

Biography Kevin T. Kavanagh, MD, MS – Nov. 18, 2023

Dr. Kevin Kavanagh's academic career has spanned over 4 decades, he began as an Otolaryngologist and finished as a patient and research integrity advocate after his surgical career was cut short with debilitating arthritis. As an advocate he achieved national and to some extent international recognition. He has written 68 peer-reviewed articles, 56 of which he was the first author. He has also written book chapters and numerous peer-reviewed letters to the editor.

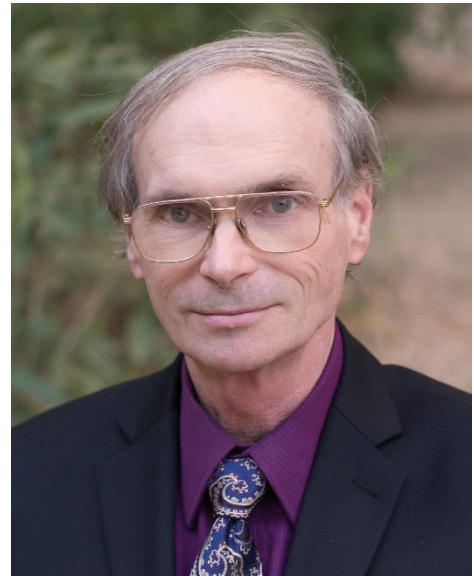
During his time at the University of Tennessee, Memphis Department of Otolaryngology he wrote two papers^{1,2} which were selected by *Otolaryngology, Journal of the American Medical Association* as among the most important works for 1980³ and 1992⁴ for being the best research articles in the field. He also published one of the first case reports on the treatment of laryngomalacia.⁵ However, his three most impactful papers

were, (1) Regarding computerized signal averaging to measure hearing loss, which was published in 1979 and the second (only by a few weeks) article to publish this technique and the first to describe the use of bone conduction and detection of non-organic hearing loss;⁶ (2) The use of image directed robotics for the performance of mastoid surgery in 1994;⁷ and (3) an article demonstrating the importance of social determinates of health, finding parental education and age were determinate factors in pediatric patient appointment compliance and concluding that the "importance of family centered case management in promoting the health care of children and casts doubt on the effectiveness of interventions which are solely centered on the patient or are designed to mitigate only one of these factors."⁸

During his time at the University of Tennessee he received the 1983 State Appreciation Award for Service to Iowa Lions for development of a statewide [otologic research and diagnostic program](#), and a Maternal and Child Health Grant for a tri-state pediatric speech and hearing program (MCJ-473808).

During the 1990s, Dr. Kavanagh entered into private practice where he became an avid sailor and honed his computer skills. On July 2001, with the University of Kentucky, he published one of the first AMA Category 1 Online Continuing Education programs, and the first in the field of Otolaryngology (cmeusa.org). In 2005, he received the United States Sailing Association Training Service and Support Award for his sailing website, www.sailingcourse.com. This website was listed by the USCG as a recommended boating safety site. Dr. Kavanagh served on the U.S. Sailing Training Committee and on the U.S. Sailing National Faculty from 2002 to 2010.

In 2010, Kevin Kavanagh retired from medical practice due to long-standing severe arthritis debilitation arthritis which was treated with multiple operations and the placement of Bone Morphogenic Protein in his neck which caused long-term symptoms. Because of this experience, along with his belief in the desperate need for improving medical care, he became



an avid patient safety and healthcare worker advocate and founded Health Watch USAsm in Aug of 2005. Through Health Watch USAsm a number of initiatives were undertaken.

- State reporting of infections with dangerous pathogens – Health Watch USAsm force behind the enactment of 902 KAR 2:020 regarding “reportable disease surveillance.”^{9,10}
- Medicaid should adopt the Rules of Medicare for non-payment of preventable patient harm.
- The anti-competitiveness of Certificate of Needs (CONs) resulting in higher prices and lower quality of services.¹¹
- Research Integrity regarding surveillance for MRSA^{12,13} and the questionable effectiveness of chlorohexidine bathing.^{14,15}
- Healthcare integration encouraged by an often-hidden facility fee charge.¹⁶
- Malpractice Reform.¹⁷
- The importance of nursing and nurse staffing.¹⁸
- The importance of patient input in the measurement and maintenance of patient safety.¹⁹

Dr. Kavanagh is an Associate Editor for the Journal of Patient Safety. He has served on the 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018 Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services’ (CMS) Hospital-Acquired Condition (HAC) Reduction Program Technical Expert Panel, along with the AHRQ Standing Working Group for Quality Indicators for 2016 to 2017. Currently, he serves on the CMS Hospital Harm Technical Expert Panel and was a member of the National Quality Forum’s Consensus Standards Approval Committee. He served on the AHRQ for Health Care Effectiveness and Outcomes Research (HEOR) Study Section from 2018 to 2022.

In 2019, Dr. Kavanagh warned about reduced data transparency in tracking pandemic pathogens²⁰ and in disparities in protecting socioeconomic disadvantaged populations during pandemics.²¹

In 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Dr. Kavanagh was at the forefront in community and national education along with policy formulation. During this time, he served as a news source and wrote over 150 articles and Op-eds in the lay press, including USA Today. He has had four peer-reviewed publications regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Watch USAsm has been one of the driving forces for clean indoor air and the use of N95 masks.^{22,23} But his major contribution being in the obtainment and interpretation of vaccine durability data before the Delta Surge and the warning of the dangers of this variant on June 7, 2021.²⁴ Using this data, Health Watch USAsm was one of the first to call need for a booster in a series of articles in Infection Control Today which had 100’s of thousands of page views.^{25,26,27,28} In addition, the organization questioned the initial advisement of receiving a booster every 8 months when the data indicated this time period should be 5 months. Health Watch USAsm was also one of the first to raise the concerns of vaccine Imprinting after data for the bivalent booster

was presented at the Sept. 1, 2022 CDC ACIP meeting.²⁹

Throughout the pandemic, Health Watch USAsm has been active in combating disinformation regarding vaccines and the pandemic. This was a major topic of the 2023 Webinar regarding Long COVID.³⁰

For his efforts in protecting patient and worker safety he was awarded the Massachusetts Nurses Association's *Advocate for Nursing Reward*, Oct. 2021.

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