



### **KS House District 114 Candidate Jeff Stroberg's statement on Medicaid expansion**

A vital key to a flourishing and prosperous community is great healthcare access for its residents. Kansas is one of twelve states that has refused Medicaid expansion, thus depriving our state of over \$4 billion of much needed healthcare funds. This has led to an unacceptably high level of uninsured residents and hospital closures/underfunding that threatens the very fabric of our communities.

The brunt of these policies has unfortunately fallen on rural Kansans who can least afford any additional burdens. At least 31 Kansas hospitals, nearly a third of rural hospitals in the state, are vulnerable to closure. Five have already shuttered. Hospital closures are devastating to rural communities, with negative impacts on availability of services, access to care and to the local economy.

In addition to the profoundly adverse health effects on Kansans, the closure of a community hospital reduces per-capita income by more than \$700 and increases the unemployment rate by 1.6 percentage points.

It is crucial to reverse this trend; hospitals serve as local economic engines, creating jobs while attracting and supporting the community's businesses and residents. A Kansas State University study showed for each job created in the hospital sector, another 0.91 jobs are supported in other businesses and industries. Similarly, for every dollar of income generated in hospitals, another \$0.59 is created in other businesses and industries.

With over five years of experience in most expansion states, there is an ample body of evidence on the favorable impacts of Medicaid expansion on rural communities and providers. These include:

- greatly enhanced coverage,
- reduce medical costs with preventative vs emergency care
- easier access to affordable health services for rural residents, and
- much needed revenue to hospitals and other providers.

Keeping all these things in mind, it is clear Kansas needs to at last take advantage of the great opportunities expanding Medicaid provides.