



OJNI Bronze Award Recipient –

Dr. Helen R. Connors

Awarded February 2009

Helen R. Connors, RN, PhD, Dr PS (Hon), FAAN

**E. Jean M. Hill Endowed Professor and
Associate Dean, Integrated Technologies < KU School of
Nursing
Executive Director of the KU Center for Health Informatics**

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With her innovative vision and ability to marshal change, Dr. Helen R. Connors has forged a distinctive path in the nursing profession. Dr. Connors has strived to expand the use of advanced information technologies for education and practice, to establish policy for telecommunications and telehealth, and to promote the image of nursing nationally and internationally.

Dr. Connors is a recognized leader in educational innovations. Through her efforts, the School of Nursing has developed academic and business partnerships with such entities as the Kansas Health Institute, Cerner Corporation and HealthGate Corporation to support and expand the use of health information technologies.

Garnering grants totaling more than \$4 million, Dr. Connors was instrumental in establishing the Kansas Primary Care Nurse Practitioner Program and the Kansas Continuous Learning Project in collaboration with Fort Hays State, Wichita State, and Pittsburg State universities. Through these creative programs, Dr. Connors helps to bring education, networking, and support services to nurses in rural Kansas communities using interactive technologies. Now, nurses do not have to sacrifice family and career obligations to attend traditional schools to further their education.

An appointed member of the FCC Telecommunications and Health Care Advisory Committee, Dr. Connors' innovative efforts to bring the classroom to nurses and to increase the number of nurses in rural areas were included in Time magazine and CNN's spotlight on the "Heroes of Medicine." These multi-media productions won the 1998 American Academy of Nursing Media Award and The Pew Health Professions Commission Primary Care Journalism Award.

Her efforts in Health Information Technology (HIT) have led to her serving on a variety of state and national HIT/HIE committees. Currently, she is project director for the Health Information Technology Scholars program, a highly successful, HRSA funded faculty development program for integrated technologies in nursing education and practice. She Chairs the Kansas Health Information Security and Privacy Collaboration (HISPC), and is a Governor appointed member of the Kansas e- Health Advisory Council.

Dr. Connors received her BSN from Villanova University, MS (Nursing) from Russell Sage College and PhD (Education) from the University of Kansas. She is the recipient of many honors and awards including: the first E. Jean M. Hill Endowed Professorship; membership in the American Academy of Nursing; honorary Doctor of Public Service from Russell Sage College, the Virginal K. Saba, Nursing Informatics Leadership Award; and the Rutgers State University College of Nursing, Center for Professional Development, Award for Advancement of Computer Technology in Healthcare.

