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## Business-health coalition gets grant from foundation

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The Kansas Health Foundation has awarded \$50,000 in startup funds to the Wichita Business Coalition on Health Care.

The grant accounts for about a third of the nonprofit group's estimated first-year budget.

"We're very interested in leadership," said Mary Campuzano, the foundation's vice president for programs. "I think the most positive thing to us is the focus on wellness and the promotion of health for employees."

The foundation awarded \$26 million in grants last year, Campuzano said.

The coalition rolled out its three-year strategic plan two weeks ago, the group's board voted to hire health care consultant Ron Whiting as executive director.

As interim executive director, Whiting developed the coalition's plan and helped coalesce the group's several dozen initial members into committed founders who contributed nearly \$100,000 in startup funds.

"The KHF grant is a recognition that what we're doing is important for the community," Whiting said. "Wichita is a unique place, and we have the potential to do some really innovative things in this market."

The coalition was formed to address health care cost and quality issues that drive up premiums for employers and affect how health care is consumed and delivered in Wichita.

While predominantly employer-driven, members include other stakeholders in the community, including hospitals, insurance providers and professionals and education partners such as the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita and Wichita State University.

Whiting, who just returned from a visit with Kansas City's well-established business coalition, said he's now working on putting the strategic plan to work, underscoring the importance of employers taking an active role in value-based benefit design.

"It's a transition from planning to implementation," he said. "The challenge is making sure each member sees the value in what we've created."

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