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NXTUS Selects Leading Startups to Offer Health Tech Solutions to Kansas Communities
Ten Finalists Competing to Pilot Innovations with Nine Future-Minded Kansas Organizations

Wichita, Kan. – August 6, 2025– NXTUS, Inc. has announced 10 finalists for the **2025 NXTSTAGE Community Health & Vibrancy Pilot Competition**, presented by **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS)**. They offer innovative solutions for community health workers, preventative Diabetes care, support for families dealing with addiction, social media literacy, civic engagement, online pharmacy solutions, and more.

The companies emerged as finalists from a competitor pool of 143 startups from 27 states and 15 countries. They will travel here in October to present their technology tools to nine program partners and other innovation-hungry organizations focused on improving the health of Kansans and removing barriers to community growth.

Since 2021, startups from around the world have looked to Kansas as a place to test and launch their innovative community tools. Now in its fifth year, the competition has produced 53 finalists and prompted 55 local and state-wide innovation projects.

“At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, we work to help build healthier communities through innovation, collaboration and lasting commitment,” said **Virginia Barnes, BCBSKS Director of Blue Health Initiatives**. “By partnering startups with Kansas organizations, we’re removing barriers and working toward a health system that is accessible and equitable for all. We’re inspired by how local groups have embraced new technologies to improve community health and look forward to seeing the positive impact from the next group of finalists.”

The 2025 finalists were selected by NXTUS and leading community health and economic development organizations across Kansas. These pilot partners will now work to design and select innovation projects they see as most promising for their communities. Here are the competition’s nine 2025 Pilot Partners:

- Veteran program partners include **Thrive Allen County, Hodgeman County Economic Development, LiveWell Northwest Kansas, Russell Regional Hospital, and JenRus Freelance Marketing** (representing Republic County).
- New pilot partners are **NMC Health, the Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity, CloudCorp Economic Development, and Coffey County Economic Development**.

Partners will announce pilot projects during the Innovation Showcase, set for October 9 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Equity Bank Park. The event is open to community health and growth advocates from around the state. To attend the event in person or sign up for the simulcast, register via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

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BlueCross BlueShield
Kansas

The program has helped position the state as a proving ground for next-generation solutions that support community health and vitality. For example, the 2024 program spawned pilot projects that helped improve maternal health, supported Kansans as they quit smoking, and opened new pathways for community health workers to be compensated for the care they provide to underserved Kansans.

These are the 2025 NXTSTAGE Community Health & Vibrancy Finalists:

- **Cairn Health** (Wichita, KS): Cairn Health helps uninsured, low-income Kansans access vital prescriptions through a mail-order charitable pharmacy for a small, affordable dispensing fee.
- **Greens Health** (Houston, Texas): Greens Health helps Medicare seniors and caregivers manage blood sugar and pressure, medications, and meals with culturally tailored, convenient, holistic support.
- **GrownBy** (Cooperstown, NY): GrownBy is the farmer-owned marketplace for local food.
- **Healium XR** (Columbia, MO): Healium is relaxation for a new reality allowing you to SEE your feelings. The company's mental wellness software is popular in areas of stress.
- **Kind-Ed** (Chicago, IL): KindEd is a social media and AI literacy provider. We use a behavior-focused approach to support healthy digital habits and youth wellness.
- **Kwema** (Saint Louis, MO): The Kwema Smart Badge Reel contains a hidden duress button that empowers community healthcare workers to discreetly call for help during workplace violence incidents.
- **PearSuite** (Tulsa, OK): Pear Suite empowers community health workers (CHWs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) through an AI-powered care navigation platform, a national provider network, and comprehensive managed services.
- **Polco** (Madison, WI): Polco helps local leaders understand community needs, design programs to address them, and secure funding with AI-powered grant management.
- **We the Village** (New York City): We The Village empowers families to better recover from addiction, together, with clinically proven online family programs and professional training.
- **Welfie** (San Diego, CA): Welfie is building AI patients to train the youth mental health workforce and create economic mobility for youth and underserved families.

In addition to presenting sponsorship from **Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas**, the 2025 program is supported by **the Kansas Health Science University - Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine**, **Hinkle Law Firm**, the **University of Kansas School of Medicine – Wichita Medical Practice Association**, **Kansas Health Foundation**, and the **Greater Wichita Partnership's Opportunity Wichita** initiative.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.nxtus.io/nxtstage-community-health-and-vibrancy>

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About NXTUS:

***NXTUS, Inc** helps entrepreneurs grow companies of significance. The organization works to connect startup founders with community resources, capital, and customers. NXTUS manages NXTSTAGE programs, which are aimed at connecting startups to mature businesses and regional partners looking to become customers for their innovations and to help accelerate the pace of innovation and startup growth in the region, as well as Accelerate Venture Partners, a fast-growing regional angel investor syndicate.*

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas

For more than 80 years, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas has built a reputation of trust with its members and contracting providers by providing outstanding customer service while quickly and accurately processing claims; fairly administering benefit plans and contracts; offering programs, services and tools to help members improve or maintain their health; and operating under the highest ethical standards while being good stewards of premium dollars. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and is the state's largest insurer, serving all Kansas counties except Johnson and Wyandotte. For more information, visit bcbsks.com.