

2025 KANSAS POLICY AGENDA

REACH
healthcare foundation®

ABOUT REACH

The REACH Healthcare Foundation is a charitable foundation dedicated to improving health coverage and access to quality, affordable healthcare for uninsured and medically underserved people. The foundation focuses its support in a six-county service area that encompasses Allen, Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas, and Cass, Jackson and Lafayette counties in Missouri.



REACH BY THE NUMBERS

6

county service area

\$150

million in assets

2,300+

grants awarded since 2005

\$88

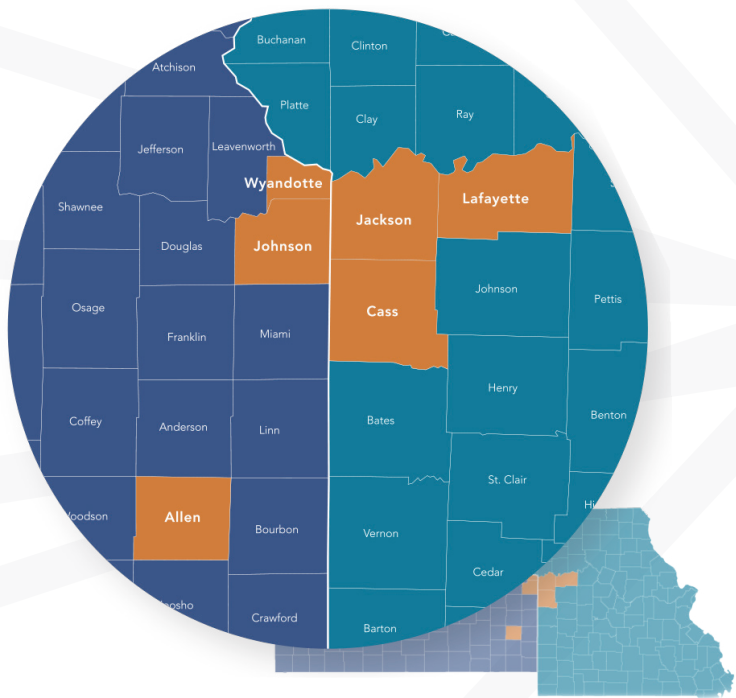
million in total grants

17

board members representing our service area

7

staff members



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BRIDGE THE COVERAGE DIVIDE

The REACH Healthcare Foundation promotes health coverage for all, regardless of insurance or socioeconomic status. We support expanding KanCare to help cover 150,000 Kansans who can't afford health insurance. We oppose new eligibility restrictions and requirements for existing public benefit programs, as well as any efforts to restrict voter rights or discourage voter participation.

Most people in the coverage gap in Kansas are hardworking men and women who make too much to qualify for KanCare, the state's Medicaid program. Kansas has extremely low income eligibility requirements compared to other states. These same individuals often make too little to qualify for premium assistance for private insurance on *healthcare.gov*, placing them in the "coverage gap". They are stuck with few or no options for affordable health coverage.

The state's economy would benefit if Kansas expanded its Medicaid eligibility. Not expanding Medicaid increases the rate of personal bankruptcies and medical debt burden on families, impedes employee health and productivity, stifles entrepreneurialism, and hinders current and future healthcare workforce recruitment efforts in the state, particularly in rural and urban areas.

The states surrounding Kansas are at a competitive advantage. Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado and Missouri—and all but 10 states across the country—have expanded their Medicaid eligibility to provide this affordable care option to their residents and workforce, making them more attractive. Expansion has allowed them to improve access to preventative care and mental health services, reduce the uncompensated care drain on hospitals and providers, and lessen the local property tax burden on communities.

Kansans have paid federal taxes that have been used to expand Medicaid in other states. Kansas has declined billions of dollars that could have been used for important initiatives to improve health and the economy. In no other area of government has the state declined this level of federal funding.

Kansans have repeatedly expressed their readiness for KanCare expansion. Numerous polls show consumers, providers and voters support expanding coverage to help workers and families.

Further eligibility restrictions and requirements to public benefit programs may sound good in theory but are counterproductive. State-administered programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and KanCare (Medicaid) offer important services for thousands of Kansans facing financial hardship. Additional restrictions and requirements do not achieve their desired effect; rather, they negatively impact public health and create additional administrative costs for the state.

Voter engagement is an important contributor to individual and community health. Voting is a fundamental tenet of a healthy democracy and should be accessible to all Kansans. REACH supports measures that make voter registration easier and encourage voting, including expanded access to early and absentee voting, ballot drop boxes, adoption of automatic voter registration, and Election Day registration.



STRENGTHEN THE SAFETY NET



The REACH Healthcare Foundation supports the expansion of healthcare services and providers who treat Medicaid beneficiaries and the underserved. This requires an effective and adequately funded public health and safety net healthcare system, particularly for people with fewer financial resources or who face access challenges due to geography or other social determinants of health.

Public health departments, community health centers, and community behavioral health centers provide important services like prevention and primary and specialty healthcare.

They are the first point of entry to the healthcare system for many Kansans, and the first line of defense for communities experiencing a public health emergency.

Funding of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's) and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC's) should be protected and increased—particularly given Kansas's notably low income requirements for Medicaid eligibility relative to other states—to substantially improve those systems' financial stability, ability to compete for providers, and capacity to deliver critical services.





CLOSE THE HEALTH EQUITY GAP



The REACH Healthcare Foundation believes that accessible, affordable healthcare is a human right for everyone, and that healthy people make for a healthier state. We support public policies that protect access to comprehensive health services for everyone. We support policies that value the cultural, geographic, racial, and ethnic diversity that make Kansas a special place to live, and those that foster a sense of welcoming and belonging for current and new residents alike. We oppose policies intended to limit access to reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare, and those that undermine efforts designed to attract a more diverse and inclusive citizenry, business community and workforce.

Increased investment in education, screenings, vaccinations, and access to public health services is needed to reduce significant health disparities that exist among rural, disabled, Black, and Hispanic Kansans compared to their White, non-disabled and more urban counterparts.

Whether by choice or necessity, it is crucial that any individual faced with critical decisions about their health and well-being has access to the care they need without interference or delay. Abortion rights, reproductive health, and gender-affirming care are no exception. Kansans overwhelmingly support the ability of people to make personal health decisions without fear of reprisal and government intrusion.

Health data collection and monitoring needs to be improved in Kansas and should include race and ethnicity. Disaggregated data can identify health disparities and inform effective interventions to address pressing issues like Black maternal health, birth outcomes, suicide rates in rural communities, and childhood immunization rates.

Legislation that undermines efforts to attract a more diverse and inclusive citizenry harms our people and economy. Industries, skilled talent, and consumers that perceive Kansas as unwelcoming are less likely to do business here, putting the state and its people at greater economic risk. This limits opportunities for workers seeking good-paying jobs with benefits including employer-sponsored health insurance.

People immigrating to Kansas account for nearly all recent population growth in the state. More than 7% of Kansas's population are immigrants, yet they comprise more than 9% of the state's labor market. Foreign-born people who've chosen to relocate to Kansas are important contributors to the state's cultural and economic fabric and are critical to the skilled workforce in growth industries like food processing, advanced manufacturing, construction, agriculture, animal health, bioscience, aerospace and defense, and corporate and professional services.