



MEDIA RELEASE

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Individuals Are the Heart of Health Care Kansas Hospital Association Awards

(October 1, 2026) – The Kansas Hospital Association recognizes hospital employees who have made a significant contribution to the betterment of their hospital through the Heart of Health Care Award. Hospitals across the state nominate individuals who routinely go above and beyond the call of duty.

For the past several months, KHA has been recognizing individuals nominated for the Heart of Health Care Award. This year's nominees serve their hospitals and communities in a variety of ways, across both clinical and non-clinical roles. Congratulations to the following nominees:

- Amy Allen, Sabetha Community Hospital, Sabetha
- Danica Bato, Community HealthCare System, Onaga
- Vic Blaufuss, Coffey Health System, Burlington
- Jon Borchard, Minneola Healthcare, Minneola
- Linsey Coster, Ascension Via Christi St. Joseph, Wichita
- Angela Davenport, AdventHealth South, Overland Park
- Lori Dennis, Smith County Memorial Hospital, Smith Center
- Wendel Ellis, DO, Greeley County Health Services, Tribune
- Callie Evans, NMC Health, Newton
- Crissa Foley, Patterson Health Center, Anthony
- Kari Holthaus, Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Seneca
- Jamey Huffman, Newman Regional Health, Emporia
- Cindy Judy, Girard Medical Center, Girard
- Sam Lane, Pawnee Valley Community Hospital, Larned
- Amy LeDuc, Mitchell County Hospital Health Systems, Beloit
- Paul Luce, The University of Kansas Health System, Paola
- Zahra Mahmoudjafari, The University of Kansas Cancer Center, Kansas City
- Jennifer Milner, MD, Wamego Health Center, Wamego
- Teresa Noland, AdventHealth Lenexa City Center, Lenexa
- Jacob Perryman, McPherson Center for Health, McPherson

- Chelsea Shupe, Holton Community Hospital, Holton
- Amanda Simon, Osborne County Memorial Hospital, Osborne
- Dixie Simpson, SCK Health, Arkansas City
- Amy Taylor, Coffeyville Regional Medical Center, Coffeyville
- Tammy Touslee, Decatur Health, Oberlin
- Caley VanLoenen, Graham County Hospital, Hill City
- Dianna White, Ascension Via Christi Hospitals, Wichita
- Beth Whitehead, Greenwood County Hospital, Eureka
- Paul Wilhelm, MD, Kiowa District Healthcare, Kiowa

On Friday, Sept. 11, 2026, all of the above nominees were recognized at the Awards Luncheon during the KHA Annual Convention in Overland Park, Kansas. The following six individuals received top honors.

Congratulations to our 2026 Heart of Health Care Winners.

- Jon Borchard, Physician Assistant, Minneola Healthcare, Minneola
- Lori Dennis, Patient Advocate, Smith County Memorial Hospital, Smith Center
- Wendel Ellis, DO, Chief of Medical Staff, Greeley County Health Services, Tribune
- Crissa Foley, Director of Emergency Services, Patterson Health Center, Anthony
- Jacob Perryman, APRN, McPherson Center for Health, McPherson
- Chelsea Shupe, Social Worker, Holton Community Hospital, Holton

The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization dedicated to being the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA's membership includes 249 organizations, of which 124 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA's vision is Optimal Health for Kansans and Kansas Hospitals.

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