



MEDIA RELEASE

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DENNIS SHELBY, NEODESHA, AWARDED BY KANSAS HOSPITALS

(Sept. 7, 2021) – The Kansas Hospital Association is pleased to announce that the 2021 recipient of the Donald A. Wilson Visionary Award is Dennis Shelby, Chief Executive Officer of Wilson Medical Center in Neodesha. KHA established this award to recognize outstanding, innovative contribution to health care delivery, health care financing or other initiatives that improve the health and clinical outcomes in a community. This award is dedicated in honor of Wilson who faithfully served as the KHA president and CEO from 1982 until his retirement in 2004. This year’s recognition has a special meaning with the unexpected passing of Wilson in May.

Wilson would have been pleased to recognize this year’s honoree, Dennis Shelby, who for more than 40 years served communities through his work in three health care sectors – psychiatric, rehabilitation and general acute care. His most relevant and rewarding work has been in rural health care. “Dennis has been a leader in the work of Kansas hospitals to keep health care viable in rural communities,” said Chad Austin, President and CEO, Kansas Hospital Association.

Since his arrival in Neodesha in 2011, he has brought on many new programs that have greatly enhanced health care in Southeast Kansas, including specialty clinics, adding telemedicine services and establishing several community-based programs. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he worked with his team and others in Kansas to implement innovative ideas to continue to provide health care services to Kansans. Under his visionary leadership, Wilson Medical Center was recognized nationally by the National Rural Health Association, the American Hospital Association and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for their response to COVID-19 and for maintaining health care in rural America during a pandemic.

Throughout his career Shelby has been an active member of the Kansas Hospital Association serving on both the Kansas Hospital Education and Research Foundation Board (2019-2022) and the Kansas Health Service Corporation Board (2013-2018). He also has served on many KHA committees, including the KHA Rural Health Visioning Technical Advisory Group; KHA Dues Review Committee; KHA Governance Committee; KHA-PAC Steering Committee and the KHA Strategic Planning Committee. He also served on the State of Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services.

Members of the Kansas Hospital Association will recognize Shelby with the Donald A. Wilson Visionary Award during the KHA Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 27. The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 232 member facilities, of which 123 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA's vision is Optimal Health for Kansans.

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