



SINCE 1947

years

Letter from the CEO & Executive Director



IGNITE

CONVERSATIONS
AND CHANGE

Ability KC is founded upon a valuable legacy of bringing together our community to build brighter futures. In 1947, under the leadership of Mary Shaw Branton, Jeanette Luhnow, and Jane Dick, the Cerebral Palsy Nursery School was established for children with complex abilities and needs. Simultaneously, Vivian Shepherd pioneered the opening of the Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City (RIKC) for soldiers returning from World War II and individuals with disabilities in the broader Kansas City region. In 2015, the two organizations merged to become one, **Ability KC**. Over the past seven decades, Ability KC has risen to the challenges of the rapidly changing rehabilitation landscape, providing a model of care, culture and services that is a critical bridge for individuals to integrate into homes, schools, workplaces, and our communities.

The demand continues to rise with the growing acuity and complexity of injuries, illnesses, and disabilities. In our greater KC community and beyond, thousands of individuals experience life-changing injuries, illnesses, and disabilities each year. These individuals represent the rich diversity of our community—across all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic statuses. If Ability KC did not exist, individuals and their families would have to travel to multiple places—and often a different city—to get the therapies and support they need, resulting in additional expenses, inefficiencies, and disparate care. This is why it's important that we are ensuring our program innovation, technologies and campus support the quality and dignity in care being provided.

The good news is that together, we can and will do more to meet these needs. It takes all of us being at the table together, igniting conversations and understanding, innovating, and creating solutions. Ability KC is driven by the unwavering purpose for disabilities inclusion in our communities. While Ability KC fills an important gap in our greater KC community and beyond, no one organization does it alone.

On behalf of our entire Ability KC community, we appreciate the hundreds of community supporters, volunteers and partners that have been with us through our incredible mission journey over the past 75 years—we couldn't have done it without you. Your support will ensure we continue to serve and meet the needs of the diverse populations of individuals in the Kansas City community for the next 75 years and beyond by identifying gaps, adapting, and innovating to provide a value-based model of care, culture, and services, bridging to quality of life.

Amy Castillo

CEO and Executive Director

IMPACT

In 2022, Ability KC provided almost **\$5 million** in **uncompensated, at-cost services** for under-resourced individuals and families.

IMAGINE

Ability KC is an expert in value-based care and our model is person-centered, **building bridges between healthcare and quality of life.**

We provide job training, placement and driving services for individuals with disabilities, partnering with employers to create a thriving workforce.



Since 1947, our mission has been strong in Kansas City at every juncture of life—from a child's kindergarten readiness, to an individual returning to high school or work or to building and achieving a plan of independently living in their home and community.

The need is great, so we are fortunate you are with us to ignite change to help more Kansas Citians, together.

Building brighter futures for 75 years

1947

World War II veterans returned home with life-changing injuries, and across the country the need for rehabilitation services was overwhelming. In response, the Kansas City Health Council of the Council of Social Agencies conducted a study that recommended the development of the first comprehensive rehabilitation center in Kansas City to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. From this study, with the leadership of Vivian Shepherd and Eleanor Jones Kemper, the Rehabilitation Institute was founded, offering both medical and vocational services.

Partners:

- Goodwill Industries
- Jackson County Medical Society
- Jackson County Society for Crippled Children - Easter Seal Society
- Kansas City Health Council - Council of Social Agencies
- Kansas City Junior League
- National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis - March of Dimes
- United Jewish Social Services - Jewish Family and Children Services
- Visiting Nurse Association
- Women's Chamber of Commerce

1947

At the same time, less than 10 schools existed in the country that would support children with disabilities, however, these children still faced inequities in accessing education. Mary Shaw Branton had a different vision for the future of children with disabilities in Kansas City. Together with Jane Dick and Jeanette Luhnnow, they created The Cerebral Palsy Nursery School focused on preparing children with Cerebral Palsy for kindergarten through therapies, education and socialization.

Partners:

- Jackson County Society for Children with Cerebral Palsy
- Kansas City Junior League
- St. Luke's Hospital

1965

The school's services were recognized under the professional division of Children's Mercy Hospital pediatrics department. This marked the first direct merger in Kansas City of two Community Chest health agencies that were supported in part by the annual United Campaign drive.

Enrollment more than doubled to 75 children served.

Partners:

- Children's Mercy Hospital
- Kansas City Community Chest

1971

The industry-leading expertise, forward-thinking and innovative services available at the Rehabilitation Institute garnered accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The Institute was the first organization in the state to achieve international recognition in these areas of excellence.

Partner:

- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

1983

The first Groundhog Run was held at the Hunt Midwest SubTropolis and became the therapeutic preschool's largest fundraiser.

Partner:

- Hunt Midwest SubTropolis

1984

A new industrial shop was constructed where individuals with disabilities could participate in work experience opportunities and job skill development. The construction of this facility was funded by the Jackson County Board of Services, now known as eitas.

Partner:

- Jackson County Board of Services for the Developmentally Disabled (eitas)

Rehabilitation Institute

1947

1960

1970

1980

Cerebral Palsy Nursery School

1992

The Institute established its physiatry residency program with the University of Kansas Medical School in an effort to share the expertise of our staff and enhance the recruitment of Kansas City's top talent. Health Midwest identified the Rehabilitation Institute as a hub of expertise for medical rehabilitation.



Partner:

- University of Kansas Medical School

1999

A Capital Campaign was launched in 1996 to build the Children's Center Campus, a hub where more than 300 children could access a unique environment with the benefits of shared resources that fostered each child's development while contributing to the stability of the Union Hill neighborhood. Children's TLC's early intervention and preschool developmental programs received accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Young Children with Disabilities in the Kansas City School District and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education accreditations.



Partners:

- Block & Co. Inc.
- JE Dunn Construction
- Kansas City School District
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Union Hill Acquisition
- Hallmark

2000

The high-quality learning opportunities available at the preschool were recognized and accredited for the first time by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for meeting national standards of educational excellence.



Partner:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

2001

The Institute's leadership regrouped and forged a path forward to become a Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF), empowering the Rehabilitation Institute to operate as an independent organization.

As transformational advancements occurred for medical services, vocational services continued to grow across the region. The Institute opened a new employment services office in St. Joseph.



Partners:

- Baptist-Lutheran Medical Center
- Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF)
- Independence Regional Health Center
- Menorah Medical Center
- Research Medical Center

Rehabilitation Institute
of Kansas City

2015

Children's Therapeutic Learning Center and the Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City formally came together as one organization, Ability KC, with one mission to build brighter futures for children and adults with disabilities.

2019

Ability KC expanded CARF-accredited services to include eight new programs:

- Adult Amputation Specialty Services
- Pediatric Amputation Specialty Services
- Adult Brain Injury Specialty Services
- Pediatric Brain Injury Specialty Services
- Adult Spinal Cord Injury Specialty Services
- Pediatric Spinal Cord Injury Specialty Services
- Adult Stroke Injury Specialty Services
- Pediatric Stroke Injury Specialty Services

CARF's recognition of Ability KC's expertise in amputation, brain injury, spinal cord injury and stroke positioned the organization at the forefront of care internationally.



Partner:

- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)

2022

Ability KC celebrates its 75th anniversary, the thousands of lives changed, and the community impact of decades of service.

For 50 consecutive years, Ability KC receives CARF accreditation with continual innovation and expansion of services. This is the first year the therapy services available at the preschool received accreditation under the Pediatric Specialty Services.

Ability KC's therapeutic preschool services receives re-accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for the 10th straight year.

Ability KC's commitment to making Kansas City more diverse, equitable and inclusive leads to a partnership with the local Girl Scout Council. Curriculum is developed in collaboration with patient alumnus and Disability Influencer, Anna Sarol.



Partners:

- Girl Scouts of Northeast Kansas and Northwest Missouri
- Midwest Adaptive Sports
- Clay County Children's Services Fund
- Platte County Board of Services

2020

1990

2000

2010

Children's TLC

ABILITY KC®



“Preparing to go to college has been one of the hardest things that I have ever done. It’s a lot to go to college as an able-bodied individual, but when you’re disabled, there are so many factors that add to the stress and the complication of it. By receiving therapy at Ability KC, I gained an overall sense of confidence; I genuinely think that if I had not come here, I would never have the confidence or skills to go to a big 4-year university.”

Tatem

Former Ability
KC patient



See more of
Tatem’s story

Supporting high patient acuity

Ability KC invests in our team’s expertise to support individuals with complex injuries, illnesses, and conditions, specializing in brain injuries, stroke, spinal cord injuries, and amputations, across all ages. This is a critical investment, as over the past few years, Ability KC has seen a rise in patient complexity and acuity. Acuity is a measure of a patient’s severity of illness or conditions, including but not limited to, the stability of physiological and psychological parameters and the dependency needs of the patient and the patient’s family. As people leave the hospital, they have a **need for more intensive care, requiring skills and expertise that includes nursing, therapy, social work, and support services**. Higher acuity will continue to rise. Ability KC continues to plan and invest in our value-based model of care, culture, expertise, and services.

58% have **impulsivity changes** requiring supervision

43% need **assistance with toileting**

17% are **dependent** / require tube feeding

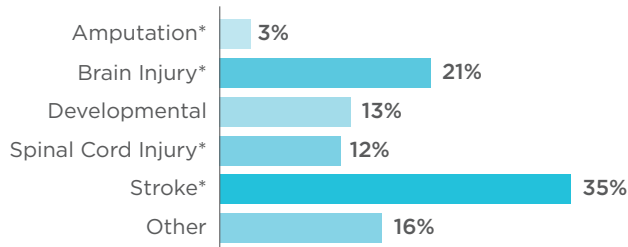
11% have **swallowing precautions**

6% require **constant observation**

75 years of serving hundreds of thousands with disabilities

OUTPATIENT MEDICAL REHABILITATION

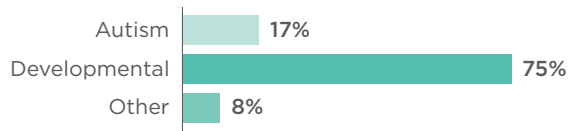
Pediatric, Adolescent and Adult



*CARF-accredited specialty programs

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT**

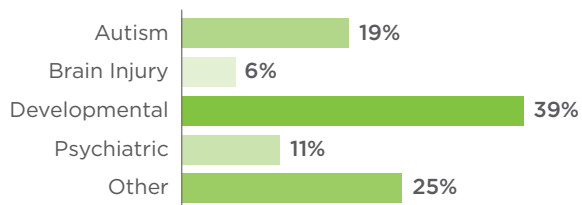
Mary Shaw Branton Therapeutic Preschool and Integrated Therapies



**Additional conditions to pediatric medical rehabilitation

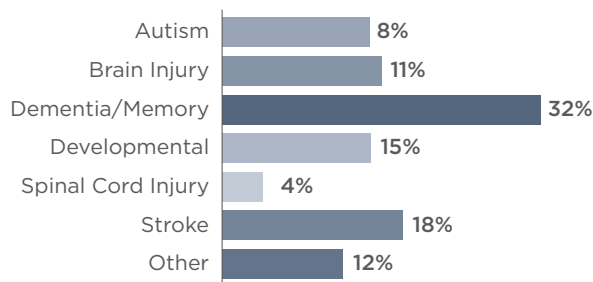
VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Employment Services and Ability KC Industries



COMMUNITY INDEPENDENCE

Assistive Technology, Adaptive Driving and Neuropsychology



Ability KC supports a **high percentage of underserved families** in our community, with more than 42% being from Jackson and Wyandotte counties.

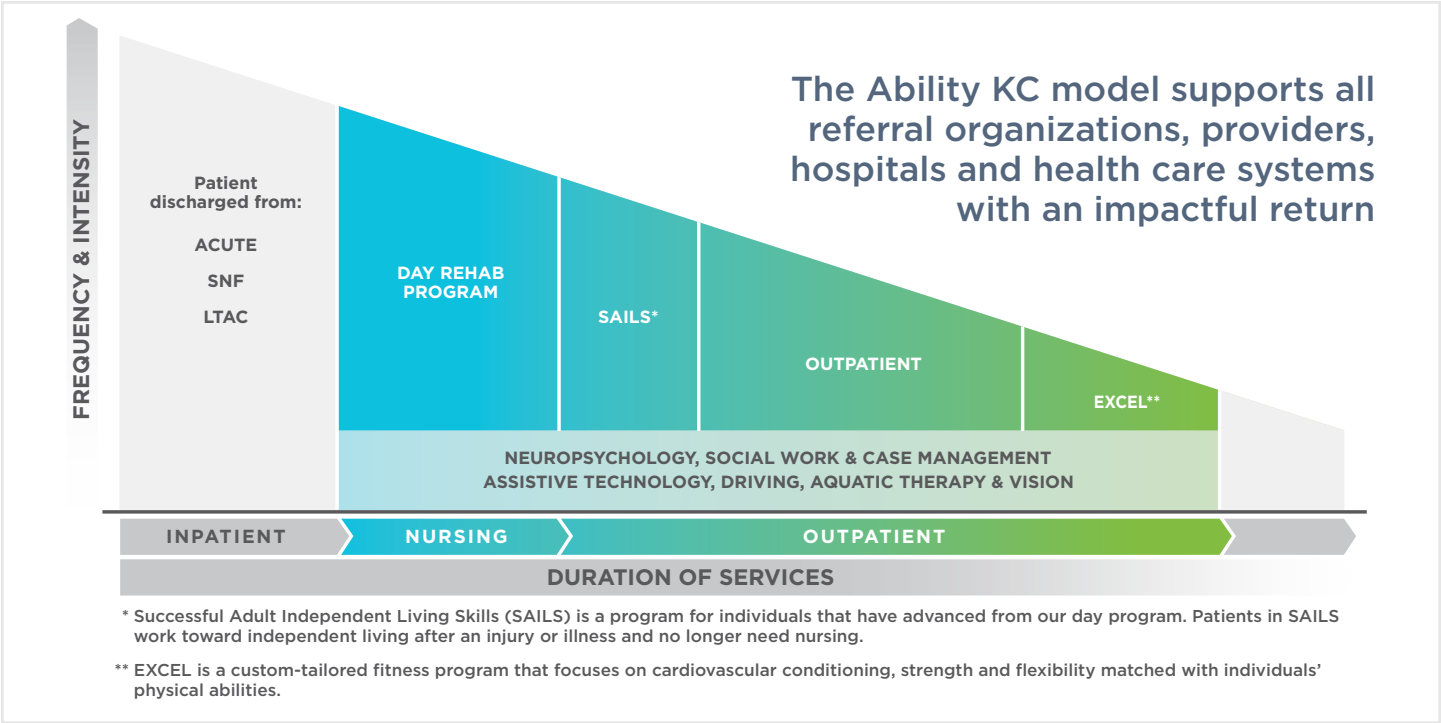
Ability KC has experienced an **increase in need from counties as far as western Kansas and central Missouri to southern Iowa and northern Oklahoma.**

If Ability KC didn't exist, individuals in our community would have to travel beyond Missouri and Kansas, working with different care teams, or they may not receive the services they need at all. It is often a misconception that this model of care and services is provided by others in the greater Kansas City area.

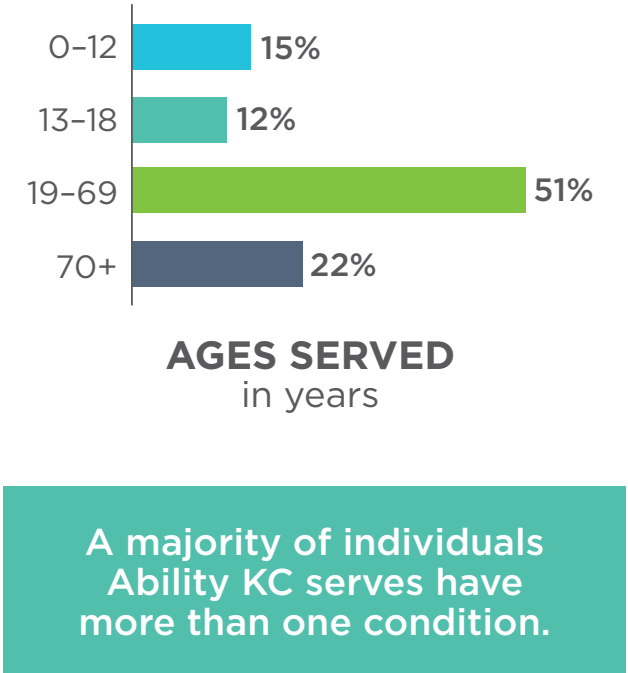
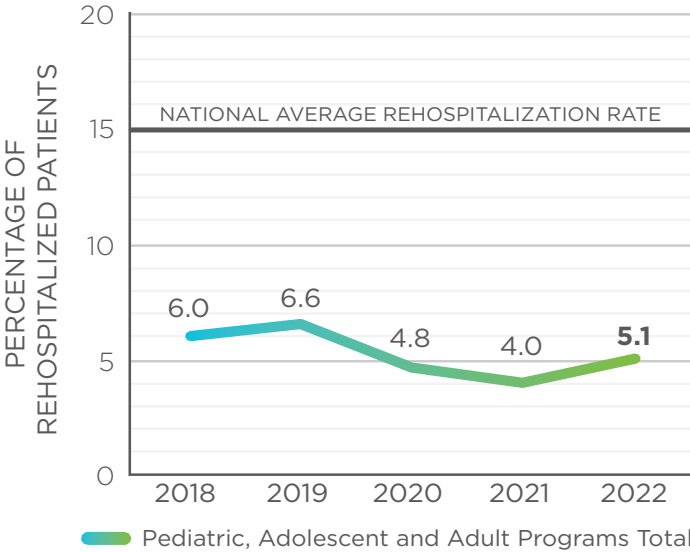
Our intensive and complex rehabilitation is individual-centered, designed to maximize care within one center yet extend services via technologies to homes and communities. We strive to advance our technologies and campus to match the level of quality of care being provided and ensure individuals are supported when they return to home and to their communities.

Impact thousands of lives by working together

Ability KC’s therapy model is a purposeful and comprehensive center-based design of necessary therapies supported with medical supervision, case management and social work, neuropsychology, and transition services across an individual’s life continuum. Through our partnership with CARF International, we are recognized as a value-based care leader and partner with them to showcase our model around the U.S.



Through our model, individuals experience **low rehospitalization rates**, well below the national standard of 15%.





See more of
Sharif's story

“Prior to coming to Ability KC, I really don’t know what the next step would have been for me after getting done with therapy and looking ahead to getting back into the workforce and other aspects of daily living. The therapists here seem to just have that vision of being able to guide you in that right way to push you to do things you may not have thought about with therapy. I have learned every day is a journey and to just keep going, put your best foot forward, and never give up.”

Sharif

Current Ability KC patient

Thank you to our generous donors

\$100,000+

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\$1,000-\$2,499

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*Deceased

Impact = mission + sustainability

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

In millions; years end December 31



LEADERSHIP

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ACCREDITATIONS



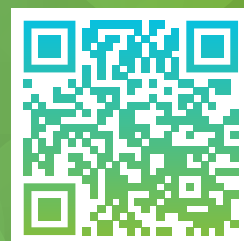
PARTNERS



Ability KC currently partners with **more than 300 community partners and providers.**

Get involved!

Join us to continue the positive impact in our community and in the lives of many, next year and beyond.



Donate | Volunteer | Sponsor an Event | Join Our Team