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### Reopening Johnson County Hospital: The Beginning of Interprofessional Healthcare Education at ETSU

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### Abstract

Johnson County Hospital was a hospital located in Mountain City, TN that existed from 1972 until its final closure in 1998. The hospital faced multiple financial challenges during its existence and was forced to close three times. In 1988 it closed for the penultimate time, and as it had in the past, it counted on the community, local business and local government to reopen the hospital. Three local businessmen were particularly dedicated to reopening the county hospital and reached out to East Tennessee State University (ETSU) and their newly formed College of Medicine. A partnership was formed between the community and ETSU to open a rural campus to educate medical, nursing, public health and allied health students. This rural campus was made a reality through the Kellogg Grant awarded to ETSU in 1991 and was expanded to include graduate medical education in 1996. This collaboration between the community, local businesses, local government and ETSU was able to reopen the hospital in 1992 and jump-started interprofessional education at ETSU which is continued today in the form of the Academic Health Sciences Center and the Interprofessional Education Program.

### The Rural Campus



### Background

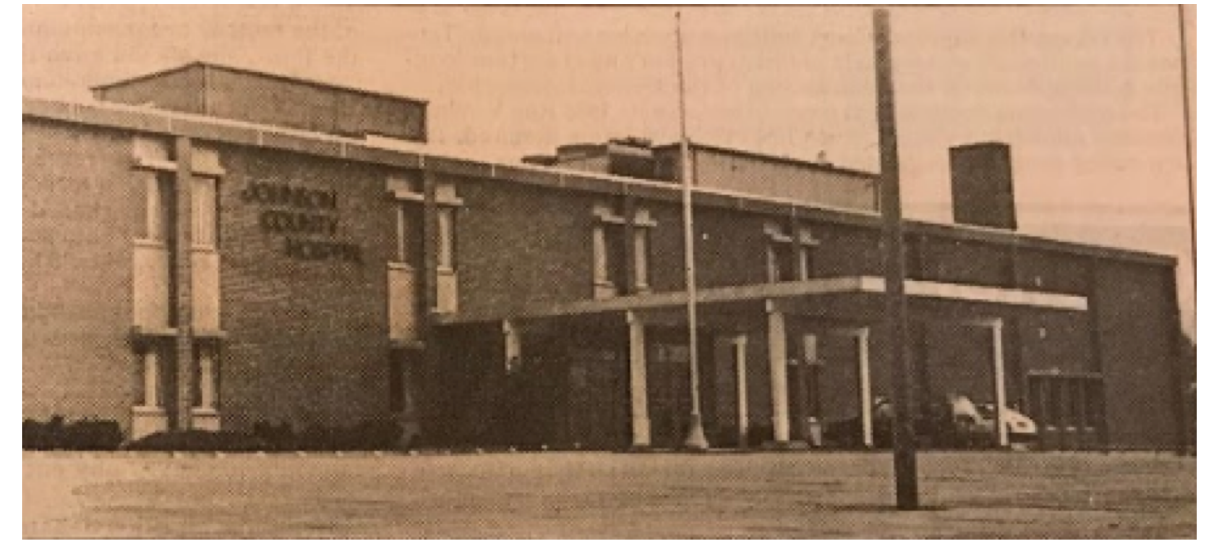
Johnson County Hospital (JCH) was opened in July of 1972 after the community and local businesses worked together to fundraise to build the hospital. JCH encountered financial difficulties and closed in December of the same year. Reopening almost a year later, the hospital entered a period of relative prosperity adding an intensive care unit later in the decade and expanding from 44 to 66 beds in 1983. Changes in Medicare reimbursement and the loss of local physicians led to insurmountable financial troubles that forced the hospital to close for the second time in 1988. Shortly thereafter, stakeholders in the community began to organize to reopen their hospital which would eventually happen with the partnership ETSU and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, a private foundation established by breakfast cereal pioneer Will Keith Kellogg in 1930.

### Timeline

- 1987-** Hospital faces financial troubles due to changes in Medicare reimbursement and physicians leaving the area
- 1988-** Hospital closes and declares bankruptcy
  - Rescue squad must transport patients needing care outside of Johnson County.
- 1989-** Danny Herman, Paul Brown, and Tommy Walsh bought back the hospital equipment and formed a hospital board. Along with fundraising help from Jimmy Vincill and philanthropist Dewey Houston, over \$750,000 was raised to reopen the hospital (lease was accepted by county commission in 1991)
  - Medical School agrees to partner with the Hospital.
- 1990-** Campaigning begins to raise money and attract physicians for new hospital
  - February- ETSU Quillen College of Medicine make Rural Campus official: a place of education for both resident and medical students at an ambulatory clinic open 8am- 5pm with a doctor on call 24 hours a day.
  - August- \$2.5 million dollars awarded from the state of TN to open hospital.
  - December- Aaron Richardson, plant manager of Sara Lee, donates \$150,000.
- 1991-** Kellogg grants helps the hospital through the "Community Partnerships for Health Professions Education" grant
  - September- Kellogg grant awards (total of) \$6 million for hospital
  - Hospital Lease is accepted
    - Dewey Houston gives \$300,000 more for hospital
  - October- Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is approved; official start date October 1, 1991

### Timeline (continued)

- 1992-** Hospital Reopens on February 17<sup>th</sup>
  - July- Kellogg students start from the colleges of medicine, nursing, and public health
- 1994-** Extended Hours Clinic opens
  - April- Graduate Medical and Nursing Education (GMNE) initiative gives \$1,813,000 over 4 years to develop a series of multidisciplinary training experiences in underserved areas and with underserved populations
- 1998 -** Mountain States Health Alliance opens Johnson County Health Center (the future Johnson County Community Hospital) and Johnson County Hospital is closed for the final time.



### The Kellogg Program

The goal of the Kellogg program was to provide residents and medical, nursing and public health students with "practical medical experience with rural community health problems"

The program and its students not only provided accessible care to the community but did multiple research projects including:

- Surveys about what health concerns the people of Johnson County have
- Collaboration with TN Department of Health to assess Johnson County's community needs through the Tennessee Community Diagnosis project
- Communication exercises with standardized patients from Mountain City
- Community events like "Heartfest" where students educated shoppers about how what they eat can affect their health and provide education about cardiovascular disease

The Kellogg program expanded ETSU horizons by:

- Making it financially possible to assign faculty to interprofessional rural courses.
- Providing exposure to what other programs were doing around the country and around the world- helped ETSU to gain exposure to the larger world and provided the opportunity for its people to think outside the box.

### Legacy

Gave Rural Communities access to ETSU so they knew that "ETSU is not just a place in Johnson City but is a place we have access to also" and the power to influence young health care professionals, giving communities a voice to say:

*"This is what we think someone who is going to be a doctor needs to know about our community and how to take care of people in rural areas". – Dr. Wilsie Bishop*

**East Tennessee State University Rural Primary Care Track**

- 4 year experiential curriculum that emphasizes community, rural culture and interdisciplinary team interactions
- Originated in 1992 from the Kellogg Foundation grant
- Designed to train students to practice rural primary care

**Mountain City Extended Hours Health Center**

- Federally certified Rural Health Clinic serving Johnson County residents
- Provides primary care, prenatal care and behavioral health services
- Operated by ETSU Family Nurse Practitioners and open 6 days a week located in the Johnson County Community Hospital

**Academic Health Science Center**

- Named as Academic Health Science Center in 2009, defined as including a medical college and at least one other professional college
- Interprofessional education is a national movement and ETSU caught that wave because of the Kellogg funding
- Close cooperation has resulted in the formation of the Interprofessional Education and Research Center

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### Acknowledgements

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