

# A safety net for community health

*By John Berggren*

Salina Regional Health Center is a not-for-profit health system that serves the health care needs of a wide region in north central Kansas and beyond. The organization cares for people on a daily basis, regardless of their ability to pay.

In fiscal year 2024, Salina Regional provided \$71.6 million in non-reimbursed benefits to the community. More than 54% of this total is attributed to subsidized health services, which do not generate revenue that fully offsets expenses for the care provided. In many instances, professional costs associated with providing specialized medical care are not fully recovered. This includes 24/7 access to emergency coverage.

## Caring for our community

The organization also provides services like forensic nursing to collect physical evidence in criminal cases, infant-child development services for children born with disabilities and developmental delay, behavioral health, and a number of other

primary care and specialty care services that are subsidized.

More than 24% of the organization's non-reimbursed benefit comes from shortfalls generated by government-sponsored health insurance. About half of Salina Regional's patients are covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

More than 19% of Salina Regional's uncompensated care is attributed to charity care and uncollectable debt. The organization provides payment plans and financial assistance to those who qualify by meeting federal poverty guidelines. However, some patient accounts cannot be collected.

Salina Regional also serves as a clinical teaching site for a number of students and residents who are completing their health care training. These include family medicine residents, pharmacy residents, medical students, nurses and others. In 2024, about \$2 million was given to support students and residents.

Despite these financial losses, Salina Regional Health Center, as

a whole, remains on solid footing.

"We're fortunate to be in a position that allows us to continue to invest in new technology, infrastructure and services to meet the health needs of people in the community," says Joel Phelps, President and CEO at Salina Regional Health Center.

## A significant economic impact

Salina Regional Health Center has 1,860 employees at its Salina hospital and clinics, contributing \$140 million in salary and benefits to the local economy. The organization receives no local, state or federal tax support.

"Health care plays a vital role in driving the economy of the region, and Salina Regional Health Center is at the heart of this impact," says Renee Duxler, president and CEO of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce. "Salina Regional's continued growth strengthens the local economy by attracting skilled professionals, encouraging investment and fostering partnerships across the community."

## Fiscal year 2024

### Unreimbursed community benefit

- Charity care: \$1.7 million
- Health professions education: \$2 million
- Uncollectable debt: \$11.9 million
- Medicare and Medicaid shortfalls: \$17 million
- Subsidized health services: \$39 million

