



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Independent hospitals launch Kansas-based shared services organization to help transform Kansas rural healthcare

(September 8, 2026) – Five independent Kansas hospitals today announced a new collaboration called Astra Health to meet the growing healthcare needs of rural communities.

Astra Health is a partnership between [Amberwell Health](#), [LMH Health](#), [Salina Regional Health Center](#), [Newman Regional Health](#) and [The University of Kansas Health System](#). Together, the hospitals serve more than 500,000 patients per year, touching nearly every county in Kansas.

Astra Health's goal is to improve clinical outcomes, strengthen access to care, and deliver more affordable healthcare options for Kansans. Through a collaborative model, member independent hospitals will gain the scale and shared capabilities of large health systems while keeping their own identities and independence. The combination of a larger network with the independence each hospital values is what positions Astra Health to change the dynamic for rural healthcare in Kansas and keep high-quality care close to home, helping the communities these hospitals serve stay strong.

Initially, Astra Health's participating hospitals will exchange information and resources to create shared quality metrics, enhanced tools to support care and ultimately decrease costs for patients and employers. This will drive a cooperative effort to identify and define opportunities for enhanced quality and patient experience. Astra Health recently received a Regional Partnership award as part of the Kansas Rural Health Transformation Plan to develop shared infrastructure and performance metric reporting across the founding members.

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Representatives from Astra Health agree rural communities need good health in order to thrive and grow. Healthcare affordability and access continue to be significant challenges for individuals and communities. As the healthcare landscape continues to change, models like Astra Health will help meet this need and change the dynamic, while continuing to offer choice and flexibility. As Astra Health progresses in its efforts to increase the value of care for patients, participating health systems will also look to develop solutions that help employers' rising healthcare costs.

Astra Health also will complement and enhance the larger Kansas Clinical Improvement Collaborative (KCIC) network and its participants with management services and investments. Founded in 2016 as part of The University of Kansas Health System Care Collaborative, KCIC is a well-established and respected broad network throughout Kansas that now includes 49 hospitals and 2 independent physician practices across 50 counties in Kansas. The network of independent rural Kansas hospitals continues to focus on high-quality, efficient care delivery tailored to unique Kansas geographic and market dynamics.

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