

2026 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, as well as the City of Kansas City, Missouri.



REACH BY THE NUMBERS

6

county service area

\$161

million in assets

2400+

grants awarded since 2005

\$92

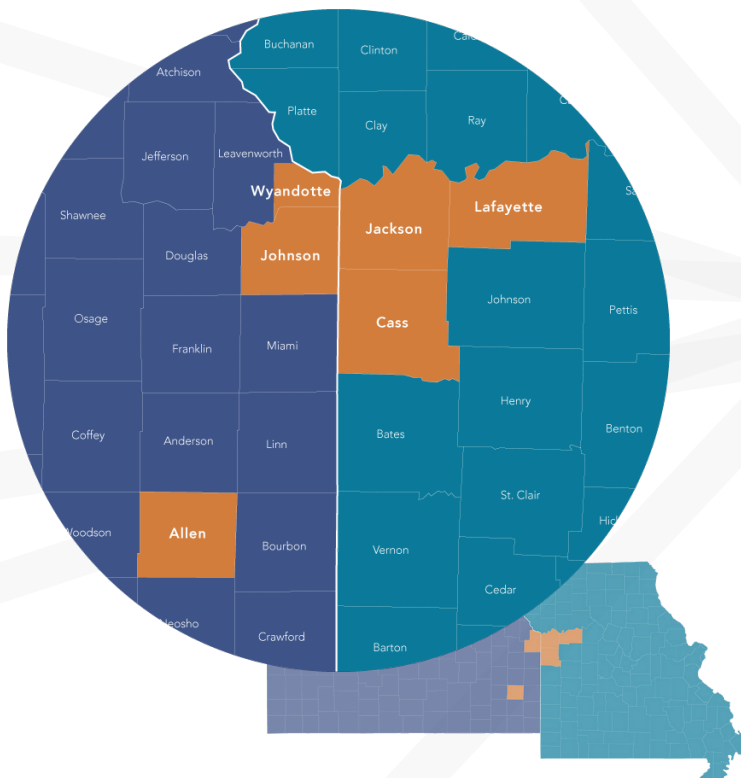
million in total grants

17

board members representing our service area

8

staff members



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STRENGTHEN THE SAFETY NET

The protection and expansion of healthcare services and providers who treat Medicaid beneficiaries and the underserved is critical considering recent federal funding cuts to the health and human services safety net. This requires an effective and adequately funded public health and community-based healthcare system, particularly for people with fewer financial resources or who face access challenges due to geography, federal funding cuts and work requirements, or other social determinants of health.

Local public health agencies, community health centers, and community-based behavioral health centers provide important services like prevention, 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. Adequate public health funding is critical to address a healthy workforce, respond to public health emergencies, and prevent communicable diseases through vaccine access.

Funding for critical health care infrastructure in primary, behavioral, and mental health care should be protected and increased. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's) and Certified Community-Based Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC's) need stable and increased funding to substantially improve those systems' financial stability, ability to compete for providers, and capacity to deliver critical services. Additionally, the state should meet the increased funding request for the 988-suicide prevention hotline to meet increased demand for this life-saving service.



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. REACH opposes new eligibility restrictions and requirements for existing public benefit programs, as well as any efforts to restrict voter rights or discourage voter participation. The foundation also supports sound fiscal policy that balances income, property, and sales taxes to provide efficient and effective public services.

Kansans falling into the coverage gap need to access high-quality and affordable health care, with the best option being expanding eligibility to KanCare, the state's Medicaid program. Kansas has extremely low income eligibility requirements to access Medicaid relative to other states. Many Kansans also make too little to qualify for premium assistance for the healthcare marketplace (Healthcare.gov) and fall into the "coverage gap". The state's economy would benefit from expanded Medicaid and put Kansas in a better position to compete with neighboring states that have all expanded the program. Given overwhelming public support – and the fact that Kansans continue to pay federal taxes that support expansion in other states – expanding KanCare should remain a top priority of policymakers.

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) support Kansans at different points in their lives—whether they are raising children, navigating job changes, caring for loved ones, or managing health needs. Restrictions passed under HR 1 are unlikely to improve outcomes and instead create barriers to care, weaken public health, and increase administrative costs for the state. The Kansas Legislature should avoid further cuts and protect these programs to keep residents healthy and the economy strong.

Voter engagement is an important contributor to individual and community health. Voting access and fair representation are fundamental tenets of a healthy democracy and should be accessible to all Kansans as they directly impact health outcomes. REACH supports measures that make it easier to be civically engaged, and we oppose measures that intentionally reduce representation of people and communities seeking to improve their health and quality of life.



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 workforce, economy and state. REACH supports public policies that protect access to comprehensive health services for all Kansans and that recognize the cultural, geographic, racial, and ethnic diversity that makes Kansas a vibrant place to live. We support policies that foster welcoming and belonging for current residents and newcomers, and that prioritize community-informed investment of Rural Health Transformation dollars across the state. 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.

Implementation and allocation of Rural Health Transformation (RHT) funding should be closely monitored to ensure those dollars meet the greatest needs of rural Kansans to improve quality and access to health care. Rural Kansans face challenges in getting the health care they need, often due to a lack of services near their homes. Through the federal RHT grant awards to states, Kansas will receive nearly \$222 million in 2026. It is essential that the administration, policymakers, stakeholders, and those in affected communities work together to ensure that funds are distributed meaningfully and equitably to advance the five initiatives in the RHT application.

Decisions about health care, including resource allocation at the system level, and medical decisions at the individual level, need to be informed and guided by existing science and evidence. Disaggregating public health data by characteristics like race, ethnicity, and geography is a best practice to guide interventions that improve health outcomes among underserved groups, as well as stewarding investments for maximum impact. We also support immunization and vaccine recommendations that are grounded in credible, evidence-based science, consistent with guidance from the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians.

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.

Our region is stronger and more economically vibrant when it creates a welcoming and inclusive environment for all people.

With Kansas set to be on the global stage for the 2026 World Cup, we want to ensure a safe and welcoming environment is at the center of our decision-making. Regardless of background or place of birth, creating communities where people feel welcomed supports economic resilience and shared prosperity. Immigrants make up more than 7% of Kansas's population and nearly one in ten workers statewide, contributing to local economies, creating good-paying jobs with benefits, such as employer-sponsored health insurance, and enriching the cultural fabric of our communities. We oppose policies that limit opportunities, target people based on race or ethnicity, or which keep people from achieving their American dream here in Kansas.



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