

From the Kansas City Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/kansascity/news/2017/11/03/health-systems-form-clinically-integrated-network.html>

## What could bring 3 KC health care competitors together? Better care, more money

Nov 3, 2017, 2:49pm CDT

Three health care competitors — The University of Kansas Health System, Shawnee Mission Health and North Kansas City Hospital — will work together to improve pay and patient care.

The companies will participate in a new clinically integrated network (CIN) consisting of more than 1,600 physicians in the Kansas City area, called Centrus Health Kansas City. Independent physicians, including the Kansas City Metropolitan Physician Association, also will participate.

The concept of CINs isn't new, but the ability to incorporate three competing health systems in the same market is "very unique," said Jill Watson, executive director of Centrus Health Kansas City.

"We haven't seen anything like this before. We're extremely excited to bring this collaboration to the Kansas City market," she said. "I think this will be good news for anyone who's buying health care as well as patients who are receiving health care."

Watson explained that CINs offer a way for health care systems to work together without entering a merger agreement. The partnership will allow them to share performance benchmarks, patient data and infrastructure to reduce duplicative testing and improve patient care. Physicians also can meet to discuss the cost of an episode of care and how to reduce it.

On the provider side, she said the cooperation would be consistent with standards set by the Medicare Shared Savings Program, which rewards physicians for reducing the cost of care. That contract will begin next year, Watson said.

"When you're in a shared-savings program, all of the participants have the same destiny. You're completely rowing in the same direction," she said.

Centrus also will participate in a similar model, an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City.

"We will have incentives around the quality of care and total cost of care for providers," Centrus Executive Director Chris Wilson said. "That will help support our efforts to be able to perform better around quality



GETTY IMAGES (ROBERT DALY)

Three big Kansas City-area health systems are joining a clinically integrated network, which is designed to improve care for patients and reduce costs for providers.

and cost."

In total, Centrus is expected to have 90,000 participating patients to start. But Watson said she expects the agreement to have an even broader effect.

"It's not sustainable for costs to go in the direction they are going. ... We want to make sure our community has strong hospitals and academic health centers but is able to get to a place where high-quality care is affordable," she said. "I think it's important for the economic viability of Kansas City."

**Elise Reuter**

Reporter

*Kansas City Business Journal*

