



\$12 Million NIH Grant to Research Obesity, Fatty Liver Disease

The Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research will research obesity-related diseases and train junior researchers.

October 31, 2022 By Laura Schmidt

The University of Kansas Medical Center (KU) received a \$12 million five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to research [obesity](#) and obesity-related diseases, such as [fatty liver disease](#) and diabetes, at a new research center.

KU has produced extensive obesity-related research over the years. The NIH grant will fund a new medical center specifically dedicated to this research: the Kansas Center for Metabolism and Obesity Research (KC-MORE).

John P. Thyfault, PhD, a professor in both the Department of Cell Biology and Physiology and in the Division of Endocrinology, Metabolism and Genetics, is one of three principal investigators who will lead the NIH-supported research at KC-MORE.

“Obesity causes chronic health conditions,” Thyfault said in a [KU news release](#). “It causes early mortality, and rates of obesity are very high in Kansas. It’s a serious problem. And here at KU Medical Center, we have a number of researchers who specialize in various elements of obesity and related disease conditions.”

KC-MORE plans to continue research to better understand obesity and how it contributes to the development of a range of diseases, including fatty liver disease, which is caused by excess fat in the liver and is one of the most common [liver diseases](#) in the United States.

“Our No. 1 goal is to improve human health,” said Steven Weinman, MD, PhD, a professor in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology who specializes in fatty liver disease and is the director of the University of Kansas Liver Center. “And part of that will be addressing obesity in all of its manifestations with a robust group of investigators.”

The grant will also provide infrastructure for obesity research and training opportunities for promising young investigators.
