



MEDIA RELEASE

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LES LACY TO RECEIVE ASSOCIATION'S HIGHEST HONOR

(August 7, 2026) – It is with great pleasure that the Kansas Hospital Association announces Leslie Lacy, RN, vice president of regional operations for the Great Plains Health Alliance, is the recipient of 2026 Charles S. Billings Award. Lacy will be awarded at the KHA Annual Convention and Trade Show on Sept. 10-11, in Overland Park.

The Charles S. Billings Award, named after the association's first president, was established in 1971 to recognize distinguished service and outstanding contributions to the field of health care in Kansas. The Kansas Hospital Association reserves this award for those who have shown their commitment, leadership and dedication to that noble pursuit. Lacy, the 46th recipient of this award, has exemplified these qualities throughout his devoted health care career of nearly five decades.

Lacy's service to health care began at an early age, helping in his father's dental practice. At age 18, he earned his EMT certification and began serving his community as a first responder. For nearly 50 years, he has served in a wide range of clinical and administrative roles, giving him a rare understanding of hospital operations at every level. Colleagues know him as a leader who is willing to teach, share knowledge and support others' growth. He consistently invests in people, strengthens organizations, and helps rural hospitals adapt and thrive in a changing health care environment.

Lacy has demonstrated leadership across local, state and regional health care initiatives for decades. His service includes the High Plains Rural Health Network, the State Network Council, the Kansas Advisory Council on Trauma, the Kan-Ed User Advisory Council and the Sunflower Foundation Board. Through his involvement serving on statewide boards, councils and advisory groups, he has brought thoughtful leadership, practical experience, and a strong voice for community hospitals. His service

includes the Kansas Health Education and Research Foundation (now Healthworks) Board, beginning in 2007, and was chairman in 2011. He also served on the Kansas Hospital Association Board from 2013 to 2017, during which time he served on several board committees. He was an at-large Kansas delegate on the American Hospital Association Regional Policy Board and has served on many other KHA councils, committees and technical advisory groups.

“His career reflects not only his dedication to strengthening health care for Kansans, but also a deep, steady commitment to service, excellence and mentorship,” said Chad Austin, KHA president and CEO. “Les brings integrity, humility, practical wisdom and a genuine dedication to doing what is best for patients and communities.”

Lacy has a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Colorado State University, CO, and an Associate Degree in Nursing from Garden City Community College.

The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization dedicated to being the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 246 member facilities, 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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