



MEDIA RELEASE

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KHA Distinguished Health Care Advocate Secretary Janet Stanek

(Sept. 27, 2026) The Kansas Hospital Association Distinguished Health Care Advocate Award honors individuals, organizations or groups who provide an exemplary contribution to the health and well-being of the people of Kansas through their leadership in public, political or policy areas. This award provides KHA members with the opportunity to recognize those who work on KHA's behalf from outside our ranks. At any level of the public spectrum, these award recipients are unique, and their outstanding commitment to the health of Kansas is extraordinary, including this year's honoree Janet Stanek, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Sec. Stanek's commitment to improving health and health care access is evident in her ongoing engagement at community, state and national levels. She regularly visits hospitals, clinics and public health departments to hear firsthand the challenges facing Kansas communities. Through her leadership, KDHE has become a strong voice for sustainable health care, health equity and improved population health outcomes. At the state level, she works with legislators, health systems, and public health partners to advance policies that strengthen the health workforce, improve behavioral health access and support hospital sustainability. Her consistent presence, advocacy and responsiveness demonstrate a deep and enduring commitment to the health of all Kansans. This includes collaborating with KHA to obtain the approval to maximize the hospital provider assessment program, which will benefit Kansas Medicaid providers who care for the most vulnerable patients.

Sec. Stanek's stewardship of the Rural Health Transformation Program has positioned Kansas as a national leader in rethinking rural health delivery. She has worked closely with legislators, hospitals

and federal partners to advance policies that stabilize rural facilities, expand access to primary and preventive care, and modernize reimbursement structures. This leadership reflects her long-term dedication to ensuring Kansans have access to high quality, affordable health care close to home. Sec. Stanek regularly collaborates with national organizations, including the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration, to bring innovative models and federal resources to Kansas. Her leadership has fostered trust across sectors, enabling Kansas to pilot innovative care models and secure federal support. Her partnership style is grounded in listening, transparency, and a genuine respect for local expertise, making her a highly effective bridge between state policy and community implementation.

Sec. Stanek led the KDHE through the successful renewal of the KanCare program (the State of Kansas' Medicaid managed care program), under which Kansas contracted with three managed care organizations, to coordinate health care for nearly all beneficiaries. This summer, she played an instrument role in the multi-state partnership for the FIFA World Cup, coordinating Kansas' support for these regional efforts. Her ability to navigate complex policy landscapes while maintaining a clear focus on community needs demonstrates both breadth and depth. She consistently advances comprehensive, sustainable solutions that address immediate challenges while building long term capacity for healthier Kansas communities.

Sec. Stanek's work measurably improves health care access, quality and affordability across Kansas. She has advanced statewide initiatives to strengthen the health workforce, integrate behavioral health, modernize public health infrastructure and expand telehealth access. Her leadership spans Medicaid policy, emergency preparedness, maternal and child health and chronic disease prevention. Her impact is both immediate and enduring.

The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be 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.