Protecting the Foundation of Health Care in Kansas
1 of 3 Kansans Live in Rural Areas

Rural areas in Kansas greatly contribute to the livelihood of our state. The majority of the state’s land mass is rural, and most counties are classified as rural.

Kansas is home to more than 61,000 farms and ranches, placing Kansas sixth in the nation in total value of agricultural products sold. Rural Kansas produces more wheat than any other state in the nation, and only two other states top Kansas in cattle.

The well-being of Kansas rural communities depends on the continued availability of good-paying jobs, access to critical services such as education, communications and especially health care.

98 of 105 Kansas Counties Are Rural

Kansas rural hospitals serve more than 900,000 Kansans. They provide care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. They assure that Kansans receive the right care, at the right place, at the right time. They not only care for the health of their communities, but also contribute to the economic fiber of those communities.

102 Kansas Community Hospitals Are Rural

One hundred and two Kansas community hospitals are designated as rural by the United States Census Bureau. Those hospitals treat more than 85,000 patients annually and receive over 7 million clinic and outpatient service visits in their communities as well.

These hospitals provide their communities with a remarkable array of quality health care services, including emergency, primary, chronic and long-term care, as well as home health care, hospice care and assisted living. Their relationships with referral and urban hospitals, as well as physician specialists assure access to higher levels of care when those are needed.
Impacting 177,500 Kansas Jobs in Health Care and Beyond

Hospitals and health systems are among the state’s largest employers and a vital part of the Kansas economy. Annually, Kansas hospitals employ approximately 93,048 people or 4.7 percent of all jobholders in the state. Kansas hospitals support the creation of an additional 84,413 jobs in other businesses and industries. Kansas hospitals have a total employment impact of approximately 177,500 jobs.

The health care sector is the fourth largest aggregate employer in the state.

$1 Generates $1.59 to the State Economy

Kansas hospitals annually generate approximately $6.7 billion in direct, total income (employees’ salaries). For every $1 of income generated by hospitals, another $0.59 is generated in other businesses and industries in the state’s economy. Thus, hospitals have an estimated total impact on income throughout all business and industry of nearly $10.7 billion. The health care sector (which includes hospitals) is the fifth largest producer of total income and total sales in the state.

Rural Kansas hospitals provide direct benefits to a community beyond their economic contribution. These benefits are part of the hospital mission but also a legal obligation. Many reporting requirements exist, including the Internal Revenue Service 990 Schedule H. Many health care services are provided at no cost to the community or its residents. Such services include emergency care, regardless of a person’s ability to pay, health education and information about managing health conditions.
420,000 Emergency Room Visits in Kansas’ Rural Hospitals

Quality of life issues, including health care access, are important factors for employers. The presence of a viable hospital is an influential factor in a business’ decision to locate or stay in a given area. Providing high quality health care is a priority to hospitals.

11,000 Babies Born Annually in Kansas’ Rural Hospitals

Rural hospitals provide essential frontline health care services and play a pivotal role in their communities. Day and night, every day, year after year, our hospitals are prepared to care throughout every storm and disaster, saving lives and treating the sick and wounded. Hospitals also are the first place the community turns to when disasters strike. People with access to care are healthier. Rural hospitals help to maintain a healthy, productive community. In a rural hospital, the patient is a neighbor or friend that health care providers know. If patients have to travel long distances, they are less likely to seek preventative services. This often leads to delayed care, which can lead to more serious, long-term conditions and more expensive interventions later.

Challenges Facing Rural Hospitals

Recent national numbers show that 73 percent of Kansas’ rural hospitals are operating at a loss. Additionally, many have seen an increase in bad debt and charity care and an increase in costly emergency department care. At the same time, all hospitals – rural included – have seen major cuts in payments. Kansas has chosen not to expand Medicaid, leading to a growing number of Kansans who are uninsured and unable to access subsidies for health insurance through the insurance exchange.

Rural hospitals are a tremendous asset to Kansas, to the communities they support, to the Kansans they employ and to the individual patients they serve.

Protect Health Care in Rural Communities.