

STATE CAPITOL
201 W. CAPITOL AVENUE, ROOM 216
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65101



(573) 751-3222
WWW.GOVERNOR.MO.GOV

Mike Kehoe

GOVERNOR
STATE OF MISSOURI

Governor's Endorsement for Missouri's Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Plan

October 31, 2025

The Honorable Mehmet Oz
Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Dear Administrator Oz,

I am writing to express my full support for and commitment to the proposed Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Plan for the State of Missouri. Missouri's submission is a bold, collaborative effort designed to increase access, improve quality, enhance care coordination, and incentivize long-term sustainability to create a healthcare ecosystem that will support our rural communities for generations to come.

I am pleased to share that the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS), led by Director Jessica Bax, will assume the lead role in administering the program and will ensure its successful implementation.

The Missouri Plan: Built on A Foundation of Collaboration and Partnership

While this application was being developed, my staff and I worked closely with the Missouri Department of Social Services to ensure Missouri's RHT Plan engaged Missouri's congressional delegation, state legislature, and key healthcare stakeholders, including leaders from the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH), Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), State Office of Rural Health, Missouri Hospital Association, Missouri Primary Care Association, and Missouri Behavioral Health Council. Missouri received and reviewed hundreds of comments from local, regional, and statewide partners through the Department of Social Service's Rural Health Portal, providing valuable input.

Over recent months, our healthcare partners have collaborated to develop a bold, transformative plan for rural healthcare in Missouri. In an unprecedented commitment to the state, leaders have placed their own self-interests aside and put the needs of Missourians first. Through implementation, Missouri will continue to incorporate stakeholder feedback through the Rural Health Transformation Office's governance councils, regional network meetings, and public review.

The Missouri Plan: Cementing Our Future Through Ongoing Engagement

Our administration is committed to ensuring the success of Missouri's Rural Health Transformation Plan through several key state-level actions, including continued robust collaboration across multiple state agencies, as well as crucial legislation and regulatory changes that will improve the health and well-being of all Missourians.

Missouri welcomes the re-establishment of the National Presidential Fitness Test via EO 14327, and upon the issuance of federal guidance, Missouri commits to aligning state regulations with the new federal fitness standards by or before December 31, 2028. Our administration is committed to ensuring young Missourians understand the importance of physical fitness and value its contributions to their overall health and well-being.

At my direction, through EO 25-30, the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS) has submitted a waiver to the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service to refocus Missouri's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on the purchase of healthy foods and supporting local agriculture. On October 22, Missouri's waiver was sent to Secretary Rollins' desk and is pending her final approval. The waiver will prohibit the use of SNAP to purchase non-nutritious items including candy, prepared desserts, soda (including sweetened drinks), as well as fruit and vegetable drinks with less than 50 percent natural juice. Missouri expects implementation to occur by October 1, 2026, and commits to implementation by December 31, 2027.

Missouri has already begun the process of changing regulation to require at least one CME hour in nutrition for licensed physicians by October 31, 2026.

The State of Missouri commits to joining the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact, through legislation filed in the 2026 state legislative session, with full enactment by December 31, 2027.

We also commit to working with the Missouri General Assembly to file legislation during the 2026 state legislative session to solidify the process by which out-of-state physicians can practice telehealth medicine in Missouri, with enactment by December 31, 2027.

Additionally, our administration will reassess Missouri's current scope of practice laws and regulations for Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Pharmacists, and Dental Hygienists. This re-evaluation will identify reforms to increase the availability of services provided by these professionals in rural areas and enable them to reach rural Missourians who are struggling to access local care.

These coordinated efforts and commitments across various departments and regulatory frameworks are designed to ensure that Missouri's Rural Health Transformation Plan is embedded into every facet of our healthcare system, creating a lasting impact for future generations.

As Governor of the State of Missouri, I certify that no award funds will be expended on prohibited activities under 42 U.S.C. 1397ee(h)(2)(A)(ii), in compliance with funding policies and limitations.

The Missouri Plan: A Blueprint for a Stronger Missouri

This historic funding opportunity will ensure rural Missourians have access to an effective and sustainable healthcare delivery system uniquely crafted to meet the needs of their local communities. Missouri's RHT Plan will benefit all of rural Missouri because it is designed to strengthen the long-term sustainability of rural providers and improve care coordination through targeted investments in data infrastructure and the adoption of innovative technologies. These investments build a foundation for the state to effectively implement payment models to reflect the realities of rural care delivery.

Missouri's RHT plan will allow rural providers to collaborate amongst themselves, and with high-quality regional partners, to enhance operations, technology, and care delivery. This will improve healthcare delivery and access for all residents by connecting traditional healthcare providers, pharmacies, local public health agencies, at-home resources, and digital health tools through a unified rural regional coordinating network composed of well-aligned local community hubs.

I am confident Missouri's RHT Plan will provide rural Missouri families with increased access to primary care, behavioral health services, and maternity care options in their local communities, while also improving access to specialty and complex care through telehealth services and patient-facing technology investments, made possible through a well-aligned delivery system that is built to last.

Thank you for your careful review and consideration of Missouri's application. We are eager to receive your feedback and the opportunity to begin implementing our RHT Plan. Your support and collaboration are crucial, and we look forward to getting started on this important journey to improve healthcare access and outcomes for rural Missourians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Kehoe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Kehoe
Governor