactic sessions.

## Acknowledgements

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## References

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