

Kansas Advocacy Issue

Hospitals and Health Care: Working for Kansas

Action Needed

Kansas hospitals and the health care sector benefit the financial health of our state. Policymakers should reject cuts that would harm the economy's health care sector, a sector that created thousands of jobs.

Although the connections between health care services and local economic development are often overlooked, at least three critical linkages must be highlighted. First, a robust health care system helps attract and maintain business and industry growth, attracts and retains retirees, and creates jobs in communities. A vigorous and sustainable health care system is essential not only for the health and welfare of community residents but also to enhance economic opportunity.

According to a report from the Institute for Policy and Social Research at the University of Kansas, Kansas hospitals employ almost 73,000 people. The Kansas health care sector, directly and indirectly, contributes more than 300,000 jobs and nearly \$21 billion in labor income to the Kansas economy.

As hospitals expand, they provide additional employment opportunities and generate economic activity and income in other sectors of the economy. The report found Kansas hospitals generate approximately \$6 billion in direct labor income to the Kansas economy each year. Every \$1,000 in current hospital wages and salaries sustains an additional \$458 in income for employees of grocery stores, restaurants, gas and electric utilities and other industries used by hospitals and their employees.

Kansas hospitals believe supporting increased investment in areas of our economy that are poised for growth is a smart move. Increasing demand for health care services requires new health care infrastructure and additional education and training for more health care workers. Specific professions in demand and poised for growth in Kansas include registered nurses; medical records and health information technicians; physical, occupational and respiratory therapists; laboratory, radiologic and surgical technologists; pharmacists and pharmacy technicians; and physician assistants. There's never been a better time for educators, health care providers, technology developers and community leaders in Kansas to collaborate to strengthen employment opportunities in the state's health care system.

Bottom Line:

The health care sector in Kansas provides substantial contributions to the state's economy. Not only does it generate direct jobs and employee income, it also supports additional businesses across many industries through supply chain linkages and employee spending on household goods and services.

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