



**Kansas Hospital  
ASSOCIATION**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **KHA Distinguished Health Care Advocate Awarded to STAND Youth**

(Sept. 13, 2022) The Kansas Hospital Association Distinguished Health Care Advocate Award honors individuals, organizations or groups who provide an exemplary contribution to the health and well-being of the people of Kansas through their leadership in public, political or policy areas. For the first time, a youth organization received this award and was honored by KHA members during their annual convention last week.

STAND is a unique group of more than 140 students in six high schools across Harvey and Marion Counties whose work is peer-to-peer health advocacy as drug/alcohol preventionists and promoters of positive mental health in youth and adults. STAND forms protective youth barriers from drugs, tobacco and negative mindsets while leaning into positivity, resilience and grit. They self-govern through a 26-member board.

Earlier this year, STAND traveled to Topeka for "Mental Health Advocacy Day" to meet with elected officials and advocate for the mental health needs of Kansas youth. They hosted multiple vaping awareness public meetings and educated about 1,000 middle-schoolers on the harmful effects of vaping.

Youth members speak at town hall and city council meetings, Chamber of Commerce events, local coalition meetings, state conferences and in various communities around Kansas about their proactive work and mission of a drug-free, resilient future for all.

STAND youth and adult leaders also provide mentoring and education for other Kansas communities who ask, "Would you teach us how you do what you do?"

Data from the areas they serve demonstrates that communities with STAND have seen a decrease in reported alcohol, marijuana, vaping and e-cigarette use among teens. KHA members are honored to recognize STAND Youth as their 2022 KHA Distinguished Health Care Advocate!

The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 237 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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