



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **KHA Distinguished Health Care Advocate Rep. Derek Schmidt**

(Sept. 26, 2025) 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. This award provides KHA members the opportunity to recognize those who work on KHA's behalf from outside our ranks. At any level of the public spectrum, these award recipients are unique, and their outstanding commitment to the health of Kansas is extraordinary, including this year's honoree Rep. Derek Schmidt from Kansas's Second Congressional District.

Rep. Schmidt's commitment to health care advocacy spans more than two decades. Rep. Schmidt served as Senate Majority Leader in the Kansas Legislature, where he consistently championed health care issues affecting Kansas communities. His understanding of how policy connects to access and outcomes has been a hallmark of his leadership. He is regarded as a pragmatic, solutions-oriented policymaker who values the role of hospitals in rural and urban communities alike.

Following his tenure as Senate Majority Leader, Rep. Schmidt was elected Kansas Attorney General. During this time, Rep. Schmidt was instrumental in many health care policies, including successfully recovering dollars through the opioid lawsuits that led to the Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board. Rep. Schmidt also collaborated with KHA to create an online toolkit to increase awareness within the health care community on human trafficking. Further, Rep. Schmidt was a staunch supporter of hospitals participating in the 340B Program, defending their ability to stretch scarce resources and serve vulnerable patients. In that role, he regularly engaged with hospital leadership to understand

their operational and legal needs, and he worked to ensure federal and state laws were interpreted and enforced in a way that protected care access.

At the national level, now as a member of Congress, Rep. Schmidt continues to support policies ensuring Kansas hospitals remain stable, sustainable and equipped to care for their communities. His actions during the budget reconciliation negotiations underscore he is willing to step up — even unexpectedly — to advocate for what’s right for Kansas. Despite not serving on a health-related committee, Rep. Schmidt took the initiative to fully understand a critical Medicaid financing issue that would have harmed Kansas hospitals and patients under the proposed federal Budget Reconciliation bill. His leadership and personal advocacy led to the inclusion of a manager’s amendment that improved the policy language and protected the financial integrity of the Kansas Medicaid program — a result that surprised and deeply impressed health care leaders across the state. He and his staff approached the issue not from a political angle, but from a “what’s best for Kansas hospitals?” perspective. That kind of relationship-building is rare — and deeply valued.

Whether in the Legislature, Attorney General’s Office or the halls of Congress, Rep. Schmidt has shown his support for health care is not tied to headlines or election cycles, but to a long-standing belief in the critical role hospitals and providers play in community well-being. He consistently shows up, listens to health care leaders and acts on their behalf — even when it’s not politically required. His actions have contributed to the financial sustainability of Kansas hospitals, increased access to services and protected care for vulnerable Kansans across the state.

The Kansas Hospital Association is a voluntary, non-profit organization existing to be the leading advocate and resource for members. KHA membership includes 242 member facilities, of which 124 are full-service, community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA’s vision is Optimal Health for Kansans and Kansas Hospitals.

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