

2025 MISSOURI 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 Cass, Jackson and Lafayette counties in Missouri, and Allen, Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas.



REACH BY THE NUMBERS

6

county service area

\$150

million in assets

2,300+

grants awarded since 2005

\$88

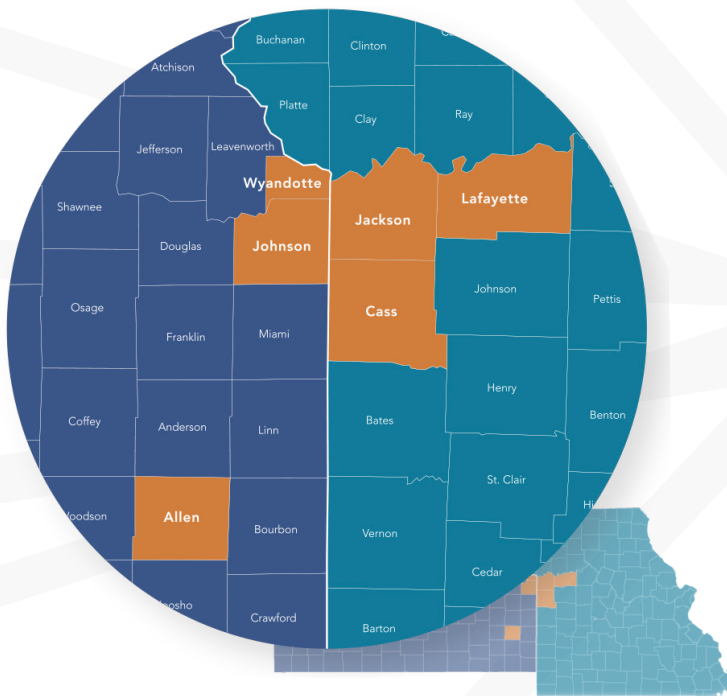
million in total grants

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 policies that help Missourians obtain and best utilize their health coverage, including MO HealthNet, the state's Medicaid managed care program. We support policies that streamline public benefit eligibility, application and renewal processes. 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.

MO Healthnet is an important source of health insurance coverage and care for more than 1.4 million Missourians. Following the passage of Missouri Amendment 2 in 2020 and the Affordable Care Act in 2012, Missouri's uninsured rate dropped from 13% to 7.5%. Yet the state's concerning record of delays in processing MO Healthnet applications and eligibility determinations persists. Inefficiencies and chronic understaffing at the state level result in delayed medical care and prescription access for many Missourians already facing financial hardship, including life-saving prenatal care and insulin.

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 MO HealthNet (Medicaid) offer important services for thousands of Missourians 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 Missourians. 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 few financial resources or who face access challenges due to geography or other social determinants of health.

Legislation passed in 2024 to prevent drug manufacturers from limiting where they will deliver drugs purchased under the federal 340B Drug Pricing Program provides important protections for healthcare providers serving people in rural and high-poverty areas. Certain hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's), Ryan White HIV/AIDS Programs (RWHAP's) and other health and human service providers participate in the 340B program. This legislation should be upheld to enable patients to access life-saving prescriptions closer to home.

Missouri is behind in its payments to local healthcare systems, clinics and providers for services already provided. Some providers are owed several million dollars in delayed reimbursements for services rendered to MO Healthnet-covered patients, placing the state's healthcare infrastructure at financial risk. Adequate state funding is essential to prevent the disruption and availability of critical healthcare services, particularly in rural areas.

Local public health agencies, community health centers, and community behavioral and mental health organizations provide important services like prevention, and primary and specialty healthcare. They are the first point of entry to the healthcare system for many Missourians, and the first line of defense for communities experiencing a public health emergency. Funding of Local Public Health Agencies (LPHA's), Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's) and Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC's) should be protected and increased to substantially improve those systems' financial stability, ability to compete for providers, and capacity to deliver 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, those that value the cultural, geographic, racial, and ethnic diversity that currently exists in Missouri, 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 services, and those designed to undermine efforts 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 Missourians 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 exceptions. Missourians overwhelmingly support the ability of people to make personal health decisions without fear of reprisal and government intrusion.

Robust health data collection and monitoring efforts should be implemented in Missouri and drive all health policy decisions.

The *2024 Missouri State Health Assessment*, informed by thousands of Missourians, is a useful guide and overview for policymakers. Disaggregated data by race and ethnicity, geography and other factors can help identify and improve significant health disparities that exist in Missouri, such as 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 Missouri 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 Missouri contribute to the state's economy.

About 4% of Missouri's population are immigrants, and they comprise 5% of the state's labor market. Foreign-born people who've chosen to relocate to Missouri are important contributors to the state's cultural and economic fabric and are critical to the skilled workforce in growth industries like advanced manufacturing, construction, agriculture, animal health, bioscience, food processing, aerospace and defense, and corporate and professional services.