



SCALING THE MOVEMENT: BROADENING AND DEEPENING

Progress Report for the Period of July 2023 – June 2024



**KERN NATIONAL NETWORK
FOR FLOURISHING IN MEDICINE**
Character. Caring. Practical Wisdom.

FOUNDING DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we reflect on the past year, it is an honor to share the exceptional progress we've made together in advancing the mission of the Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine (KNN).

With the KNN Framework for Flourishing as our North Star, collective work is sparking a national movement that seeks to restore a sense of meaning and fulfillment in medicine and other health professions, encouraging a whole-person approach that benefits leaders, faculty, staff, learners, patients and communities alike.

During the period of July 2023 through June 2024, the KNN has continued to grow this movement, expanding in scale and, importantly, in the depth of engagement with organizations nationally. In that time, noteworthy accomplishments have included:

- welcoming new institutions into the movement as KNN Catalyst Organizations and Changemaker Groups committed to advancing flourishing within their settings;
- forming new partnerships and holding vital dialogues with diverse stakeholders, including academic leaders, health systems, national associations, networks and beyond;
- expanding engagement with medical students, residents and fellows to cultivate the next generation of leaders in medicine;
- hosting several major convenings and events, including our second annual conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and beginning to plan for our third annual conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; and,
- as part of the KNN Bridging Across Differences Toward Flourishing Initiative, launching nine demonstration projects with medical schools across the U.S. to foster civil discourse and open inquiry in medicine, working in collaboration with the Constructive Dialogue Institute and the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation.

This past year has marked a true growth in the KNN's national presence, both through widespread presentations and engagement across the country. Our presence also has expanded through hosting special convenings to bring together thought leaders from diverse areas of focus to engage with the KNN Framework elements and apply them to generate new ideas and shift the national dialogue on key issues.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all who have contributed to this movement. Your passion, talent and leadership have been instrumental in driving the transformation that encourages flourishing for all. It is a privilege to work alongside you as we continue to build a new future through a shared vision, framework and collaborative spaces for advancing flourishing in medicine.

I also would like to express my deep gratitude to the Kern Family Foundation for their exceptional collaboration and transformative investment in the KNN's work. All our efforts are rooted in the principles we share with the Foundation, as outlined in the charter that guides our partnership.

Thank you for your steadfast dedication; I look forward to all that we will achieve together in the coming year.

With best regards,



Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD

Founding Director, KNN
Stephen and Shelagh Roell Endowed Chair
Professor of Bioethics and Medical Humanities
SVP, Strategic Academic Partnerships
Medical College of Wisconsin

PROGRAM OFFICE

as of June 30, 2024

Kimara Ellefson, MBA
National Director of Strategy
and Partnerships

Lamya Augusthy

Nicole J. Borges, PhD

Ellie Bradish

Elena Burke, MBA

Christine K. Cassel, MD

Sue M. Cox, MD

Jessica Cunningham, MEd

Alverno Devine, DDiv

Tara Fikejs, BSBM

Jeff Fritz, PhD

Brianna Johnson

Antonina Johnston, MMed

Marissa Kalkman, MS

Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD

Kari Reynolds

Michaela Sarenac

Georgina Selenica

Maria Steinert, MBA

Suzette Svoboda-Newman, MS

Christine Van Hulle

Sarah Williams

Alicia Witten

Joëlle Worm, MPA

OUR NORTH STAR KNN FRAMEWORK FOR FLOURISHING

The aspirational vision guiding the whole of our work

Every journey needs a constant point by which to navigate, and the **KNN Framework for Flourishing** shines brightly as our North Star for making progress toward shifting the culture within medicine. The rich concept of flourishing offers a grounding in scholarship, a holistic lens, a relational approach and a new aspirational course to chart.

Flourishing points us toward creating environments that allow and encourage a wholeness of being and doing, even amid adversity. It encourages us to shape systems that enable those within to reach their full potential while helping others do the same. And it invites us to consider flourishing on many different levels: individual, organizational and societal.

How do we move toward flourishing? During the KNN's first phase of work, founding medical schools, domain experts and many others grappled with that question and shaped a framework of foundational concepts that offers a potential path. In developing this framework — shown and described in detail on the next page — the KNN built on existing scholarship to define individual components and focused on advancing understanding of how they interact and can be applied within the profession of medicine and healthcare environments.

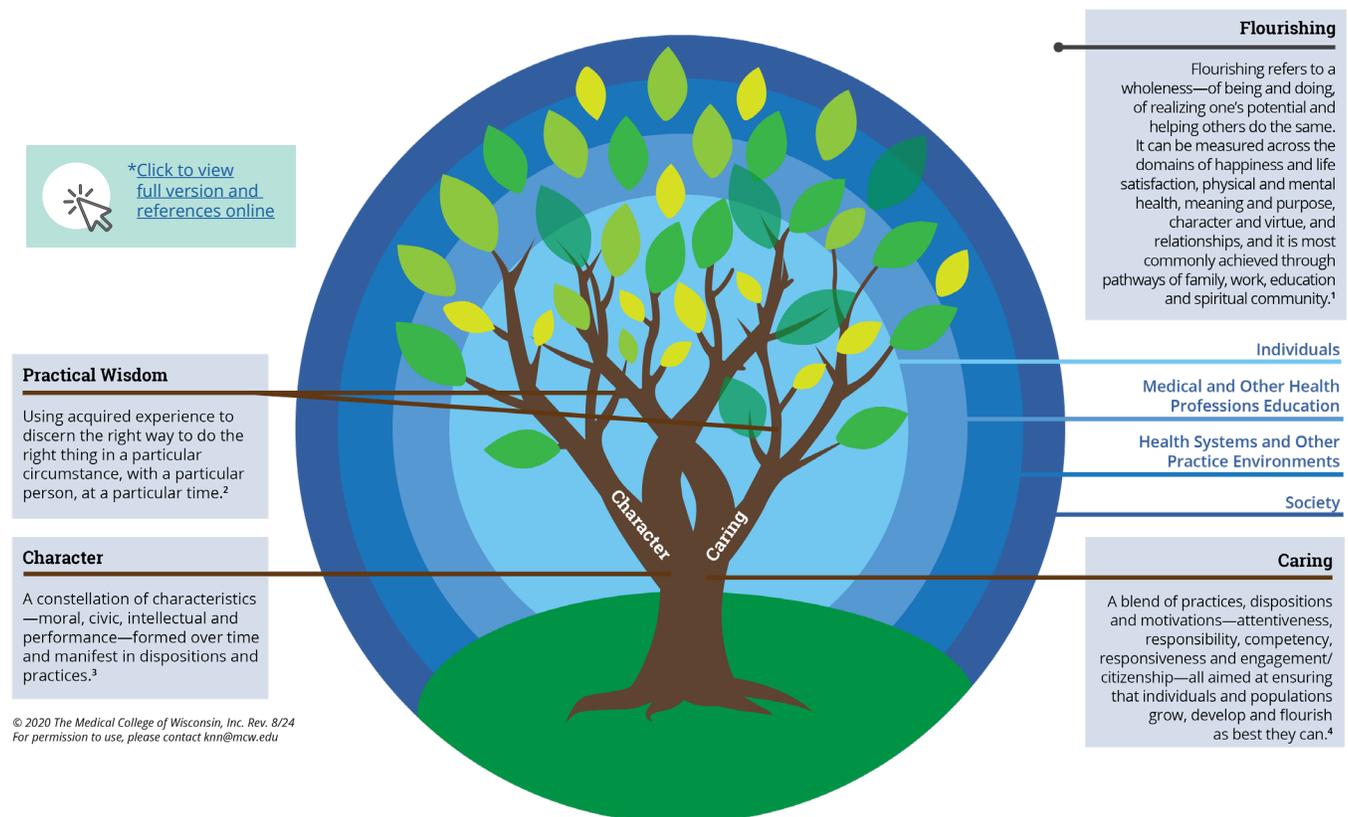
OUR NORTH STAR KNN FRAMEWORK FOR FLOURISHING

The aspirational vision guiding the whole of our work

In the KNN Framework for Flourishing, the tree as a whole represents the concept of **flourishing**, suggesting growth, change and organic development. Like a strong trunk and branches allow for healthy leaves, the interconnected concepts of character, caring and practical wisdom support flourishing.

The scholarly grounding behind the KNN Framework helps us understand the important role of the building blocks of **character** — strengths like compassion, curiosity, humility and more — and the need to create environments that support the expression of such traits over time. Further, the KNN Framework views **caring** as going beyond a kind demeanor to involve an ongoing practice and approach that leads to spaces where it is possible to be attentive to needs, responsible for one another, responsive to changes and engaged in creating a more caring society. Finally, **practical wisdom** serves an integrative function, encouraging us to blend reflection, experience and judgment in order to apply principles of character and caring to particular situations and determine the best path forward.

Ultimately, flourishing is not static or steady; it ebbs and flows and evolves over the course of life, as represented by the leaves changing colors.



ADVANCING THE WORK

Our approach and theory of change

True transformation requires voices from across the health ecosystem. The KNN is **connecting** and **convening** stakeholders across the health ecosystem, **catalyzing** transformational initiatives and **influencing** policy and systems change.

KNN THEORY OF CHANGE



Achieving our ambitious vision will require positive change at multiple levels and coordination across diverse disciplines and roles, making collaboration and relationship-building cornerstones of our approach.



Our work is to foster critical connections ... Through these relationships, we will develop the new knowledge, practices, courage and commitment that lead to broad-based change.

– Margaret Wheatley

FULFILLING THE PROMISE

Strategies for advancing flourishing in medicine

To fulfill the promise of character, caring and practical wisdom toward flourishing in medicine, the KNN movement is pursuing five major national strategies:

- **Building a knowledge sharing and practice community.** Through creating Catalyst Organization and Changemaker Group engagement pathways, providing support for KNN Framework-related projects and developing learning experiences, we are encouraging strong partnerships and skill-building to catalyze action.
- **Developing leaders for flourishing in medicine.** The rapidly growing KNN Learner Network is providing medical students, residents and fellows with opportunities to reflect on what it means to become physicians and leaders who demonstrate strong character, embody caring, use practical wisdom to navigate complexities and are dedicated to flourishing.
- **Bridging across differences toward flourishing.** The KNN Bridging Initiative is encouraging individuals across medicine and healthcare to come together to overcome polarization, find common ground and build a foundation for creating value by fostering constructive dialogue, open inquiry and diversity of viewpoints.
- **Changing system culture, policies and practices.** Ongoing efforts are engaging stakeholders across the health ecosystem to generate initiatives designed to shift mental models, enhance organizational cultures and rethink the aims of medicine and health professions.
- **Furthering scholarship, dissemination and convenings.** Across all areas, we are committed to highlighting, amplifying and scaling important work happening nationally through events and speaking engagements, scholarly presentations and other dissemination channels.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS REPORTING PERIOD

Scaling up, out and deep in our growth phase

Long-term, sustained progress requires collective commitment. Rich pathways for engagement are supporting organizations, groups and individuals in taking meaningful steps toward systems and culture change — together.

As of June 2024, the KNN had grown to encompass 6 Catalyst Organizations, 2 Changemaker Groups, 21 active projects, 29 student chapters, 9 Bridging demonstration sites and 100+ individual partners from across 37 organizations.

BUILDING THE BASE OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES *(see pg. 9)*

In this reporting period, the number of KNN projects testing applications of the KNN Framework grew from an initial set of 17 to a total of 21 active projects. Along with adding new projects, the KNN program office enriched existing projects by establishing a cycle for knowledge-sharing and feedback and by adopting the Kirkpatrick Model to guide evaluation and assessment.



21

Active KNN Projects

SHAPING PATHWAYS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT *(see pg. 12)*

In summer 2023, the KNN introduced new formal ways for institutions beyond its founding medical schools to join the movement, including by becoming a **Catalyst Organization** or **Changemaker Group**. As of the end of this reporting period, 6 institutions and 2 additional groups had committed to adopting the KNN Framework for Flourishing as a model guide to activate systems and culture transformation.



6

Catalyst Organizations

+



2

Changemaker Groups

...and more joining all the time

Catalyst Organizations

KAISER PERMANENTE
BERNARD J. TYSON
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



Department of Surgery
College of Human Medicine
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UT Health
San Antonio
Joe R. & Teresa Lozano Long
School of Medicine

MCW
MEDICAL SCHOOL

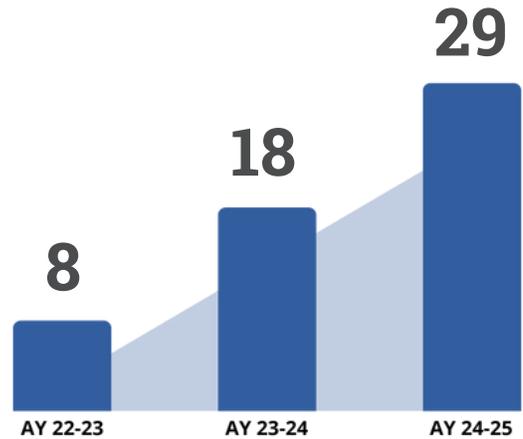
Dr. Kiran C. Patel College
of Allopathic Medicine
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

NSU
Florida

UC RIVERSIDE
School of Medicine

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION: KNN LEARNER NETWORK *(see pg. 15)*

The first eight KNN Student Chapter sites launched in academic year 2022-2023, creating opportunities for student doctors to integrate character, caring and practical wisdom at the local level. The chapter model was met with great enthusiasm, expanding to 18 student chapter sites in academic year 2023-2024 — and in the year ahead, it is now poised to grow to **29** chapters that span across the country.



New engagements designed for residents and fellows launched this year, and the former KNN Student Network is now known as the **KNN Learner Network** to reflect the expanded representation.

ADDRESSING POLARIZATION IN MEDICINE *(see pg. 19)*

The KNN was honored to receive a board grant from the **Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation** and to partner with the **Constructive Dialogue Institute** to launch a national series of demonstration projects in **9** U.S. medical schools. This initial cohort of institutions will identify innovative, effective methods for overcoming divisiveness and bridging across differences toward flourishing within clinical learning environments.

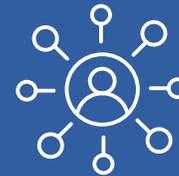
9
U.S. medical school sites in national Bridging demonstration

FINDING SYNERGY IN NETWORK PARTNERSHIPS

In this reporting period, the KNN also announced **three new formal partnerships** with organizations across healthcare and education. Uplifting each other's efforts and collaborating in mutual areas of interest will generate additional momentum and progress toward shared aims.



BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND PRACTICE COMMUNITY



As organizations and groups across the movement continue leading work in areas related to character, caring and practical wisdom toward flourishing, the KNN is strengthening its infrastructure and support to create linkages and learning opportunities across partners. Through coordination and collaboration, collective efforts are becoming more than just the sum of individual initiatives.

For instance, the KNN program office supported a growing number of project partners by establishing a new cadence for group sharing and report-outs, as well as introducing a common model and language to inform evaluation. Additionally, the KNN's newly formed Learning and Engagement team focused on listening to the movement to uncover needs and opportunities, then began developing experiences to support institutions and individuals in learning — and sharing knowledge and expertise — about KNN Framework concepts, as well as practices for encouraging bridging and civil discourse.

NURTURING INNOVATIVE IDEAS

Expanding projects rooted in the KNN Framework

KNN project partners across the country are using the KNN Framework concepts in program designs and with participants to generate evidence-based practices and programs as models for use in transforming healthcare environments. Since the last reporting period, some projects concluded and other new efforts were added, growing the total number of active projects from 17 to 21.

Project partners are now applying the KNN Framework elements across wide-ranging areas, such as community-building and team dynamics; coaching and mentoring approaches; student leadership and empowerment; narrative medicine and humanities-based approaches; leadership development for flourishing; and more. Collectively, the current cohort of projects is serving a broad base of individuals — starting in pre-professional preparation and continuing into practice and leadership.

Aggregate Participants Served by KNN Projects from February 2023-June 2024



800+

faculty, clinicians, and other care team members

2,000+

medical students, residents, and fellows

150+

high school and undergraduate students

25

staff members

Although projects have rolling start dates and each has a defined duration that best fits the specific undertaking, all have begun to benefit from regular opportunities to come together, share information, ask bold questions and engage with one another. During this reporting period, the KNN program office team introduced the following cycle of touch points:

- **Project Convenings:** Virtual gatherings held twice per year, with an additional opportunity to gather in person at the annual KNN Conference to share project progress and findings. These events also generate artifacts in the form of posters and presentations on related work.

- **Monthly Meetings:** Virtual monthly meetings create regular informal connection points, providing a supportive community of practice for those leading projects grounded in KNN Framework concepts.
- **One-on-Ones:** Available at any time, project one-on-ones enable partners to receive consults, co-creation and expertise on an ad hoc basis as their work progresses.
- **Report and Reimagine:** At the close of a project cycle, this process surfaces key lessons, products and resources — such as toolkits, facilitator guides, project briefs and more — which can then be considered for larger-scale dissemination through the KNN’s emerging learning experiences.

Introducing a shared lens and language

As part of this year’s project convenings, both KNN program office team members and project leads analyzed the incorporation of KNN Framework elements, as well as how current or planned evaluation aspects of projects align to the **Kirkpatrick Model**. This process provided a baseline for the visibility of KNN Framework elements across projects, while revealing opportunities to focus on the integration of practical wisdom and interconnections between elements in the year ahead.



Frequency of Occurrences of KNN Framework Elements Across Projects

Framework Element	Frequency
Flourishing	14 leaves
Character	10 leaves
Caring	10 leaves
Practical Wisdom	6 leaves
Full Framework	14 leaves

Average frequency rating across 19 projects analyzed; each leaf = 1

Active Projects

- Learner Professional Identity Formation - A Flourishing Approach
- Mentorship and Professionalism in Training 1.5
- Medical Student Learners for Flourishing
- Flourishing in the Medical Profession: The Impact of a Professional Identity Formation Curriculum on Medical Students and Longitudinal Faculty Coaches
- Integrated Training to Promote Empathy Resilience in Medical Students
- Excellence Not Perfection and the MD Student Success Initiative
- The Project on the Good Surgeon
- Flourishing Through Broader Community Connections
- Curricular Program in Human Flourishing for First-Year Medical Students
- Strengths-Based Coaching for Student Success
- Flourishing Approach to Physician Formation (FAPF)
- Mobilizing Character Faculty Development Course
- Cultivating a Caring Culture to Enhance the Capacity to Care in Clinical Learning Environments
- Creating Positive Work and Learning Environments
- Flourishing in the Health Professions
- TeamUp Study: Bridging Theory and Practice Toward Human Flourishing in the Health Professions
- Women Leaders Flourishing Project
- Teaching to CAREfully Create Strong Surgery Clinical Learning Environments
- Using Narrative Medicine and Embodied Well-Being Practices to Promote Inclusive Flourishing
- Expanding the Reach and Impact of Columbia Character Cooperatives
- Visiting Senior Scholar for the KNN and Project on the Good Surgeon

Completed Projects

- Promoting Kindness and Well-Being on a Population Scale Within Health Care
- Professionalism in Medicine Research Agenda

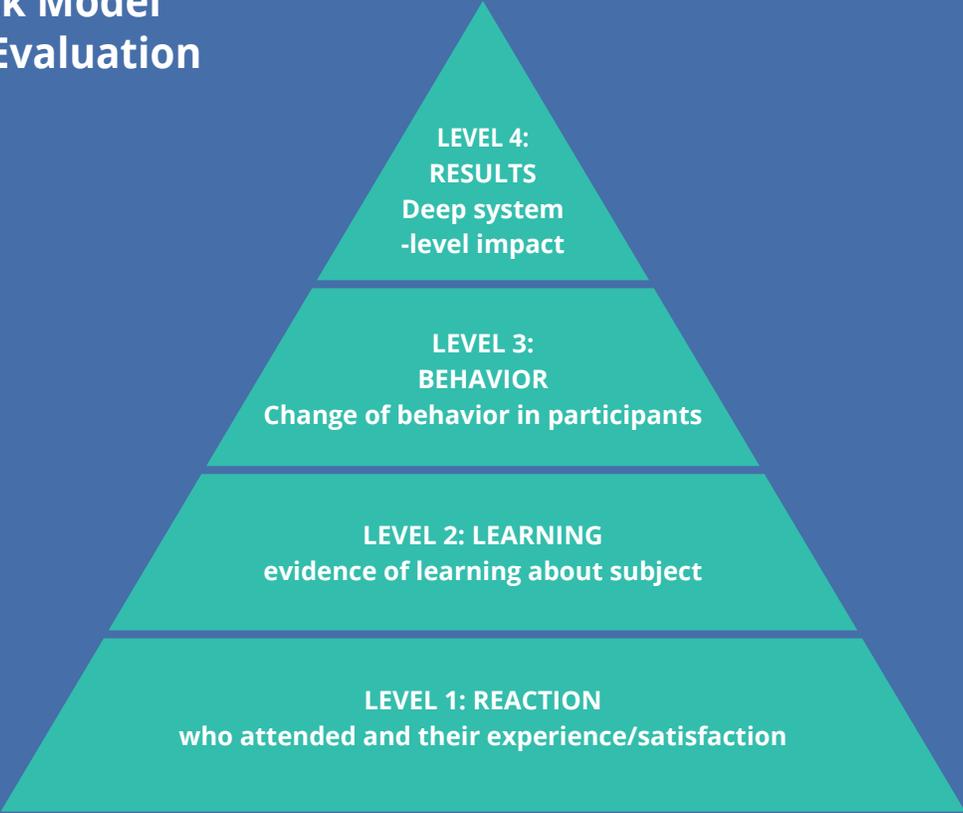


The Kirkpatrick Model is a prominent approach to evaluating program effectiveness within learning and development. With four levels — reaction, learning, behavior and results — the model supports a holistic approach that considers the participant experience, gains in knowledge and skills, change in actions and organizational impact.

Accordingly, this structure is encouraging project partners to ensure that initiatives not only are well-received and effective in imparting knowledge but also are successful in translating learning into practice and encouraging systems-level change. It also will allow for more unified impact reporting in the future, as project outcomes are compiled and analyzed.

In all, these efforts are strengthening the structure and scaffolding provided across the movement and are allowing partners to learn from one another in community. Leveraging shared models for evaluation and assessment is bringing additional rigor to project planning, while providing a common language and lens for meaning-making.

Kirkpatrick Model Levels of Evaluation



DEEPENING LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

Expanding Institutional Involvement with Catalyst Organizations and Changemaker Groups

As part of the KNN's growth phase, summer 2023 heralded the introduction of new ways for institutions to engage with the movement to advance flourishing in medicine, including by becoming a **Catalyst Organization** or **Changemaker Group**.

Both of those engagement pathways are designed to support institutions, departments and other groups in using the KNN Framework as a guide within their efforts and initiatives — helping to shift mental models and provide a new lens for addressing cultural and systemic factors within their organizations. Catalyst and Changemaker partners join others across the country in engaging leaders, faculty, staff and learners so that the concepts of character, caring, practical wisdom and flourishing can be meaningfully integrated across the organization.

Across both of those partnership categories, engagement experiences draw from the principles of change theory and utilize a champion model. The KNN amplifies the impact of institutional champions by supporting them in exploring the unique strengths within the culture of their organizations, building upon their perspectives and generative ideas, and co-creating initiatives that integrate the KNN Framework for Flourishing as a model for transformation.

KNN PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT ETHOS

Grounded in change theory, the KNN supports groups and organizations to:

Create a sense of urgency

by amplifying the KNN Framework through deepening knowledge and inspiring action

Build a guiding coalition

by appointing representative Champions to lead, communicate and activate

Form strategic vision

by using the KNN Framework as a model guide for co-creating initiatives and exploring cultural integration of character, caring and practical wisdom toward flourishing

Grow volunteer contributors — invite leaders, faculty, staff and learners to engage

by offering continuous opportunities to contribute to the movement and call others into the work

A Changemaker Group is a team, department, academy or institute from one institution committed to amplifying the KNN Framework for Flourishing within a specific area of work or strategic initiative. During this reporting period, the **Baylor College of Medicine Center for Professionalism** and the **Nuvance Health Patricia A. Tietjen, MD Teaching Academy** became partners at this level.

Exhibiting a purposeful, long-term commitment, KNN Catalyst Organizations attest to a shared vision of flourishing as the aim of the profession and commit to leading the efforts needed for transformational change. In recognition, we are pleased to highlight the initial group of Catalyst Organizations that have already affirmed this level of engagement:

- Joe R. & Teresa Lozano Long School of Medicine at UT Health San Antonio
- Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine (KPSOM)
- Medical College of Wisconsin
- Michigan State University Health Sciences
- Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine (NSU MD)
- UC Riverside School of Medicine



As KNN Catalyst Organizations, these institutions both gain support from and contribute to national efforts. Catalyst Champion orientations and in-person site visits to engage leadership teams already are underway — with the KNN team most recently visiting UC Riverside and KPSOM in California after co-hosting a workshop at the 2024 AAMC WGEA conference in partnership with leaders from those institutions.

The Power of a Movement: Perspectives from KNN Catalyst Organizations



As a university that holds allopathic, osteopathic and nursing professional schools, through participation in KNN, now a group of student affairs and faculty advocates from across the three colleges are going to catalyze in ways that we haven't before, to move together in a united effort to find ways to help students maintain meaning and purpose during training.

- Professor, MSU College of Human Medicine



At the UC Riverside School of Medicine, our mission is centered on training a diverse physician and biomedical scientist workforce to serve our inland Southern California region which suffers from a shortage of physicians and poorer health outcomes than other areas of the state ... This work provides purpose and meaning but can also be challenging and, at times, overwhelming. The mission of KNN centered on flourishing in medicine resonated with us and aligns with our mission.

- Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences and Dean



Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine (KPSOM) is proud to be a KNN Catalyst Organization. We are compelled by [the] KNN Framework for Flourishing and see it as a driver for positive culture change in medical education and healthcare. These efforts align with KPSOM's desire to bring about healthcare transformation through a focus on health equity, health systems and well-being.

- Assistant Dean for Medical Education, Associate Professor

Laying the foundation for an ecosystem of experiences

Another way the KNN aims to advance the movement toward flourishing in medicine — in collaboration with partners across the country — is by providing an ecosystem of experiences for sharing knowledge and practices that center the foundational elements of the KNN Framework. The KNN is developing processes and mechanisms to facilitate a variety of experiences through which partners across the movement can engage as learners and contributors.

Below are highlighted accomplishments from throughout the reporting period that have created a solid foundation for the development and 2025 launch of the KNN's learning consortium:

- **Hired and formed a team** within the KNN program office to support learning and engagement for the movement, including a senior manager, senior facilitator, and two program coordinators.
- **Completed a series of listening interviews** with individuals to understand their perspectives on the themes and learning methods that would be most valuable for learning about and applying the KNN Framework within their work.
- **Announced a collaboration with ScholarRx** and began content development and design of a set of engaging, open-access Bricks (online educational modules) that will empower medical educators and students to explore deeper issues of meaning, purpose and belonging within medicine. Currently in development are two collections of learning modules, which will focus on building knowledge and skills related to the KNN Framework elements and the practice of bridging across differences.
- **Initiated a review and selection process to find a flexible, engaging virtual platform** to serve as the future home of KNN learning experiences.
- **Developed a strategy and process to curate lessons, work and contributions from KNN projects** and other contributors for broader dissemination.
- **Designed and launched the first iteration of the Bridge Builders Learning Community**, creating a baseline for learning and practice that cultivates bridging and civil discourse. In response to positive feedback from participants, the Bridge Builders Learning Community is slated to become an ongoing learning offering. *(For more on the KNN's broader Bridging Across Differences Toward Flourishing Initiative, see page 19.)*

DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR FLOURISHING IN MEDICINE

KNN Learner Network continues to expand

Developing leaders for flourishing is integral to creating lasting, sustainable improvements within the culture of medicine. By creating opportunities for learners across the country to grow, develop and lead change, the KNN is equipping them to advance character, caring, practical wisdom and flourishing within their home institutions — and shaping the next generation of practitioners and leaders who will bring those concepts to life throughout their careers.

Since the inception and initial launch of eight original KNN Student Chapter sites, student engagement has continued to broaden and deepen, with 29 sites now anticipated for the 2024-2025 academic year, across an array of medical schools looking to engage in the movement and transform the field. Expansion has created additional opportunities for students to contribute, such as by translating student chapter work into research, participating in the student conference planning committee and making plans to attend or present at the upcoming annual KNN Conference.



Based on learners' desire to stay involved and to apply KNN Framework concepts as they enter into residency and fellowship programs, the KNN team has created new opportunities for medical trainees to remain engaged. Accordingly, the KNN Student Network now has become the KNN Learner Network, more accurately reflecting involvement across the full span of medical training.

Ultimately, participants in the **KNN Learner Network** are creators, presenters, innovators and change agents, with opportunities to advise the KNN on future work, present at events, participate in work groups and lead initiatives as driving forces within the movement.

2024 KNN Student Conference



In the spring of 2024, the second annual KNN Student Conference was held at Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin. Developed for and by KNN students, more than 80 medical students from across 29 institutions were in attendance. The conference theme, **“Fostering Flourishing: Integrating Your Why into Your World,”** emphasized the importance of meaning and purpose, and the event began by centering on a quote from Simon Sinek: “If we want to feel an undying passion for our work, if we want to feel we are contributing to something bigger than ourselves, we all need to know our WHY.”

The conference created space for learners to reflect on their purpose in medicine and identify what motivates them as aspiring physicians. Throughout the event, the concepts of character, caring, practical wisdom and flourishing provided the foundation for the agenda.



For **character**, medical students explored identity through personal and professional core values and shared stories of character in action during meaningful experiences in medicine. Learners discussed critical aspects of authentic care and patient connections while placing a strong emphasis on going the extra mile for those they serve. Within the discussion, students explored the concept of caring through the lens of “love languages” and discussed the importance of developing skills to confidently provide care in challenging clinical situations.

For **practical wisdom**, one presentation introduced the idea of *phronesis* as a metavirtue that helps one calibrate and apply aspects of character and caring in practice. Learners recognized areas in their lives and medical training where practical wisdom can and should be applied, and the session ultimately served as a reminder that cultivating practical wisdom can enrich both individuals and communities.

A session on **flourishing** in the clinical learning environment allowed students to explore the importance of adjustment, balance and being flexible. Attendees participated in an interactive game of Twister, modified with the purpose to represent navigating different scenarios in clinical settings.

Additionally, learners had a chance to creatively express themselves through reflecting on what brings them joy. From positive childhood memories to hobbies and music, students used the school’s designated flourishing space to draw and share what has helped them to prioritize their personal and professional flourishing. Students also used the flourishing space to share how they can help each other succeed on their journeys in medicine — highlighting the importance of caring, collaboration and community.



2024 KNN Student Conference Attendance



80+
medical students



from across
29
school locations

2023-2024 *Becoming* series

In the monthly virtual *Becoming* series, students from medical schools nationwide convene to explore and practice putting elements from the KNN Framework into action. The series invites medical students to learn about, discuss and practice building specific strengths essential for **becoming** the physicians they aspire to be. Student and faculty presenters alike share experiences, facilitate conversation and use arts and humanities-based activities to deepen reflective practices.

The 2023-2024 season of *Becoming* took the blue concentric rings of the KNN Framework as its inspiration and examined topics focused on the multiple spheres of influence and levels at which flourishing can occur: individuals, communities, systems, and society. Unified by the theme **“Cultivating a Flourishing Self, System and Society,”** sessions explored varied topics:

- Reflection
- How to handle failure
- Building blocks of character
- Growth mindset
- Emotional resilience: loss and grief
- Influence: ways to drive institutional change
- Moving from languishing to flourishing
- Humanism in medicine
- Giving back: service and engagement

Across 10 sessions, the series attracted 196 unique attendees representing 37 organizations — a nearly 40% increase in participation from last series, which garnered 142 unique attendees from 25 organizations. Importantly, *Becoming* not only grew its reach but also deepened its impact by enriching learners’ understanding of character, caring, practical wisdom and flourishing.

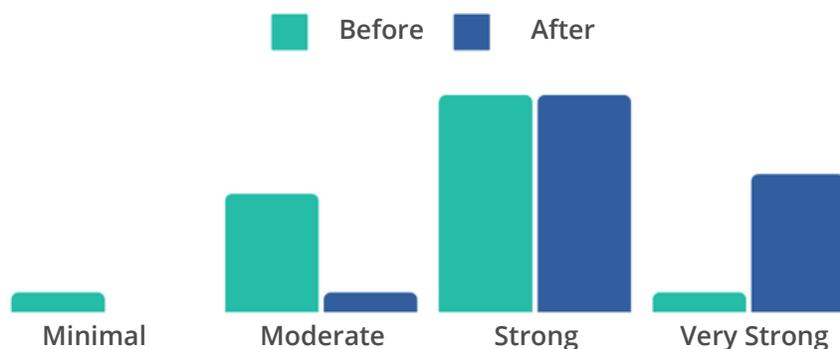
After the series, learners shared how *Becoming* impacted their thoughts and actions around the concepts covered, and in a post-series survey, participants reported that they gained a stronger understanding of KNN Framework concepts through participating and presenting. In this way, the *Becoming* series has offered a foundational entry point for learners interested in engaging with the KNN movement.

196
unique attendees
across 10 sessions

representing

37
organizations

Learners’ Reported Understanding of KNN Framework Concepts Before and After *Becoming* Series



Series Impact on Thoughts and Actions

"It supported my established love of the [session] concept."

"I need to participate in more advocacy."

"I had my own perspective on how the topic related to my life, but I had a new appreciation of how other people viewed it."

"I made more time to make art and learned that it was a useful tool to help ground myself from the overwhelm that is medical school. I also learned to find time for nature and the appreciation of beauty."

Series Impact on Experience and Development

"I want to bring these concepts to medicine!"

"Seeing others being so thoughtful and graceful, makes me want to be better! This has been so inspiring!"

"I think it helped me have more empathy towards my peers and other HCPs. Sometimes people can be terse or tense and it's helpful to ground myself enough to be able to put myself in their shoes and understand that these attitudes and behaviors are not necessarily about me, but rather, a symptom of the rigor of med school, and the pressure of managing decisions critical to someone else's health every day."

Engaging residents and fellows

In addition to work with medical students, the KNN is expanding efforts to engage medical residents who share a common goal of integrating KNN Framework concepts into clinical learning and practice settings. Acknowledging the unique environment of residency, the KNN team began by partnering with The Good Listening Project (TGLP) to shape an innovative, accessible experience for residents and fellows.

First, TGLP Listener Poets engaged with trainees to co-create poems and stories. In meaningful interactions, TGLP reflected the learners' lived experiences through compassionate listening and poetry, capturing moments of flourishing amid the real challenges faced by newly minted professionals within the healthcare system. Facilitated small-group Brave Conversations followed, which brought participants together to reflect on their poems and experiences and strengthened bonds between trainees of varied organizations, specialties and geographies. In the near future, these poems and stories will be published and shared in an anthology.



BRIDGING ACROSS DIFFERENCES TOWARD FLOURISHING

As a national movement, one core value of the KNN is to seek and cultivate open inquiry, deep listening and respectful dialogue across a variety of viewpoints. The KNN facilitates collaboration between individuals with different experiences and perspectives by way of the KNN Bridging Across Differences Toward Flourishing Initiative (Bridging Initiative).

Building on the work of Robert D. Putnam, PhD, bridging is a facilitative process that advances flourishing by providing a model for engagement across groups and individuals with different views on topics, including those impacting the health ecosystem and patient care. With the KNN Framework for Flourishing as a foundation, the Bridging Initiative aims to build organizational cultures that are strengthened by differences and connected by trust.

Throughout the reporting period, the Bridging Initiative's momentum has continued to grow, including through an invitational convening, a bold call for action and the launch of new programs and projects in this space.



The Bridging Initiative is led by Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD, KNN Founding Director, Stephen and Shelagh Roell Endowed Chair, Professor, and SVP for Academic Partnerships at the Medical College of Wisconsin, with co-leadership provided by Christine K. Cassel, MD, MACP, Professor at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine and Sue M. Cox, MD, Associate Dean, Accreditation, Strategy and Quality Improvement at the University of Texas at Tyler School of Medicine.

GENERATING AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT Elevating the national dialogue

Throughout the reporting period, the Bridging team led sessions and workshops across the country — including at the 2023 KNN Conference held in September. The “**Bridging Across Differences Toward Flourishing**” pre-conference workshop explored ways to foster constructive dialogue that supports mutual understanding during discussions of complex, divisive and challenging topics.

In October 2023, the KNN convened 20 senior leaders from 17 medical schools at an invitational meeting designed to deepen understanding of key issues and dynamics surrounding divisiveness in medicine. The convening's design was informed by conversations conducted earlier in the year, which engaged nearly 40 academic medicine leaders in dialogue about the challenges of polarization and ideas for creating a sustainable path forward that facilitates bridging across differences. October convening participants explored key themes from those conversations, contributed to a visioning session and word cloud, and engaged in a vignette exercise on cases for bridging — resulting in a commitment to advance civil discourse and bridging at the close of the meeting.

In spring 2024, Drs. Cassel and Maurana elevated the national dialogue and issued a powerful call to action in the article “**We Need to Talk: Advancing Open Inquiry,**” published in *Academic Medicine*, the journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges and a peer-reviewed publication with a high impact factor rating.



BRIDGE BUILDERS LEARNING COMMUNITY

Expanding efforts to advance open inquiry and respectful dialogue

In early 2024, another component of the Bridging Initiative launched: the **KNN Bridge Builders Learning Community**, an interactive, discussion-based learning experience for individuals with a shared interest in addressing the relational divides that persist within medicine and society. The learning community engages participants in collaborative learning and reflective exercises, enabling them to practice applying bridging skills and strategies among a community of peers before introducing concepts in their institutions.



The learning series content establishes a clear link between bridging differences and the aspirational goal of flourishing communities. During this reporting period, the Bridging Initiative team developed the curriculum and content, recruited an initial cohort of 17 individuals, and began holding live virtual sessions as well as creating an online community space to enable ongoing connection and sharing. By deepening their understanding and application of bridging principles, participants are developing transformative skills to promote viewpoint diversity, civil discourse and collective flourishing.

KNN Bridge Builders Experience Overview

The KNN Bridge Builders Learning Community is an interactive, discussion-based learning series with six virtual sessions.



Session 1: Introduction to Bridging Differences and the KNN Framework for Flourishing



Session 4: Effective Intergroup Contact and Communication



Session 2: Challenge Your Own Views and Assumptions



Session 5: Bridging Intergenerational Divides



Session 3: Active Listening and Compassionate Speaking for Bridging Differences



Session 6: Developing a Brave Space Pedagogy Toward Framing a Flourishing Culture

KNN BRIDGING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

A national effort to address polarization in medicine

In December 2023, the KNN was honored to receive a board grant from the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation that will further accelerate efforts to advance open inquiry, civil discourse and respect for diverse viewpoints within clinical learning environments. Support from the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation and the Kern Family Foundation allowed the KNN to commence a national demonstration project encompassing nine U.S. medical schools that reflect a broad range of geographic settings, institution types and learner populations.

A strong partnership with the Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI), a national leader in bridging methods, further underpins the national demonstration project. The KNN and CDI have collaborated to develop the *Perspectives for Academic Medicine* curriculum, a version of CDI's successful *Perspectives* curriculum that is tailored to the needs of medical schools. With support from senior leaders, each institution will apply this curriculum — with the aim of equipping faculty, learners and staff with the skills and tools needed to find strength in different perspectives and collectively work together to solve pressing challenges in the healthcare field.

KNN Bridging Demonstration Sites



- Duke University School of Medicine
- Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth
- Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences University at Buffalo-SUNY
- Paul L. Foster School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center-El Paso
- Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania
- Pritzker School of Medicine at the University of Chicago
- University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
- Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine
- Wake Forest University School of Medicine

CHANGING SYSTEM CULTURE, POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Shifting mindsets and structures



Ongoing efforts are engaging thought leaders, associations, policymakers and other stakeholders to generate initiatives designed to shift mental models, enhance organizational cultures and rethink the aims of medicine and healthcare. To those ends, this reporting period marked the start of a series of strategic convenings, as well as the introduction of services and support designed to help organizations shape cultures, practices and policies that are conducive to flourishing.



MISSION TRANSFORM MEDICINE

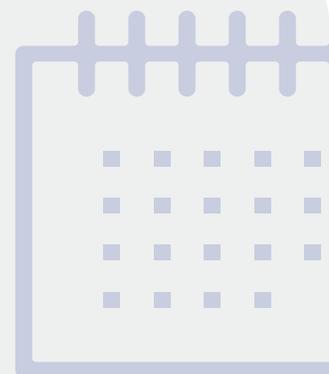
A KERN NATIONAL NETWORK CONVENING

CONVENING THOUGHT LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS *Activating Mission: TransformMedicine*

Under the banner *Mission: TransformMedicine*, the KNN began hosting strategic convenings that invite representatives from varied sectors to grapple with challenging questions, generate novel ideas and shift the national conversation surrounding key issues. Two convenings were held in spring of 2024, and planning has begun for future convenings to engage collaborative networks and health systems.

Calendar of Convenings

- **Phronesis (Practical Wisdom)**
March 2024
- **Cultivating Collaborative Networks**
December 2024
- **Social Dynamics of Health**
May 2024
- **Health Systems**
May 2025
- **Bridging Demonstration Sites**
October 2024



Phronesis: From Theory to Practice in the Promotion of Flourishing in Medicine

In March 2024, the KNN hosted its convening on *phronesis* (practical wisdom) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. During this one-day event, approximately 25 participants — including leaders, learners, scholars and beyond — shared ideas and work related to that theme.

During the event, participant energies focused on clarifying theory and effective practices for cultivating practical wisdom within healthcare environments and in learners and practitioners. The convening also explored ways in which practical wisdom can constitute and contribute to flourishing.

Illuminating and interactive panel discussions were structured around several major themes:

- **Theories of Phronesis:** Does *phronesis* suffer from a semantic, substantive or pragmatic challenge with respect to medicine, and how can we solve that?
- **Student and Resident Voices:** How do learners practice or approach phronesis, and how might we improve awareness and appreciation of this concept among learners?
- **Practitioner Initiatives:** What contemporary challenges and opportunities exist for the development of the “phronetic practitioner”?

Overall, the convening sparked new ideas, collaborations and even conference submissions among participants — including multiple abstracts submitted for the 2024 KNN Conference.



Feedback from Phronesis Convening Participants



Thank you for all you do to organize these gatherings and drive change within medicine. While we often talk about the experience of medical students and practitioners, these changes are most critical for patients. We need a better version of healthcare, and you are helping to make it possible.

It was a pleasure for me to interact [with], listen and learn from these incredible practitioners who are doing such excellent hands-on work on integrating practical wisdom into everyday education and practice.

From Social *Determinants* of Health to Social *Dynamics* of Health? Finding a Path Forward

Could shifting focus from social *determinants* of health to social *dynamics* of health support human flourishing, offer a productive path forward and catalyze new efforts? In May 2024, the KNN's social dynamics convening in Chicago, Illinois, brought together 27 participants to grapple with that question.

From academic association leaders to frontline community engagement workers, participants with a variety of roles and backgrounds were invited to share their ideas and perspectives on addressing the social factors that influence health and human flourishing. Given the multifaceted nature of this issue, the event included representation from across medicine and health systems, public health, community engagement and other disciplines.



A foundational panel set the tone by exploring the concept of social dynamics of health and how such a focus could differ from the current prevailing approach that emphasizes social determinants of health. Participants subsequently wrestled with the ideas raised in the panel through dialogue and mind-mapping, and they began formulating a vision for what a shift in focus would require and its potential impact.

Through interactive activities, lively discussion and an action planning process grounded in Strategic Doing, the convening culminated in four working groups.

Ideas for potential efforts to pursue ranged from developing scholarly manuscript(s) on the potential of “social dynamics” as more expansive language and framing, hosting a multidisciplinary podcast episode to begin breaking down silos, and piloting curricular content on structural dimensions and power dynamics. Although continued thought and attention to this area will be needed, takeaways from the convening offer a starting point for beginning to influence the current thinking around these issues.

Reflections from Social Dynamics of Health Convening Participants



There is such potential for getting diverse voices and experiences together to consider multiple sides of issues and opportunities. I love that you did this, and I am exceptionally grateful to have been included.

I made so many wonderful connections! I look forward to the action phase!

We are grateful to the Charles Koch Foundation and the Kern Family Foundation for their support of this convening.

LAUNCH OF SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Shifting organizational practices and policies



As healthcare organizations seek to create a systemic culture of flourishing, it often can be difficult to know where to start and how to generate broad-based support for the effort. With such challenges prompting multiple organizations to reach out for guidance and assistance, the KNN began offering services, support and expertise in areas spanning from leadership and organizational development, to bridging differences through civil discourse, to learner engagement and empowerment.

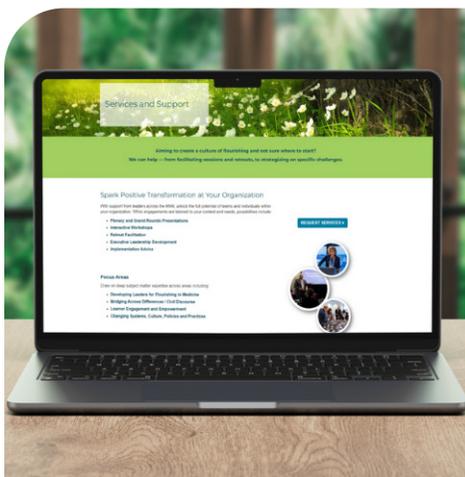
For instance, the KNN team has helped design and support strategic leadership retreats — ensuring that the agendas, activities and framing were all aligned with organizational values and conducive to building strong, flourishing teams. In the hospital system space, contributions have taken the form of facilitating sessions that help residency program leaders consider how their interventions could foster character, community and purpose.

While engagements are tailored to the context and needs of each organization, elements can include a combination of any of the following:

- Plenary or Grand Rounds presentations
- Interactive workshops
- Retreat facilitation
- Executive leadership development
- Implementation advice



The additional guidance and support is helping institutions pursue goals and objectives in a way that strengthens — not strains — their organizational culture and team members.



I wanted to sincerely thank you for your time, your wisdom, and your advice in helping make our leadership retreat both meaningful and impactful to our team. Early feedback from the group was incredibly positive and there is a sense of energy and collaboration that I think will be helpful to the road ahead. We would love to continue to work with you on some longitudinal efforts to keep the momentum and continue to build relationships and thrive more fully together.

– Medical College Dean

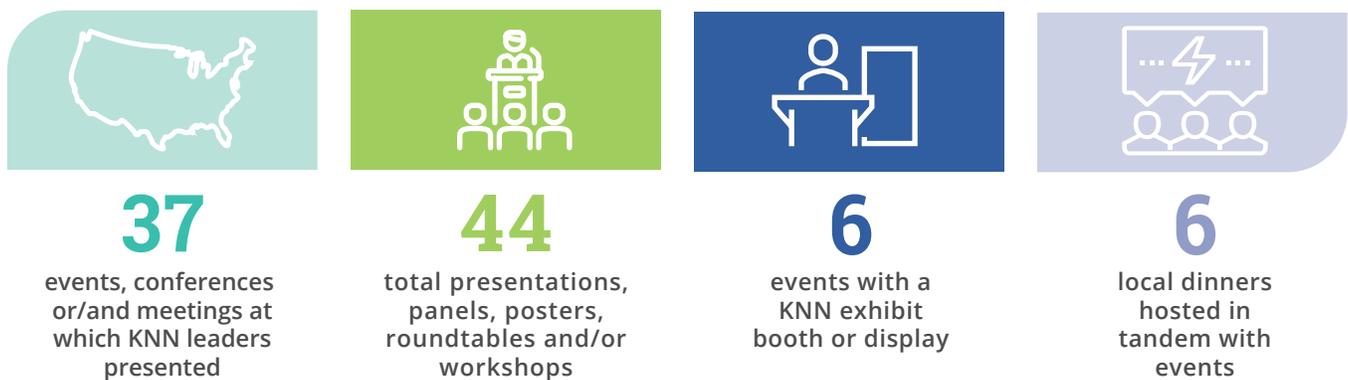
FURTHERING SCHOLARSHIP, DISSEMINATION AND CONVENINGS

Increasing national visibility while forming strong connections

Events, presentations and speaking engagements have remained central to the KNN's strategy for creating greater awareness and understanding of how the concepts of character, caring, practical wisdom and flourishing could have long-term, systemic impact within healthcare. From July 2023 through June 2024, the KNN had a presence at approximately 45 different events, conferences and/or meetings.



During this reporting period, heightened interest in and acceptance of presentations and sessions based on the KNN Framework for Flourishing elements made it clear that the idea of flourishing as the aspirational aim of medicine is resonating with audiences across healthcare. KNN leaders were accepted or invited to present at 37 different events, delivering a total of 44 sessions — ranging from roundtables and posters, to workshops and oral presentations, to keynote and plenary addresses.



Sessions created an opportunity for participants to apply Framework concepts to real-life challenges and settings, while exhibitor booths and networking events provided a place to help interested individuals learn more about specific ways of engaging with the KNN. To meet partners in the movement where they are, the KNN has hosted local dinners in several cities while traveling for events, building community across existing partners in the area while sparking interest and conversations with potential partners as well.

Deepening engagement with partners, learners and health systems

This year increasingly provided opportunities to co-present with partners from across the movement and students from the KNN Learner Network. For instance, as part of the Mayo RISE for Youth program, KNN student doctors led a session on personal narratives, purpose and authentic flourishing for high school and college students considering healthcare careers. Additionally, two groups of KNN student leaders had posters accepted at the AAMC 2024 Group on Student Affairs (GSA), Careers in Medicine (CiM), and Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) National Meeting. Events also created numerous opportunities to deepen engagement with network partners and health systems. As one example, Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD, was invited to present at the Jubilee Centre and Harvard Human Flourishing Program **Character and Flourishing Workshop** in Boston, speaking to the KNN's powerful movement for change in medicine. Several other examples are explored on the next page.

SELECT EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Systems Summit on Clinical Wellbeing at Princeton University

October 2023 | Princeton, New Jersey



In autumn, the KNN had the privilege of being invited to attend this inaugural invitational event, which was established to “bring together thought leaders from across disciplines to catalyze fresh ideas and elevate new perspectives in the pursuit of clinical wellbeing.” The summit was co-sponsored by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, American Medical Association (AMA), Healing Works Foundation (HWF) and multiple centers within Princeton University.

Alliance of Academic Health Centers (AAHC) Annual Meeting

November 2023 | Seattle, Washington

The AAHC Annual Meeting brought together approximately 100 chief officers from U.S. academic health systems for networking and knowledge-sharing. Cheryl A. Maurana, PhD, was invited to participate in a panel and speak to the evolution of community engagement within the C-Suite. The discussion not only highlighted key concepts from the KNN Framework for Flourishing but also emphasized the importance of bridging practices.



Learn Serve Lead: The AAMC Annual Meeting

November 2023 | Seattle, Washington



AAMC LSL provided numerous avenues for engaging with leaders and learners within academic medicine — from exhibiting, to hosting lunch table discussions and a KNN reception, to leading an invited Organization of Student Representatives session. We were honored to have Dr. Ronald Harden, founder of the highly regarded International Association for Health Professions Education (AMEE), join the KNN reception and ask to say a few words about the importance of this work.

Gold Humanism Summit: The Person in Front of You

February 2024 | Atlanta, Georgia

As part of a collaborative series with the Arnold P. Gold Foundation Gold Humanism Honor Society, Kimara Ellefson, MBA, and Sonia N. Chimienti, MD, FIDSA, led an in-person workshop at the 2024 Gold Humanism Summit. The Summit hosted nearly 400 individuals passionate about encouraging more humanistic healthcare. The KNN also proudly sponsored the first-ever Healthcare Barriers Hackathon, exemplifying our belief that positive change comes from bringing people together to develop creative solutions and catalyze systemic transformation.



Annual Meeting of the Alliance of Independent Academic Medical Centers (AiAMC)

April 2024 | Tucson, Arizona



As the result of an engaging keynote at the NEGEA regional meeting earlier in the year, Kimara Ellefson, MBA, was invited to deliver the closing session to leaders of independent academic medical centers at the AiAMC annual meeting. The AiAMC includes more than 70 hospital and health system members. This presentation led to a further invitation to present to the steering committee of the National Collaborative for Improving the Clinical Learning Environment later this year.

Patricia A. Tietjen, MD Teaching Academy Grand Rounds

June 2024 | Danbury, Connecticut

The Nuvance Health Patricia A. Tietjen, MD Teaching Academy invited the KNN's national director of strategy and partnerships to Danbury Hospital to deliver Grand Rounds at a culminating event for Academy members (clinician educators). Exploring the themes of flourishing and professional identity formation, the presentation received positive feedback for being both inspirational and practical — motivating participants to take the next steps in centering caring and flourishing in their settings.



2023 ANNUAL KNN CONFERENCE

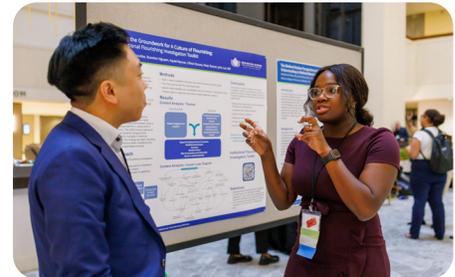
Together we flourish: collectively transforming medicine

In September 2023, approximately 200 leaders and learners from 54 unique organizations gathered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the KNN's second annual national conference. The conference theme, **"Together We Flourish: Collectively Transforming Medicine,"** acknowledged the importance of collaborative, relational approaches in the pursuit to advance flourishing within the profession of medicine.



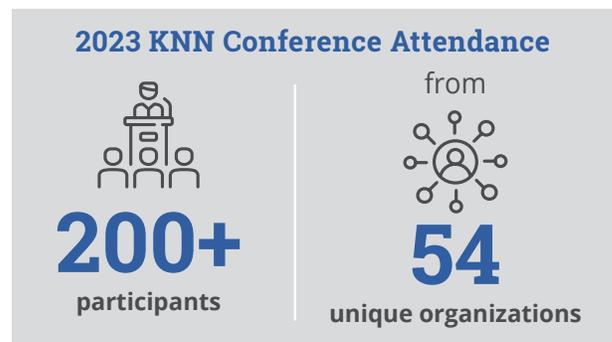
The 2023 KNN Conference marked a milestone in the KNN's evolution from a network of seven founding schools to a true movement offering new ways of partnering in the work — such as becoming a KNN Catalyst Organization or Changemaker Group — to a growing number of institutions. Consistent with its aims, the 2023 conference remained comparable in size to the 2022 inaugural national conference, while attracting a wider variety of representation. With two-thirds of participants new to the conference and one-third returning after attending last year, the event both strengthened existing relationships and forged new connections — all based on a shared goal and vision for transforming the field.

Throughout the three-day convening, sessions and workshops focused on conceptual grounding and application of the KNN Framework elements of character, caring and practical wisdom toward flourishing. The word **FLOURISH** was displayed in large, illuminated letters to serve as an ongoing reminder of the aspirational aim and the fact that transformational work to shift the culture of medicine only can be achieved through collective effort.



Using the KNN Framework as inspiration, local artist Posy Knight created a tree-themed art installation for participants to interact with and answer the question, "What does flourishing **TOGETHER** look like or mean to you?". Participant answers were written on multicolored paper leaves and attached to the tree, with just a few of the responses including:

- Caring
- Collaboration
- Community
- Building character through integrity
- Empathy
- Recognizing those in healthcare [who] often aren't [recognized]
- Love
- Trust
- Flourish



Another Milwaukee creative, Mikey Murry, opened programming by performing a spoken word piece that captured the power of being “amongst a crowd of those who share our vision of a world that does not simply spin but moves toward something bigger.”

In the same spirit, participant feedback recognized the unique energy and strength that comes from intentionally centering community and our shared humanity while disseminating new knowledge and practices.

Participant Feedback on the 2023 KNN Conference



I am so inspired by our timely and appropriate attention towards the extremely worthy and critical cause of flourishing as medical professionals ... with a caring initiative such as KNN there is now hope for future physicians.

The conference had just the right feel for me — scholarly yet also very creative, lots of space for application of ideas, great interactions at table groups that allowed for me to meet great people and be pushed in my thinking. Thank you!!

Amazing conference and a great opportunity to meet students invested in flourishing in medicine.



Planning for 2024: deepening partnerships across the movement

With the second national conference successfully held, planning began for the third annual 2024 KNN Conference, which is envisioned as a destination for learning and engagement at the headwaters of the movement to transform medicine toward flourishing. A call for submissions opened from February to April 2024, encouraging leaders, educators, practitioners and learners across the country to propose concepts for dynamic discussions, catalyzing conversations, skill-building workshops and a poster symposium. The call generated 106 abstracts with lead authors from 45+ unique organizations. To further strengthen the annual conference’s impact on the movement, abstract reviewers prioritized submissions that incorporated practical applications, systemic transformation and/or collaborative efforts within and across organizations.

In an ongoing effort to meet partners in the movement where they are and to create more opportunities for diverse institutions to attend, the KNN Conference is branching out beyond Milwaukee and will visit new locations each year based on proximity to KNN partners, beginning with Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In 2024, the conference will be hosted with collaboration from two local partners: [Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine \(NSU MD\)](#) and the [University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine](#).



106

abstracts received for 2024 KNN Conference

with lead authors from



45+

unique organizations



With a transformative investment from the Kern Family Foundation, the Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine (KNN) is a growing national **movement** focused on integrating character, caring and practical wisdom toward flourishing within medicine and health professions.

We advance this work by **connecting** and **convening** stakeholders across the health ecosystem, **catalyzing** transformative initiatives, and **influencing** policy and systems change.



KERN NATIONAL NETWORK
FOR FLOURISHING IN MEDICINE
Character. Caring. Practical Wisdom.

Contact

Kern National Network
8701 Watertown Plank Road
Milwaukee, WI 53226

knncaringcharactermedicine.org 

knn@mcw.edu 

[@KernNetwork](https://twitter.com/KernNetwork) 