



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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# KVC Receives USDA Funding to Expand MyLink™ Program to 1,000 Foster Families

*Telehealth project is the only one of its kind aimed at children in foster care*

**Olathe, Kan. – February 2, 2015** – KVC Health Systems is expanding its MyLink™ telehealth and distance learning program to hundreds of foster families in Kansas and Nebraska thanks to two new grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine program. KVC’s MyLink program is a robust, HIPAA-compliant video conferencing program that gives children in foster care increased access to therapeutic and crisis intervention services, and also delivers state-required training to foster parents in the home. These benefits are especially important in the rural areas of Kansas, Nebraska, West Virginia and Kentucky where KVC works.

KVC MyLink is the only project of its kind in the child welfare sector; the program equips children in foster care with iPads so they can directly link to behavioral healthcare services such as therapy and ongoing education via video. This expansion will connect 850 foster families in the Midwest, which builds upon last year’s program launch to 160 foster families in West Virginia and Kentucky.

**When fully implemented, the KVC MyLink program will provide iPads to more than 1,000 foster families in four states, benefiting thousands of children in state custody who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or other family challenges.**

KVC Health Systems is a private, nonprofit child welfare and behavioral healthcare organization. It is the parent organization of subsidiaries in multiple states that provide foster care, adoption, in-home family therapy, substance abuse treatment and children’s psychiatric hospitals. This program will enhance the services provided to children and families by the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The new USDA RUS DLT grants total \$516,600 which will be combined with \$170,606 in KVC matching funds for a total program expansion of \$687,206. KVC Kansas will receive \$335,100 for their MyLink project to increase access for nearly 3,000 children in foster care via telemedicine annually and 550 foster homes via distance learning, all residing in KVC’s 30-county Kansas region. KVC Nebraska will receive \$181,500 for their MyLink project to increase access for more than 500 children in foster care to crisis intervention and prevention and access to distance learning for 300 foster homes across Nebraska’s 93 counties.

“This KVC MyLink expansion will not only change everyday life for thousands of children and families; it also has the potential to change the trajectory of some young people’s lives forever,” said B. Wayne Sims, President and CEO of KVC Health Systems. “Children who have experienced physical or sexual abuse or neglect and who live in rural, underserved regions need support. This USDA-funded expansion is so critical because it gives each child a direct, immediate link to his or her highly-trained, caring KVC

therapist. It might be that access in a moment of crisis that saves a life or, at the least, makes a life-long difference.”

He continues, “The technology will also provide foster parents with new training on how to handle family challenges. KVC Health Systems is proud of its innovative approach to foster care, and we see this partnership with the USDA as an important part of raising the bar in child welfare.”

***About KVC Health Systems, Inc.***

*KVC Health Systems, headquartered in the greater Kansas City area, is a private, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that enriches and enhances the lives of over 50,000 children and families each year by providing medical and behavioral healthcare, social services, and education. KVC’s diverse continuum of services includes foster care, adoption, in-home family therapy, behavioral healthcare, and children’s psychiatric hospitals. In its 45-year history, KVC has grown since from a single Kansas home for boys to a national organization serving tens of thousands of children in five states. Due to KVC’s leadership in the use of research-based practices to improve outcomes, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has endorsed KVC as a national best practice organization. Learn more at [www.kvc.org](http://www.kvc.org).*