



The Kansas State University & Stormont Vail Health Collaboration: 2025 Annual Report

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KSU & Stormont Vail Health Partnership Overview

In 2020, Stormont Vail Health and Kansas State University formed an academic affiliation to support collaboration and develop various educational programs. These include K-State’s Physician Assistant (PA) program, the College of Health and Human Sciences Simulation Training Laboratory, continuing education activities, and other joint initiatives.

Training & Career Opportunities for Future PAs

Currently, 87 Stormont Vail physicians and advanced practice providers (APPs) serve as preceptors for K-State PA students. Stormont Vail provides one-third of all PA student rotations. Over the past two years, Stormont Vail has hired five K-State PA graduates.

Expanding Research & Clinical Innovation

In 2023, Stormont Vail opened its Manhattan Campus on the northeast corner of K-State’s campus and announced a formal medical research affiliation. This partnership, built on a shared commitment to scientific progress, supports cutting-edge projects through shared facilities and resources. It also creates opportunities for Stormont Vail team members to participate in extramurally funded research, such as National Institutes of Health (NIH) submissions. This clinical research advances new treatments and therapies, improving patient care locally and regionally.

Improving the Health of Our Community—Together

Overall, this partnership fosters meaningful engagement in education, extension, and outreach efforts that benefit both K-State and Stormont Vail. It strengthens the healthcare workforce through the PA program and generates impactful academic and medical research, ultimately improving the lives of patients in our community and beyond.

IN THE NEWS



Stormont Vail Health and K-State celebrated two years of research collaboration and five years of academic affiliation with an event attended by leaders from both organizations, including K-State President Richard Linton and Stormont Vail President and CEO Mark Slyter.

[Discover the Full Story →](#)

Mary Martell, Vice President of Strategy and Regional Development at Stormont Vail, and Dr. Carl Ade, Director of the Clinical Integrated Physiology Lab at K-State, appeared on Within Reason with Mike Matson on KMAN Radio (March 18, 2025).



[← Listen to the Interview](#)



KCLY reporter Payton Tholstrup (Clay Center) covered the Stormont Vail—K-State Research partnership.

[Read the Full Article →](#)

Ali Wisniewski, Ph.D., Stormont Vail Clinical Research Program Manager, and Gina Besenyi, MPH, Ph.D., Associate Professor at K-State's School of Health Sciences, appeared on Within Reason (October 3, 2025).



[← Hear the Conversation](#)



K-State Fellow Adam Hedelund discussed innovative ways to integrate mental health resources into cardiac care on WIBW's To Your Health (November 11, 2025).

[Watch the Full Segment →](#)

BY THE NUMBERS

K-State Researchers

11

Active
Research Studies

3

Peer-Reviewed
Publications

11

Grant Submissions with
Stormont Vail Letters of
Support

Dr. Carl Ade

Associate Professor
School of Health Sciences

Dr. Britton Scheuermann

Research Assistant Professor
School of Health Sciences

Dr. Gina Besenyi

Associate Professor
School of Health Sciences

Dr. Emily Mailey

Associate Professor
School of Health Sciences

Dr. Joshua Carr

Assistant Professor
School of Health Sciences

Dr. Heather Bailey

Associate Professor
Psychological Sciences

Dr. Julio Hernandez Pavon

Assistant Professor
Psychological Sciences

Dr. Valentina Trinetta

Associate Professor
School of Health Sciences

Dr. Matthew Wisniewski

Associate Professor
Psychological Sciences

Dr. Kristin Pelczarski

Associate Professor
School of Health Sciences

Students

56

K-State undergraduate and graduate research students.

Student Defenses

Andrew Argie

Master's Defense (March 2025)

"Understanding the intention-behavior gap towards aerobic exercise in persons with multiple sclerosis"



Britton Scheuermann

Doctoral Defense (July 2025)

"Brain health throughout cancer survivorship: The impacts of anti-cancer therapy on cerebrovascular regulation and pathology"



Michael Tollefsrud

Doctoral Defense (August 2025)

"Neural indicators of misophonia-related cognitive load"



Study Participation

Participants

Study

100

“Possible determinants of the intention-behavior gap towards regular exercise participation in persons with multiple sclerosis”

Andrew Argie, MS Student, School of Health Sciences

62

“Cognitive performance of individuals with memory loss”

Dr. Heather Bailey, Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences

12

“Investigating neuronal communication with transcranial magnetic stimulation”

Dr. Julio Hernandez Pavon, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychological Sciences

15

“Changes in vascular function and global longitudinal strain and associations with cardiac dysfunction in cancer patients receiving anthracycline chemotherapy and trastuzumab therapy”

Dr. Carl Ade, Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences

3

“Walking in nature for cancer survivorship”

Dr. Gina Besenyi, Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences

PROVIDER HIGHLIGHTS



Susan Brian, M.D., Diabetes & Endocrinology

Dr. Brian consults on Dr. Joshua Carr’s longitudinal study examining how perimenopausal management, such as hormonal exposure, influences neuromuscular aging.



Dr. Joshua Carr →

PROVIDER HIGHLIGHTS *(continued)*



Fatma Radhi, M.D., Neurology

Dr. Radhi consulted on Dr. Julio Hernandez Pavon's NIH research grant proposal, "Personalized cortico-cortical paired associative stimulation to restore motor function in stroke patients" (submitted October 2025).

Dr. Julio Hernandez Pavon →



Dr. Radhi also consults and refers patients for Dr. Heather Bailey's NIH-funded study examining cognitive performance and Alzheimer's biomarkers (p-tau 217) in patients with mild cognitive impairment.

Dr. Heather Bailey →



Molly Disbrow, M.D., Gastroenterologist

Dr. Disbrow consults on a study exploring how sorghum-based products influence gut microbiota health.

Dr. Valentina Trinetta →



Nikhil Mehta, M.D., Cardiologist, Cardiac Electrophysiology

Dr. Mehta consults on a study examining biofilms that contribute to infections in pacemaker leads.

Dr. Mehta and Ryan Fairbanks, Manhattan Campus Device Nurse, visiting Dr. Valentina Trinetta's Lab →



GRANT PROPOSALS

K-State researchers submitted 11 research grant proposals with support from Stormont Vail Health, including provider consultations and imaging resources. If funded, these collaborative studies will advance a wide range of key disciplines in science and medicine.

- NASA**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Carl Ade • Stormont Vail consult: Dr. Fatma Radhi*
“Investigating the effects of spaceflight on neurocognitive and cerebrovascular function: mechanisms and mitigating strategies”
- NIH**..... *KSU PIs: Dr. Ade & Dr. Dave Thompson*
Stormont Vail consults: Dr. Kenna Fischman & Serena Laird
“Bed-based sensors for predictive care management of daytime behavior in Alzheimer’s disease populations”
- NIH**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Ade • Stormont Vail Consult: Dr. Jaime Barberena*
“Daily stretching intervention to improve walking and calf muscle mechanics and oxygenation in older patients with peripheral artery disease”
- NIH**..... *KSU PIs: Dr. Ade & Dr. Steven Copp • Stormont Vail consult: Dr. Sara Stewart*
“Effect of GLP-1/GLP-1 metabolites on cardiovascular control during exercise in peripheral artery disease”
- NIH**..... *KSU PIs: Dr. Joshua Carr & Dr. Julio Hernandez Pavon • Stormont Vail MRI support*
“Mitigating neural hypoexcitability and weakness in women undergoing disuse”
- NIH**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Pavon • Stormont Vail consult: Dr. Radhi*
“Personalized cortico-cortical paired associative stimulation to restore motor function in stroke patients”
- NIH**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Britton Scheuermann • Stormont Vail fMRI Imaging support*
“Vascular and systemic contributions to cognitive outcomes after chemotherapy: the VASC-COG study”
- DOD**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Carr • Stormont Vail Imaging support*
“Unilateral strength training to accelerate return to readiness following ACL reconstruction”
- DOD**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Carr • Stormont Vail Imaging support*
“Menopausal effects on neuromuscular outcomes following immobilization and targeted rehabilitation”
- Klingenstein Fellowship**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Pavon • Stormont Vail Imaging support*
“Using transcranial magnetic stimulation to improve motor function in stroke patients”
- USDA**..... *KSU PI: Dr. Valentina Trinetta • Stormont Vail consult: Dr. Molly Disbrow*
“PARTNERSHIP: Fermented sorghum- and intermediate wheatgrass-based products to improve gut microbiota health and enhance iron bioavailability”

PATIENT CARE COLLABORATIONS

To provide additional exercise recommendations for Stormont Vail Health patients enrolled in the [Medical Weight Management Program](#), [Dr. Sara Stewart](#), Physician and Director of the Stormont Vail Weight Management Program, and [Christina Guhr, APRN](#) with the Stormont Vail Weight Management Program, are collaborating with Dr. Emily Mailey, an expert in promoting physical activity among special populations.

In Spring 2024, Mailey's K-State Kinesiology students received hands-on experience developing recommendation materials specifically for Stormont Vail's patients. The Stormont Vail Weight Management team distributed the first product from this course, a flyer on Self-Efficacy, on January 1, 2026, as part of a New Year's resolution theme.

This collaboration benefits patients and providers by supplying additional clinic resources.

Contributors



Sara Stewart, M.D.



Christina Guhr, APRN



Emily Mailey, Ph.D.



Behavioral Health Fellowship



Adam Hedelund (LMFT; KSU Ph.D. candidate, Couple and Family Therapy) serves as a K-State Fellow providing integrated behavioral health services at the [Stormont Vail Health Heart Center](#) in Topeka. Adam spends 20 hours per week conducting depression screenings and providing therapy for patients and families.

This fellowship supports evaluation of barriers to care, participation in multidisciplinary teams, and research opportunities in collaboration with the [Stormont Vail Heart Care](#) team.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Julio Hernandez Pavon

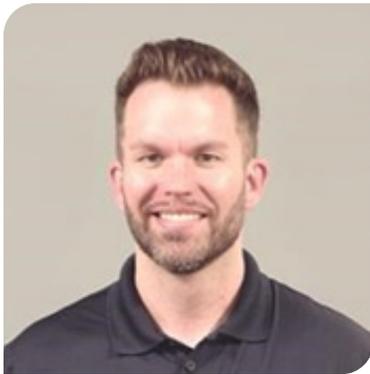
Nicole Mora Jiménez, Ph.D. Student

Dr. Pavon and Ph.D. student Nicole Mora Jiménez use transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a non-invasive technique, to stimulate the human brain.

Dr. Pavon performs magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans at Stormont Vail to obtain individualized head models, enabling accurate measurement of different brain regions. He also collects an advanced MRI sequence called diffusion tensor imaging (DTI), which maps structural connections in the brain.

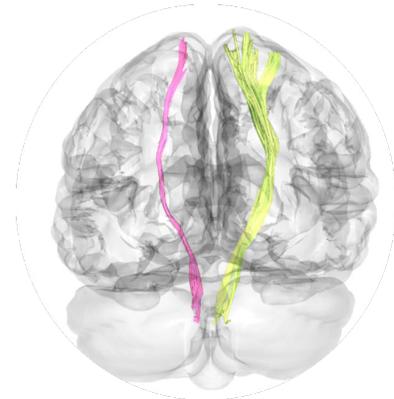
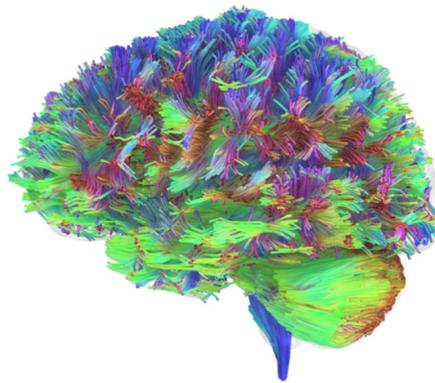


Brad Nordhus, MRSO, Medical Imaging Manager, Advanced Modalities



In 2025, Brad Nordhus assisted Dr. Pavon in collecting DTI sequences from more than a dozen participants. Data from these MRI scans reveal short- and long-range connections in the brain.

Diffusion tensor images collected at Stormont Vail Health



*Left (pink) and right (yellow)
corticospinal tracts*

fMRI AT STORMONT VAIL HEALTH

Stormont Vail Health is partnering with Kansas State University to bring functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to support advanced research and clinical innovation. This investment represents a shared commitment to expanding access to cutting-edge imaging technologies that enhance scientific discovery, education, and patient care.

Why fMRI Matters

Scientific progress: fMRI enables researchers to study brain function by visualizing real-time brain activity.

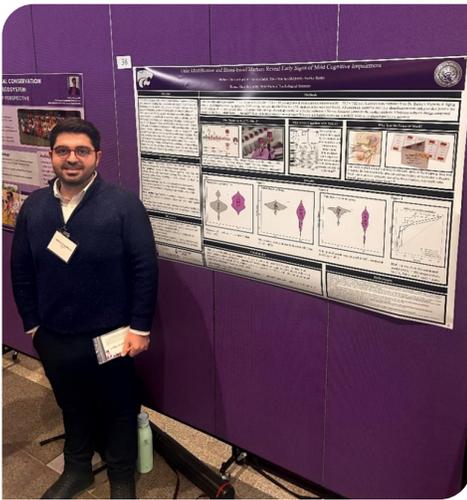
Healthcare advancements: fMRI can detect early signs of neurodegenerative conditions such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Mohsen Davoudkhani, a K-State doctoral candidate in Psychological Sciences, studies “Odor identification and blood-based markers reveal early signs of mild cognitive impairment” as part of Dr. Heather Bailey’s research with Stormont Vail.

Mohsen presented his work at K-State’s annual Research and the State forum.

He was selected as one of 10 graduate students representing K-State at the Capitol Graduate Research Summit in March 2026, where he will present to state legislators alongside students from other Kansas Regents institutions. Each student received a \$250 award for their outstanding presentation at Research and the State.



EVENTS

K-State PA Program Graduation

Stormont Vail Health hosted the inaugural celebration for K-State PA graduates on April 17, 2025.



EVENTS *(continued)*

Business of Medicine Lecture Series

Stormont Vail leaders presented on credentialing, ancillary services, healthcare finances, leadership skills, and more.

New Student Orientation

A two-day session including tours, Epic training, and student success stories.

Stormont Vail - K-State Men's Basketball Game Sponsorship

On March 8, 2025, Stormont Vail Health Clinical Research received recognition at the K-State vs. Iowa State game.

In 2024, the Stormont Vail Clinical Research program celebrated its 20th anniversary and received the 2024 Extraordinary Care Award, the organization's highest honor of Small Moments, recognizing the team's significant impact on Stormont Vail's mission and values.

Since its founding in 2004, the Stormont Vail Clinical Research program has participated in hundreds of clinical trials, partnered with thousands of patients, and contributed to the development of numerous FDA-approved medications now in the hands of providers worldwide. Areas of focus include endocrinology, gastroenterology, general medicine, neurology, oncology, and pediatrics.



Stormont Vail team members from multiple campuses attended and participated in a private reception and tour at Bramlage Coliseum.



Carmen Burns, Director of Stormont Vail Clinical Research program, and Ali Wisniewski, Stormont Vail Clinical Research Program Manager, accepted the game ball.



Ali Wisniewski with Wyatt Thompson, Senior Director of Sportscasting and Voice of the Wildcats, during a live radio interview.

EVENTS *(continued)*

K-State College of Health & Human Sciences Health Professions Exploration Event

Stormont Vail sponsored the 2025 event and hosted students at its Manhattan Campus for hands-on learning in ultrasonography, cardiology, and laboratory procedures, followed by dinner with Stormont Vail team members.



K-State & Stormont Vail Partnership Celebration

On September 8, 2025, both institutions celebrated two years of research partnership and five years of academic affiliation. The event included a roundtable discussion and presentations by K-State researchers, tours of Stormont Vail's Manhattan Campus and K-State's Mary and Carl Ice Hall, home to the K-State PA program. Leaders from both organizations attended the event to highlight how the partnership is advancing next-generation research and education.



Mary Martell speaking during a tour of Mary and Carl Ice Hall, which houses the K-State PA program and is next door to the Stormont Vail Manhattan Campus.

Also pictured: Amy Fitzgerald, Physician Assistant Studies Program Director, left, and Mark Slyter.



Mary Martell, Stormont Vail Vice President for Strategy and Regional Development, and Dr. Carl Ade, Director of K-State's Clinical Research Coordination, present during the executive roundtable.



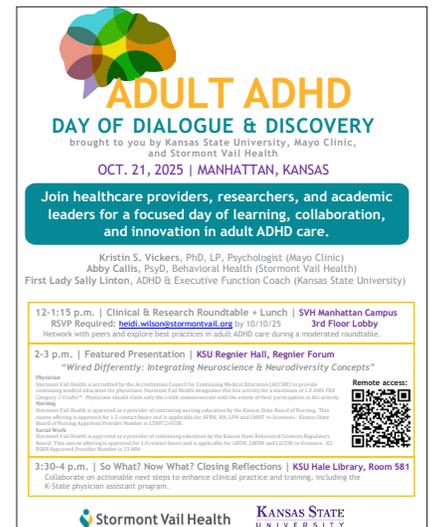
Amy Fitzgerald, Physician Assistant Studies Program Director, shows Mark Slyter an Anatomage Table, which is a 3D anatomy visualization and virtual dissection tool.

Adult ADHD Day of Dialogue & Discovery

Held on October 21, 2025, at the Stormont Vail Health Manhattan Campus, Stormont Vail and Kansas State University, in partnership with the Mayo Clinic, hosted an all-day event to advance understanding and care for adults with ADHD.

The event included a clinical and research roundtable discussion and lunch, talks from K-State's First Lady Sally Linton (ADHD and Executive Function Coach), Kristin Vickers, Ph.D., L.P., Mayo Clinic, and Abby Callis, PsyD, Stormont Vail Behavioral Health, and a closing reflections session.

Participants discussed neurodiversity, improvements in patient care, teaching strategies, and community resources.



ADULT ADHD
DAY OF DIALOGUE & DISCOVERY
brought to you by Kansas State University, Mayo Clinic,
and Stormont Vail Health
OCT. 21, 2025 | MANHATTAN, KANSAS

Join healthcare providers, researchers, and academic leaders for a focused day of learning, collaboration, and innovation in adult ADHD care.

Kristin S. Vickers, PhD, LP, Psychologist (Mayo Clinic)
Abby Callis, PsyD, Behavioral Health (Stormont Vail Health)
First Lady Sally Linton, ADHD & Executive Function Coach (Kansas State University)

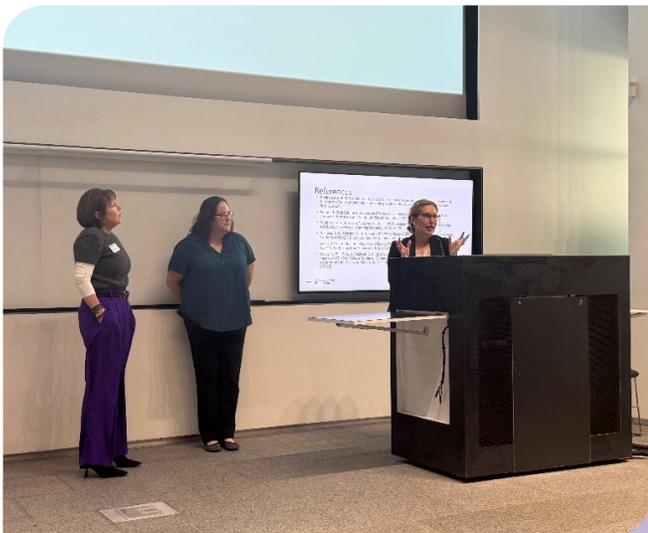
12-1:15 p.m. | Clinical & Research Roundtable + Lunch | SVH Manhattan Campus 3rd Floor Lobby
RSVP Required: jeff.wilson@stormontvail.org by 10/10/25
Network with peers and explore best practices in adult ADHD care during a moderated roundtable.

2-3 p.m. | Featured Presentation | KSU Regnier Hall, Regnier Forum
"Wired Differently: Integrating Neuroscience & Neurodiversity Concepts"
Presenters: Stormont Vail Health is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. Stormont Vail Health recognizes this for delivery by individuals of 12 CME and Category 2 Credits*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.
Stormont Vail Health is approved as a provider of continuing nursing education by the Kansas State Board of Nursing. This course offering is approved for 2 contact hours and is applicable for RN, LPN and CDEP in licensure. Kansas State Board of Nursing Approved Provider Number is 179872-0106.
Stormont Vail Health is approved as a provider of continuing education for the Kansas State Behavioral Science Regulatory Board. This course offering is approved for 1.0 contact hours and is applicable for LBSW, LISW and LCSW in licensure. KS BSRB Approved Provider Number is 12-004.

3:30-4 p.m. | So What? Now What? Closing Reflections | KSU Hale Library, Room 581
Collaborate on actionable next steps to enhance clinical practice and training, including the K-State physician assistant program.

Remote access:


Stormont Vail Health | KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY



First Lady Sally Linton, Dr. Vickers, and Dr. Callis give talks at K-State.

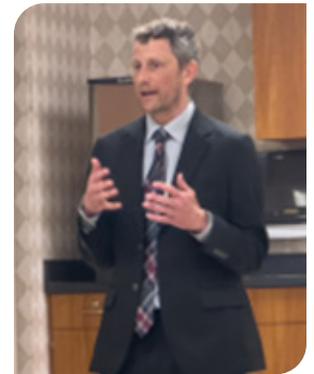


Clinical and research roundtable discussion and lunch at the Stormont Vail Health Manhattan Campus.

TALKS

March 2025:

Joshua Smith, Ph.D., M.S., Mayo Clinic, presented “Inspiratory muscle dysfunction in cardiovascular disease: Role for inspiratory muscle training” at the Stormont Vail Health Heart Center.

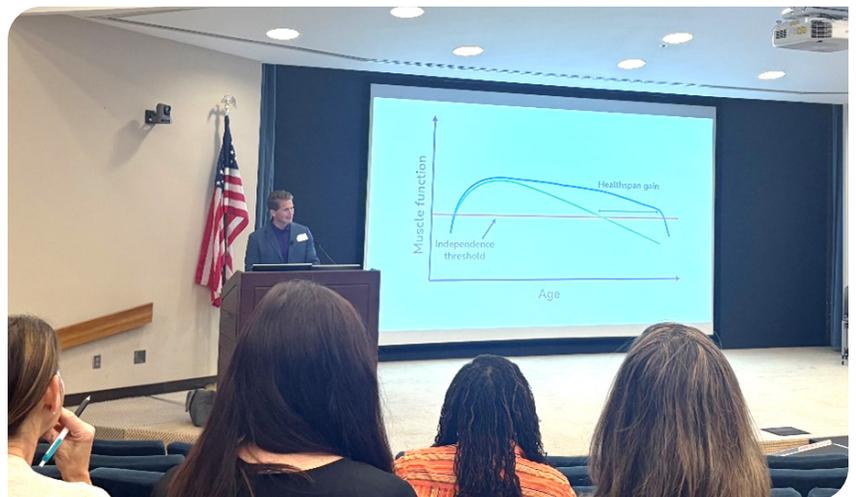


March 2025:

Karla Hedquist, Stormont Vail System Director of Community Health Engagement, spoke to the K-State Public Health Program about the health system’s role in community well-being.

September 2025:

Dr. Joshua Carr presented “Optimizing muscle retention during obesity treatment” at the 2025 Stormont Vail Health Obesity Symposium.



LEARN MORE ABOUT RESEARCH

To learn more about the K-State and Stormont Vail Health Research Collaboration, submit a research proposal, or request collaboration, visit: <https://www.k-state.edu/clinical-research-coordination/> or scan the QR code.

