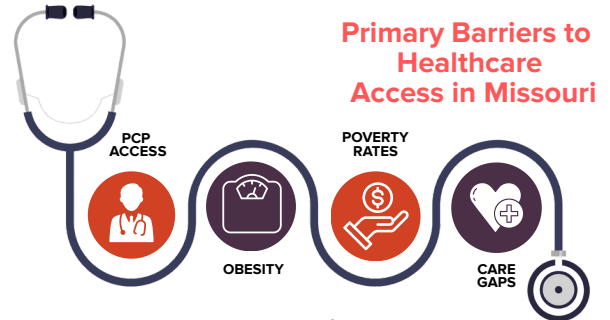


# A Health of the Heartland Fact Sheet: Access to Healthcare



## Coverage, Availability & Health Outcomes

Access to medical services that are timely, affordable and appropriate is necessary for a healthy community. Affordable medical appointments, medications and other healthcare resources lead to better health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Barriers to accessing healthcare include low numbers of care providers, insurance status and access to transportation.<sup>2</sup> Low healthcare access can lead to delayed diagnosis, worsening of disease and preventable hospital stays.<sup>2</sup> Expanding access to healthcare and removing economic, social and geographic barriers will improve health.<sup>2</sup>



Healthcare access factors	Jasper County	Jackson County
Physician to Population Ratio	1:1220	1:1180
Percent of people under 65 years old without health insurance	14%	13%
Percent of people living in poverty	17%	14%
Preventable Hospitalizations (rate per 100,000 people)	3,070	3,371

Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

## Improving Access to Healthcare

Joplin and its surrounding counties have Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPs) focused on expanding access to social services, increasing workplace wellness programs and improving education and awareness of local health resources.<sup>5</sup> In the Kansas City region, CHIPs aim to improve access to health in several ways, for example, increasing access to transportation (Wyandotte County, KS) and supporting equitable enrollment in Medicaid (Kansas City, MO).<sup>6,7</sup> Other programs like Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) and Community Paramedicine (CP) are working to deliver safe, efficient and convenient care.<sup>8</sup>

**In 2024, 66% of rural areas had a primary care physician shortage and 67% had a dentist shortage.<sup>4</sup>**

**Rural Missouri had higher death rates from almost all top causes of death than urban Missouri.<sup>3</sup>**

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## Medicaid Expansion

Having health insurance is associated with better health. 41 states (including DC) have expanded Medicaid, public insurance that provides coverage for low-income adults and children and adults with disabilities. In Missouri, there was a 44% increase in Medicaid coverage from 2020 to 2025.<sup>9</sup> In 2023, 22% of Jasper county residents 15% of Jackson county residents utilized Medicaid. Kansas is the only Midwestern state that has not expanded their Medicaid.<sup>9</sup>

State	Medicaid Name	Expanded?
Arkansas	Arkansas Medicaid	Yes
Iowa	Iowa Medicaid	Yes
Kansas	KanCare	No
Missouri	MoHealthNet	Yes
Nebraska	Nebraska Medicaid	Yes
Oklahoma	SoonerCare	Yes

Source: HealthCare.gov, KFF

## KCU's Impact

Kansas City University is the leading producer of physicians in Missouri. KCU students participate in Score 1 for Health, a free in-school preventative health screening program for elementary aged students. Additionally, the Center for Population Health and Equity created the Student Health Advocates program. In this program, KCU students, in partnership with a sponsoring organization, work with individuals or families in a non-clinical capacity to advance shared health goals and assist in navigating healthcare systems.

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## ABOUT KANSAS CITY UNIVERSITY

Kansas City University was founded in 1916 as one of the nation's five original osteopathic medical schools. Today, KCU is a fully accredited, private, not-for-profit health sciences university strategically located on two campus locations – Kansas City and Joplin, Missouri – to address the growing health needs of both urban and rural populations. KCU's Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine, Biosciences and Dental Medicine offer graduate degree programs in osteopathic medicine, clinical psychology, biomedical sciences, dental medicine as well as multiple dual-degree opportunities.

## THE CENTER FOR POPULATION HEALTH AND EQUITY MISSION

The CPHE builds momentum around understanding and addressing the social factors that impact health within and outside of the traditional health care setting, in partnership with local organizations, to better prepare students to practice osteopathic medicine, clinical psychology and dentistry while improving the well-being of the communities we serve.