



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29
MANER CONFERENCE CENTER
TOPEKA, KANSAS

2026 KANSAS HEALTH IMPACT CONFERENCE

The Kansas Health Impact Conference is a comprehensive event dedicated to encouraging and learning across disciplines, sectors, and communities, because we know that partners working together have the power to bridge gaps in health and well-being. This conference aims to bring together healthcare professionals, payers, state collaborators, and community organizations to explore strategies and solutions for improving health outcomes in underserved communities.

KEY DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- Use of data to better understand and prioritize community health needs
- Identifying and connecting with community and regional resources that support health and wellness
- Building partnerships across organizations and communities to address shared health challenges
- Developing practical action steps that link data, resources, and partnerships to improve health outcomes

Visit the conference webpage to register and see more information about our breakout sessions.



8:00 AM **Registration and Continental Breakfast**

8:30 AM **Welcome and Introductions**

Sarah Irsik-Good, MHA, President & CEO, KFMC Health Improvement Partners

8:45 AM **Opening Keynote**

***Meeting People Where They Are:
Building Trust to Improve Community Health and Safety***

Eric Kirsch, Sheriff, Wabaunsee County, Kansas

Sheriff Eric Kirsch shares how a people-centered, trust-based approach to public safety can drive meaningful change in rural communities. Drawing from real-world law enforcement experience, he highlights the role of empathy, collaboration, and consistency in improving connections between public systems and the individuals they serve. Attendees will gain practical strategies to strengthen partnerships, enhance community responsiveness, and advance health equity.

9:45 AM **Break & Networking**

10:15 AM **Breakout Sessions**

Reimagining Health Delivery with AI

James Joseph, Jr., MD, FAAOS, Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine

As healthcare systems face growing workforce shortages and rising demands, this session highlights how prescribed AI tools can support patients beyond traditional settings, shaping the future of care delivery while navigating regulatory and clinical considerations.

Building the Health Information Infrastructure that Rural Patients and Providers Actually Need

Kemper Tell, MS, MA, CEO, Lewis and Clark Information Exchange

Emily Brown, Senior Project Manager, Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment

Learn how stronger health information infrastructure can improve care coordination in rural communities, with practical strategies for connecting providers and closing critical data gaps.

Healthcare Happens Between Visits

Rachael Rivero, MSN, APRN, AGACNP-BC, Founder & CEO, Kansas Care Connect

This session explores gaps in care that occur outside the exam room and shares practical strategies to improve coordination, communication, and patient support between visits. Attendees will gain actionable ideas to strengthen continuity of care and better support individuals with complex health needs.

11:15 AM **Break & Networking**

11:30 AM **Lunch & Health Equity Innovation Award**

12:30 PM **Data Walk**

Co-Creating Community Storytelling:

Using Data Walks to Bridge Gaps and Spark Community Action

Samiyah Para-Cremer Moore, Senior Analyst & Portfolio Strategist, Kansas Health Institute

Yazmin Wood, CEO, Legacy Regional Community Foundation

Sarah Johnson, Director of Marketing, Strategy, and Communications, William Newton Hospital

Erika Debrick Kelly, CEO, Hunger Free Kansas

Brett Martin, Vice President Community Impact, United Way of Kaw Valley

Explore hunger through an interactive Data Walk, where storytelling and conversation bring data to life. Engage with data, discuss solutions, and gain strategies to strengthen partnerships and drive lasting, equitable impact.

2:00 PM **Visit Exhibitor Booths & Snacks**

2:30 PM **Full Group Session**

No Agenda, Just Coffee

Candice Sauers, Deputy Director, Saline County Health Department

This session explores a trust-building model designed to reconnect rural communities with local government through authentic, relationship-centered engagement. By prioritizing human connection over institutional roles, the approach demonstrates how simple, everyday interactions can rebuild credibility and foster collaboration.

3:30 PM **Break & Networking**

3:45 PM **Closing Session & Exhibitor Door Prizes**



Eric Kirsch

Sheriff Eric Kirsch serves as the elected Sheriff of Wabaunsee County, Kansas. A graduate of The Citadel, he served as a United States Marine Corps Counterintelligence/Human Intelligence Officer before becoming a Special Agent with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), working major cases and leading clandestine strategic intelligence programs overseas. His career has included military service, federal law enforcement, rural policing, criminal investigations, and executive leadership.

As Sheriff, he has focused on building partnerships between law enforcement, healthcare professionals, behavioral health providers, educators, and community organizations. He is an advocate for evidence-based approaches to addiction, first responder wellness, suicide prevention, and public safety, emphasizing that lasting community safety depends upon addressing both criminal behavior and underlying public health challenges. Sheriff Kirsch is a frequent speaker on leadership, trauma, and resilience from the intersection of public health and modern law enforcement which is returning to the guiding ideology of "Peace Officer & Public Servant."



James Joseph, Jr., MD

James Joseph, Jr., MD, is a retired orthopedic surgeon who practiced in Wichita, Kansas, for almost 40 years. He specialized in joint replacement of hips and knees, performing tens of thousands over his career. As retirement from clinical practice drew near, he was appointed to the faculty of the Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine to teach students anatomy and musculoskeletal medicine. During the succeeding years, he ascended to the role of Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Education wherein he oversees the clinical education process for junior and senior medical students while continuing teaching as the course director for the Musculoskeletal course which is taken by first year students. He is an Editor-in-Chief for the development of musculoskeletal examination for medical students being developed by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

In the past year, he has been instrumental in the development of a Rural Track Family Medicine residency in Kansas which will accept its inaugural class in the summer of 2028. Over the past several months, he has been a senior consultant in the development of a prescriptive AI product designed specifically for joint replacement patients. This new application of AI technology is the first of its kind, currently undergoing approval by the FDA. It is designed to allow immediate communication for patients in the immediate post-operative period, which is particularly valuable for those in rural areas.



Kemper Tell

Kemper Tell is the CEO for the Lewis and Clark Information Exchange (LACIE), providing the vision and direction for secure healthcare data sharing in the greater Kansas-Missouri region. She has deep experience in non-profit health data governance and an established track record of successfully operationalizing complex data exchange and building multi-sector collaborations that align Health Information Exchange services with public health, provider, and community needs.

For more than a decade, she has led associations and nonprofits in government and healthcare sectors. Prior to LACIE, she was the Executive Director and Lobbyist for the Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine where she led and managed three non-profit entities while executing state-level lobbying efforts and fostering advocacy efforts within its membership. She also served as Executive Director of the Tulsa Osteopathic Medical Society and led political campaigns covering city, state, and federal levels.

Kemper's varied background also includes expertise in fundraising, communications, and external affairs. She holds a Master of Science in conflict analysis and resolution from George Mason University and a Master of Arts in conflict resolution from the University of Malta.



Emily Brown

Emily Brown is a healthcare technology and project management leader specializing in Health Information Exchange (HIE), Health Information Technology (HIT), Medicaid modernization, and large-scale healthcare transformation initiatives. With experience leading complex statewide programs, Emily is dedicated to improving healthcare through secure data sharing, innovative technology solutions, and strategic collaboration across state agencies, healthcare providers, payers, and technology partners.

Emily currently serves in a leadership role overseeing the Project Management Office supporting the Kansas Modular Medicaid System, where she provides strategic oversight for the enterprise initiatives that strengthen Medicaid operations, modernize healthcare technology, and improve services for Kansas providers and beneficiaries. A significant focus of Emily's work centers on advancing HIE and statewide HIT initiatives. She provides strategic leadership for projects that improve interoperability, enables secure exchange of clinical and administrative data, and expands the use of health information to improve care coordination, public health, and health outcomes. Her work bridges the gap between technology, healthcare operations, policy, and organizational change.



Rachael Rivero, MSN, APRN, AGACNP-BC

Rachael Rivero, MSN, APRN, AGACNP-BC, is the founder and CEO of Kansas Care Connect, a nurse-led care coordination organization that helps Medicare beneficiaries navigate chronic conditions through relationship-centered support, proactive outreach, and innovative models of care. A board-certified nurse practitioner with experience across acute, specialty, and community-based settings, Rachael spent a decade in pulmonary, sleep, and critical care medicine, where she saw firsthand what happens when patients fall through the cracks between appointments, hospitalizations, and fragmented systems. That experience led her to found Kansas Care Connect, an evolving initiative focused on transforming how individuals living with chronic conditions are supported, educated, and empowered. Her team partners with healthcare providers across Kansas to improve outcomes, preserve independence, and keep patients healthier at home. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Newman University and her Master of Science in Nursing from Wichita State University.

Rachael serves on the Sedgwick County Advisory Council for the Department of Aging and Physical Disabilities, where she contributes to initiatives improving services, access, and outcomes for older adults and individuals with disabilities. She is a best-selling co-author of *The Entrepreneurial Edge* and a speaker and guest lecturer on healthcare transformation, leadership, and the future of patient-centered care. Her work is grounded in a simple belief: healthcare should be proactive, compassionate, and designed around the people it serves.



Samiyah Para-Cremer Moore

Samiyah Para-Cremer Moore, M.Sc., Senior Analyst & Portfolio Strategist, specializes in population health research, including food security research, program evaluation, community engagement, and the incorporation of health equity considerations into decision-making. Samiyah earned a master's degree in evidence-based social intervention and policy evaluation from the University of Oxford and bachelor's degrees in applied behavioral science, law and society, and Spanish from the University of Kansas.

Samiyah leads the Kansas Health Institute's community capacity building efforts and designs research initiatives to strengthen the Kansas public health system at state and local levels. She also provides direct technical assistance to communities across Kansas to build their capacity for using data and evidence-based practices to support health and health equity. Samiyah's research interests include food security, health equity, social determinants of health and evidence-based policy and practice.



Yazmin Wood

Yazmin Wood is the Chief Executive Officer of the Legacy Regional Community Foundation, a role she has held since June 2016. With a career deeply rooted in business, organizational leadership, and community development, Yazmin brings an eclectic and robust background to her work. Her diverse professional journey spans leadership in non-profit management and fundraising, sales and marketing for a major corporation, municipal government administration, and arts education. Notably, she also served as the President and CEO of the Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce for nearly a decade. This broad spectrum of experience has equipped her with specialized expertise in strategic planning, community facilitation, and collaborative leadership.

A dedicated advocate for regional growth, Yazmin is highly trained in fostering community leadership and effective communication. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Cornish College of the Arts and earned her Master of Business Administration from Southwestern College. Additionally, she holds a Certificate in Nonprofit Management from the Institute for Organization Management, is a graduate of the prestigious Leadership Kansas Class of 2006, and has been actively involved with the Kansas Leadership Center since 2007. Driven by a passion for connecting resources to community needs, Yazmin continues to leverage her extensive administrative and coaching skills to champion impactful local initiatives.



Sarah Johnson

Sarah Johnson, Director of Marketing, Strategy, and Communications at William Newton Hospital, is a seasoned marketing professional with extensive experience across banking, education, healthcare, and non-profit sectors. With an Executive MBA from Friends University and a Marketing Management certificate from Wichita State, she specializes in strategic planning, integrated marketing campaigns, and leveraging market research for impactful results.

Sarah is also a dedicated community leader, actively supporting non-profit organizations and health initiatives. She has served as coordinator for the Cowley County Community Health Needs Assessment for the last three cycles, growing the initiative from just 44 participants in 2015 to 1,896 in 2024, and helping bring \$364,500 in grant funding to the county.



Erika Debrick Kelly

Erika serves as the CEO of Hunger Free Kansas, an initiative launched by the Kansas Health Foundation and coalition of partners in 2023 to end hunger and food insecurity across the state. Erika brings nearly two decades of experience in advocacy and public policy, including key leadership roles at Meals on Wheels America, where she advanced national strategies to support food access and senior nutrition.

As a sixth-generation Kansan, she has a deep-rooted commitment to our state and is focused on building broad, bipartisan coalitions and driving sustainable, long-term solutions to address hunger at both the policy and community levels.



Brett Martin

Brett Martin is Vice President of Community Impact for United Way of Kaw Valley, where he leads community impact strategies across Shawnee, Douglas, Jackson, and Jefferson counties. He works with healthcare, social service, government, and community partners to improve health outcomes, strengthen systems of care, and address the social drivers of health.

Brett chairs LiveWell Shawnee County and the Shawnee County Homeless Task Force and serves on leadership teams supporting Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) and Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs). He also leads collaborative initiatives focused on coordinated care, whole-family well-being, and community-wide engagement. Through his work, Brett brings extensive experience in building partnerships and advancing data-informed strategies that improve health and quality of life across Kansas communities.



Candice Sauers

Candice Sauers is the Deputy Director of the Saline County Health Department in Salina, Kansas, and a recognized leader in public health at the local, state, and national levels. She serves with the National Association of Counties and is the 2026 Treasurer for the Kansas Public Health Association.

Candice's work centers on authentic communication, meaningful community engagement, improving access, and conservation. Throughout her career in public health and local government, she has championed partnership-building, strategic planning, organizational culture, and collaborative solutions that strengthen communities. Candice is also the creator of an award-winning public health podcast, *Let's Talk About It!*, designed to make public health more accessible and approachable for the communities it serves.

Passionate about leadership, communication, and innovation, she focuses on connecting people, ideas, and resources to drive positive change and improve the health and well-being of communities across Kansas and beyond.

Kansas Health Impact Conference

Registration closes October 15, 2026

The registration fee (*virtual or in-person*) for the Kansas Health Impact Conference is \$150. You can [click here](#) to register.

We do not want cost to be a barrier to attend the conference. If you are interested in a scholarship, please contact Tammy Elliott (*see below for contact information*).

About the Kansas Health Impact Conference

The Kansas Health Impact Conference is an educational event drawing healthcare leaders and community collaborators from across Kansas and neighboring states. The program encourages collaboration and learning across disciplines, sectors, and communities because we know that partners working together have the power to bridge gaps in health and well-being.

Who Should Attend?

The content of this program is designed for healthcare professionals and organizations, payers, community leaders, community partners, and health equity advocates.

Attire

Business casual attire is suggested for this program. Temperatures in meeting rooms are difficult to control for everyone's comfort levels; therefore, we recommend you dress in layers to allow for these variances.

Hotel Information

A block of rooms has been reserved at Hotel Topeka at City Center, 1717 SW Topeka Blvd., Topeka, Kansas 66612, for KHIC participants at a discounted rate for October 28.

To book a room, call 785-431-4726 with the **code KFMC** or follow this [reservations link](#). *Reservations must be made by September 28, 2026, to receive the discounted rate.*

Continuing Education

KFMC Health Improvement Partners is approved as a provider of continuing nursing education by the Kansas State Board of Nursing. This course offering is pending approval for RN, LPN, or LMHT re-licensure. Kansas State Board of Nursing provider number: LT0258-1009.

Accessibility

We value inclusion and access for all participants and are pleased to provide reasonable accommodations for this event. For inquiries about accessibility or to make a reasonable accommodation request, please contact Tammy Elliott at telliott@kfmc.org or 785-271-4152.

Event Information

If you have any questions about the event, please contact Tammy Elliott at telliott@kfmc.org or at 785-271-4152.

The registration fee (*virtual or in-person*) for the Kansas Health Impact Conference is \$150. Virtual attendees will have access to all live sessions and materials throughout the day.

Scholarship

If you are interested in a scholarship to cover your registration expense, please contact Tammy Elliott at telliott@kfmc.org or call 785-271-4152.

Refund Policy

A full refund will be given for cancellations received prior to 5:00 pm on October 15, 2026. Registrations may be transferred to another individual.

Register for KHIC

To register online, visit [this link](#).

To register by mail, send registration form and payment to:

KFMC Health Improvement Partners
800 SW Jackson Street, Suite 1110
Topeka, KS 66612

Please make checks payable to KFMC Health Improvement Partners.

Nurses: Please list your name as it appears on your nursing license.

Type of Attendance: In-person _____ Virtual _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Title/Credentials: _____

Preferred Pronouns (will appear on nametag): _____

Organization Name: _____

Organization Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Nursing License Number: (Required for CNE certificate) _____

Do you have dietary restrictions we need to be aware of? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please specify so we can accommodate you: _____



THANK YOU TO THE KANSAS HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES COALITION MEMBERS FOR SUPPORTING THE CONFERENCE!

