

KAHQ

Kentucky Association for
Healthcare Quality



KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION FOR
HEALTHCARE QUALITY

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE HOME-GROWN Quality

ROOTED IN CARE



SEPTEMBER 11, 2026



BEREA COLLEGE
Berea, Kentucky

*Cultivating excellence in healthcare quality
through leadership, innovation, and collaboration.*

Welcome and Conference Information

Welcome to the Kentucky Association for Healthcare Quality Annual Conference.

Today's program brings together healthcare leaders, quality professionals, patient experience experts, clinicians, and innovators from across the Commonwealth to share practical strategies and inspiring stories that advance healthcare quality.

Our 2026 theme, **Home-Grown Quality: Rooted in Care**, reflects the belief that meaningful improvement grows from strong relationships, engaged teams, and a commitment to serving patients and communities.

We hope you leave today with new ideas, valuable connections, and renewed inspiration for your quality journey.

Registration Link

Conference Fees:

- \$100 (member)
- \$130 (nonmember)
- \$150 (conference + membership)

*No
refunds
after Aug 31*

Accessibility & Accommodations

KAHQ welcomes all participants and is committed to providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment.

For accommodation requests, contact:

Heather Napier, KAHQ
President
Heather.Napier@bhsi.com

Continuing Education (CE)

Nursing: Submitted for approval of **7.2 contact hours** by the Kentucky Board of Nursing (KBN) (provider number 5-0051-0128-663)

CPHQ: Submitted for approval of **6 CEU hours** by the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ)

Requirement for successful completion of CE credit: Attendees must provide a nursing license number, attend at least 90% of each educational session, and complete each post-session evaluation.

Conference Objectives

Participants will:

- Translate data into engaging, meaningful conversations
- Utilize core motivational interviewing techniques—specifically open questions, affirmations, reflective listening, and summarizing (OARS)—to bypass resistance and cultivate high-quality connections
- Mobilize peer stakeholders to build a "home-grown" community of practice across multidisciplinary teams, independent of formal authority
- Explain the importance of Age-Friendly care using the 4Ms framework
- Outline the key steps in the Age-Friendly journey
- Identify common barriers to implementing Age-Friendly care
- Describe anticipated outcomes and impact
- Understand how Age-Friendly practices integrate into EPIC workflows
- Recognize the importance of culture change in sustaining transformation
- Apply the power of storytelling to drive engagement and adoption
- Describe the core components of a Tiered Performance Structure (TPS) and evaluate how performance segmentation can be used to prioritize improvement efforts and maximize organizational resources across diverse care settings.
- Apply data-driven criteria, including goal attainment and performance trajectory, to identify improvement priorities and tailor interventions based on organizational needs.
- Implement leadership, accountability, and peer-learning strategies that foster collaboration, recognition, and sustained improvement in patient experience outcomes.
- Examine healthcare experiences through the perspective of families of individuals with Down syndrome
- Identify gaps in communication, coordination, and support that may affect quality of care and patient outcomes
- Discuss strategies for incorporating family feedback and lived experience into quality improvement efforts
- Implement approaches that promote patient-centered, family-centered, and equitable care across healthcare settings
- Evaluate organizational readiness for a suspected measles case through quality improvement principles
- Analyze lessons learned and organization gaps identified through measles preparedness drills
- Develop actionable strategies to improve measles response readiness within your own healthcare organization
- Understand community needs and identify gaps in care
- Define Community Paramedicine and core services
- Measure success and program impact
- Implement a Community Paramedicine program

Conference Agenda

7:30 am - 8:20 am
Registration and Breakfast

8:20 am – 8:40 am
Welcome and Announcements

8:40 am – 9:40 am
Keynote Presentation
Planting the Seeds of Change: How Informal Leaders Use Conversation to Grow Quality

Patti Weiter, PSY.D.
Consulting & Coaching Psychologist
Louisville, KY

9:40 am – 9:50 am
Break

9:50 am – 10:50 am
Creating a Culture of Age-Friendly Care

Caroline Henderson, MSN, RN,
GERO-BC
Owensboro Health

10:50 am – 11:00 am
Break

11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Tiered Performance Structure: A Framework for Prioritizing and Sustaining Patient Experience Improvement

Ashley Ackerman, MHA, CPXP
Dawn Robbins, MBA
Baptist Health System KY & IN

12:00 pm – 12:45 pm
Lunch

12:45 pm – 1:45 pm
More Than a Diagnosis: Improving the Healthcare Experience for Individuals with Down Syndrome and Their Families

Abby Johnson, MA
Down Syndrome Association of Kentucky

1:45 pm – 2:10 pm
KAHQ Business Meeting and Snack Break

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm
Homegrown Preparedness: Achieving Measles Readiness Through Performance Improvement

Mackenzie Fugate, MLS (ASCP), CIC, T-CHEST, HACP-CMS
Centerpoint Health - Georgetown

3:10 pm – 3:20 pm
Break

3:20 pm -4:20 pm
Community Paramedicine: Better Health, Better Wellness

Austin Rousch, Advanced Practice Paramedic
CommonSpirit / Saint Joseph Health

4:20 pm – 4:30 pm
Closing Announcements and Continuing Education

KAHQ 2026 Annual Conference Speakers



Keynote Speaker, Dr. Patti Weiter, Psy.D. is a health psychologist, executive coach, organizational consultant, and owner of Shine Psychology, LLC. With more than 13 years of experience helping mission-driven organizations, she specializes in reducing burnout, strengthening workplace culture, and equipping leaders to build resilient, high-performing teams through evidence-based approaches to well-being, connection, and positive leadership.

In addition to her consulting work, Dr. Weiter serves as Deputy Section Chief for Primary Care Mental Health Integration at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center and previously held roles in organizational development and talent management within the Veterans Health Administration. She is a Professional Affiliate with the Center for Positive Leadership at the University of Louisville, serves on the Kentucky Psychological Association Board of Directors as its Meaning & Connection Ambassador, and mentors emerging psychology professionals through the KPA Early Career Professionals Leadership Academy.

A dynamic and engaging speaker, Dr. Weiter has presented to healthcare organizations, academic institutions, and leadership groups across the region, inspiring audiences to foster authentic leadership, strengthen workplace relationships, and create cultures where people and organizations can thrive. Her practical, research-backed strategies leave attendees with actionable tools to improve well-being, engagement, and organizational performance.



Caroline Henderson, RN, MSN, Gero-BC

Clinical Program Specialist-Geriatrics
Owensboro Health

Caroline Henderson, RN, brings more than 40 years of progressive healthcare experience spanning direct patient care, clinical leadership, facilitation, and project management. A dedicated servant leader, she is passionate about advancing person-centered and age-friendly care through collaboration, mentorship, and continuous improvement. Throughout her career, Caroline has successfully guided multidisciplinary teams, mentored healthcare professionals, and led quality improvement initiatives that enhance patient outcomes and the care experience. She is committed to fostering cultures of excellence, empowering frontline staff, and promoting innovative, patient-focused approaches to healthcare delivery.

KAHQ 2026 Annual Conference Speakers



Ashley Ackerman, MHA, CPXP

System Director of Patient Experience
Baptist Health System KY & IN

Ashley Ackerman is the System Director of Patient Experience for Baptist Health, where she leads enterprise-wide strategies to enhance patient experience across nine hospitals and more than 400 care locations throughout Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. With more than 18 years of healthcare leadership experience, Ashley specializes in patient experience, quality improvement, change management, and service excellence. She partners with executive and clinical leaders to translate patient feedback into meaningful improvements that strengthen care delivery, workforce engagement, and organizational performance. A nationally recognized speaker, Ashley is passionate about creating patient-centered cultures that advance quality, safety, and compassionate care.



Dawn Robbins, MBA

System Associate VP of Patient Experience
Baptist Health System KY & IN

Dawn W. Robbins is the System Associate Vice President of Patient Experience for Baptist Health, where she leads enterprise-wide patient experience strategy across nine hospitals and more than 450 care sites spanning four states. With more than 25 years of healthcare leadership experience, Dawn specializes in consumer experience transformation, organizational alignment, change management, and data-driven performance improvement. She has led nationally recognized patient experience initiatives that have significantly improved engagement and organizational performance and is a sought-after speaker at national healthcare conferences. Dawn is passionate about helping healthcare organizations build patient-centered cultures that deliver exceptional experiences for patients, families, and care teams.



Abby Johnson, MA

Director of Medical Outreach and Family Services
Down Syndrome Association of Central Kentucky (DSACK)

Abby Johnson serves as the Director of Medical Outreach and Family Services for the Down Syndrome Association of Central Kentucky, where she partners with families, healthcare providers, and community organizations to improve care and support for individuals with Down syndrome. Holding a Master of Arts in Human Services with a concentration in Marriage and Family, Abby's professional background includes foster care, clinical assessment, group counseling, and family advocacy. As the mother of a child with Down syndrome, she brings both professional expertise and personal experience to her work, championing family-centered care,

KAHQ 2026 Annual Conference Speakers

healthcare collaboration, and equitable, compassionate support for individuals and their families.



L. Mackenzie Fugate, MLS (ASCP), CIC, T-CHEST, HACP-CMS

Infection Prevention Coordinator
Centerpoint Health — Georgetown

Mackenzie Fugate is Certified Infection Preventionist (CIC) and ASCP-certified Medical Laboratory Scientist with expertise in microbiology, molecular diagnostics, infection prevention, and healthcare quality. Her unique background combines a strong clinical laboratory foundation with specialized training in infection prevention, providing a comprehensive perspective on patient safety, healthcare-associated infection prevention, and quality improvement.

She currently serves four Central Kentucky hospitals within the Lifepoint Health system, leading healthcare-associated infection (HAI) surveillance, NHSN reporting, outbreak investigations, and data-driven quality initiatives. Mackenzie is passionate about translating complex surveillance data into practical, evidence-based strategies that support healthcare leaders and frontline teams while promoting excellence in patient care and regulatory compliance with CDC, CMS, and The Joint Commission standards.



Austin Roush, Advanced Practice Paramedic

Kentucky Director of Paramedicine
CHI Saint Joseph Health

Austin Roush is the Kentucky Director of Paramedicine for CHI Saint Joseph Health, where he leads innovative programs that strengthen emergency care, improve care transitions, and expand access to community-based healthcare. An Advanced Practice Paramedic with a background in EMS and fire service leadership, Austin has pioneered hospital-based paramedic and community paramedicine programs that have gained national recognition for improving patient outcomes, reducing readmissions, and enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration. A frequent national speaker, he is passionate about advancing emergency medicine through innovation, quality improvement, and patient-centered care.

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