



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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Statewide Competition Honors Health Care Marketing and Public Relations Efforts

Topeka, Kan. – Kansas hospitals and health systems were recently recognized for excellence in public relations and marketing efforts by the Kansas Association of Health Care Communicators through its Emerald Awards competition.

Emerald Awards are given annually to Kansas hospitals and health systems that excel in communications, special events, advertising, video, and other categories. Three marketing professionals from Kentucky, New York, and Missouri with extensive experience in health care marketing evaluated this year's entries for planning and research, implementation, cost-effectiveness, and results.

The 2026 Emerald Awards were presented at the Kansas Association of Health Care Communicators Spring Conference on April 24 in Salina, Kan.

In addition to the 20 Emerald Awards and 24 Certificates of Merit presented this year, judges selected one entry as Best of Show. This year's Best of Show winner was "Relocate to Rooks," by Samantha Pfannenstiel at Rooks County Health Center in Plainville, Kan. This campaign took a fresh approach to staff recruitment by encouraging people to see themselves living and working in a rural area. A powerful video anchored a coordinated digital strategy introducing Rooks County as a place where professional impact and quality of life go hand in hand.

The judges complimented the planning and research for the campaign as well as how Rooks County Health Center collaborated to bring the idea to life. "I love that you partnered with local organizations to

make this work. A strong hospital with great providers equals a strong local community and economy,” one judge said.

The following awards in their respective categories were presented.

Advertising – Digital/Social

Emerald Award

“*Medicare Rules of the Road*,” Samantha Pfannenstiel, Rooks County Health Center, Plainville, Kan.

Advertising – Total Campaign

Certificate of Merit

“*Heart Care Beyond Compare: Elevating Cardiac Care Awareness in Rural Western Kansas*,” Onspire Health Marketing, HaysMed, Hays, Kan.

“*AdventHealth Ottawa Family Birth Place*,” AdventHealth Marketing & Communications, AdventHealth Mid-America Region, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

Communications – Annual Report

Emerald Award

“*Together We’re Going Places*,” Marketing & Development Teams, NMC Health, Newton, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“*2025 Community Benefit Report*,” Courtney Schmelzle, Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Seneca, Kan.

Communications – Newsletter

Emerald Award

“*AdventHealth KC Newsletter*,” AdventHealth Marketing & Communications, AdventHealth Kansas City, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

“*Vital Signs – Internal Newsletter*,” Roger Stockman, Holton Community Hospital, Holton, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“*WNH EXCHANGE Newsletter*,” William Newton Hospital Marketing, William Newton Hospital, Winfield, Kan.

Communications – Other Publication

Emerald Award

“*MyHealthKC Magazine*,” AdventHealth Kansas City, AdventHealth Mid-America Region, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

“*HealthBeat Magazine Fitness Court Edition*,” Shannon Rogers & Megan Solomon, Smith County Memorial Hospital, Smith Center, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“*The Power of Local Care Insert*,” Courtney Schmelzle, Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Seneca, Kan.

Communications – Total Campaign

Emerald Award

“Relocate to Rooks,” Samantha Pfannenstiel, Rooks County Health Center, Plainville, Kan.

“Jackson County Sales Tax Campaign” Roger Stockman & CSC Committee, Holton Community Hospital, Holton, Kan.

“Better Care, Closer to Home: Launching Inpatient Dialysis,” Marketing Team, NMC Health, Newton, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“Philanthropy & Faith Campaign,” Marketing & Communications Team, Stormont Vail Health, Topeka, Kan.

“AdventHealth Lenexa City Center Grand Opening,” AdventHealth Marketing & Communications, AdventHealth Mid-America Region, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

“Caring for the Kingdom Town Halls,” AdventHealth Marketing & Communications, AdventHealth Mid-America Region, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

“Career Advancement Program Launch,” WNH Marketing & Cheryl Brock, William Newton Hospital, Winfield, Kan.

Digital Media Projects

Emerald Award

“Don’t Wait,” Sarah Teaff & Kristen Birket, Patterson Health Center, Anthony, Kan.

“Digital Glow Up: Making Social Matter,” Sara Lyon & NMC Health Staff, NMC Health, Newton, Kan.

Media Relations/Crisis Communication

Emerald Award

“AdventHealth Kansas City Blizzard Response,” AdventHealth Marketing & Communications, AdventHealth Mid-America Region, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

Small Budget, Big Results

Emerald Award

“Let’s Get Physical: Giving Immediate Care an Energy Boost,” Marketing Team, NMC Health, Newton, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“A Rural Hospital’s 1.6 Million View Social Media Strategy,” Roger Stockman, Holton Community Hospital, Holton, Kan.

“Trusted Hometown Care: How Combining Two Campaigns Delivered a 38.5% Increase in Births for CHCS,” Onspire Health Marketing, Community HealthCare System of Northeast Kansas, Onaga, Kan.

“Christmas for Canines,” Tracy Jones, Linda Booth & Judy Rhodes, Coffey Health System, Burlington, Kan.

Special Events

Emerald Award

“*Talk With A Doc,*” Samantha Pfannenstiel, Rooks County Health Center, Plainville, Kan.

“*Sip, Sparkle and Self Love,*” Kristen Birket, Patterson Health Center, Anthony, Kan.

“*Women’s Cancer Survivor Experience,*” Jessica Peak, The University of Kansas Health System, Mission, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“*Planning, Protection & Peace of Mind Educational Session,*” Courtney Schmelzle, Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Seneca, Kan.

“*Lunch & Learn Series,*” Tracy Jones, Coffey Health System, Burlington, Kan.

“*2025 Health Fair,*” Jennifer Ploeger, Sabetha Community Hospital, Sabetha, Kan.

“*AdventHealth Championship: Grayson Murray Legacy Award,*” AdventHealth Mid-America Region, Shawnee Mission, Kan.

“*2025 Red Friday Celebrations,*” CheyAnn Cohen, The University of Kansas Health System, Mission, Kan.

Video

Emerald Award

“*Every Second Counts,*” Kristen Birket, Patterson Health Center, Anthony, Kan.

“*The Fitness Court and Studio,*” Shannon Rogers, Smith County Memorial Hospital, Smith Center, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“*Matt’s Story,*” Samantha Pfannenstiel, Rooks County Health Center, Plainville, Kan.

“*The Amazing Providers of SCMH,*” Shannon Rogers & SCMH Providers, Smith County Memorial Hospital, Smith Center, Kan.

“*Take Five,*” Corporate Communications & Media Relations, The University of Kansas Health System, Kansas City, Kan.

Wildcard

Emerald Award

“*Paw Squad Calendar,*” Marketing & Communications Team, Stormont Vail Health, Topeka, Kan.

“*100 Days Celebration,*” Samantha Pfannenstiel, Rooks County Health Center, Plainville, Kan.

Certificate of Merit

“*It’s a Beaut Clark,*” Smith County Family Practice, Smith County Memorial Hospital, Smith Center, Kan.

“*Shell-ebtrate Health: Using AI to Humanize Healthcare,*” Kristen Birket, Patterson Health Center, Anthony, Kan.

“*Elevator Insights,*” Jennifer Ploeger, Sabetha Community Hospital, Sabetha, Kan.

“*Christmas for Canines,*” Tracy Jones, Linda Booth & Judy Rhodes, Coffey Health System, Burlington, Kan.

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