

2025 Policy Agenda

 United Methodist
Health Ministry Fund





ABOUT THE HEALTH FUND

The United Methodist Health Ministry Fund sparks conversation and action to improve the health and wholeness of all Kansans – especially those in rural and under-served communities.

Through funding programs and ideas, providing hands-on expertise, and convening partners, we advance innovative solutions to improve Kansans' health for generations to come.

We steward a \$70 million endowment, which has provided more than \$79 million in grants and program support since our inception in 1986. We focus our efforts on three strategic areas: Access to Care, Thriving Children, and Engaged Congregations & Communities.

To achieve long-term change and improve the health of all Kansans, we must change policies and systems. Health depends on more than health care. It's strongly influenced by a variety of factors, including the conditions in our communities, schools in our neighborhoods, the availability of healthy food and good jobs, and how close we are to hospitals and clinics. Ensuring policies and systems are optimized to support healthy Kansans and healthy communities over the long term is critically important.

Each year, we develop a policy agenda that aligns with our strategic priorities. This road map guides us as we engage in legislative and administrative advocacy, support and fund advocacy partners, and back research and communications efforts that can help achieve our mission of improving the health of all Kansans.

3 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



Access to Care



Thriving Children



**Engaged Congregations
& Communities**



ACCESS TO CARE

TOP PRIORITIES

Access to care plays a critical role in supporting Kansans' health and strong communities. Particularly in rural areas where the population is growing older and more sparse, providers are looking for ways to both stay financially viable and provide quality integrated care for the people they serve.

We champion policies that support innovative and sustainable health systems that ensure people have access to all facets of care.

1

Increase and maintain access to coverage and care

- Support increased funding for care coordination, consumer assistance, and outreach and enrollment to help Kansans enroll in health care coverage
- Support funding and policies that increase enrollment in health care programs
- Oppose efforts to increase administrative burdens, such as work requirements, and barriers that lead to the disenrollment of Medicaid beneficiaries and reduced access to care

2

Expand and strengthen KanCare

- Support efforts to expand eligibility for Medicaid to 138% of the federal poverty level
- Support policies that strengthen Medicaid coverage and services
- Bolster care coordination and explore how we can maximize Medicaid to address social needs
- Oppose efforts to reduce funding for Medicaid

3

Expand use of telehealth and availability of broadband

- Maintain telehealth policy changes adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Support efforts to expand broadband and advance digital equity

4

Support workforce innovation, payment reform, and culturally-competent care

- Support new workforce models, such as community health workers, doulas, midwives and community paramedics, that improve access to services
- Support the implementation of the free care rule to enhance the delivery of school-based mental health services
- Leverage Medicaid and private payers to address social needs and support community-based delivery models

5

Sustainable tax and fiscal policy

- Maximize use of federal dollars to increase access to care and services
- Defend against cuts to the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid and work-support programs
- Reject unsustainable tax policies that threaten the ability to sustain services and Kansas' health care delivery system





THRIVING CHILDREN

TOP PRIORITIES

Ninety percent of brain development takes place in the first five years of life. Research shows that early investment in children's health and development creates not only the best health outcomes but also the greatest return on investment. We work to ensure all Kansas children have the support needed to grow up healthy and equipped for success throughout life.

We champion policies that help ensure children thrive through healthy starts, safe and stable families, and early development and learning.

1

Strengthen coverage and services

- Support the development of a robust maternal child health benefit
- Leverage Medicaid to better support healthy starts and pay for evidence-based screenings and interventions that support childhood development
- Maximize Medicaid to support infant and early childhood mental health, including policies that strengthen the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model

2

Strengthen family and economic supports

- Support policies that increase utilization of food assistance programs
- Reduce administrative burdens that impact access to safety-net programs, such as SNAP, TANF and Medicaid
- Support policies that reduce medical debt
- Oppose any efforts that will reduce funding for safety-net programs or will increase the administrative burden to access them

3

Support policies that improve school readiness, early learning and development

- Improve access to child care subsidies and reduce administrative barriers for providers and families
- Preserve evidence-based approaches to childhood vaccines and immunizations
- Support funding for evidence-based programs, such as universal home visiting, that promote healthy childhood development
- Support increasing funding for early childhood services and support efforts to streamline the state's early childhood system

ENGAGED CONGREGATIONS & COMMUNITIES



TOP PRIORITY

Local churches play a major role in shaping each community's culture, values and sense of place. Our Healthy Congregations program engages Great Plains United Methodist churches in projects to improve spiritual, physical, social, and emotional health in their congregations and communities.

We champion policies that will help our churches improve the health and wholeness of their congregations and communities.

1

Voting access

- Advocate for policies that protect voting rights, as research shows communities with higher rates of voting are healthier overall

