

How Rural Emergency Hospitals Are Benefiting Rural Communities

Updated September 2025

- *Bullock County Hospital in Union Springs, Alabama (established as an REH on May 1, 2024):* “It allows them to remain open instead of leaving a void in that community.”¹
- *St. Bernards Five Rivers Medical Center in Pocahontas, Arkansas (established as an REH on September 1, 2023):* “Wherever they are, Arkansans should expect responsive and capable emergent and trauma care should they need it. [...] We believe in this Rural Emergency Hospital change because it helps us fulfill that promise.”²
- *North Walton Doctors Hospital in DeFuniak Springs, Florida (announced intention to become an REH):* “This hospital coming back to life is enormously important. [...] Not only did we bring a hospital that went defunct and closed to back to life.”³
- *Cascade Medical Center in Cascade, Idaho (established as an REH on January 11, 2025):* “Everyone has been pleased with the experience. [...] The financial outcome was as good or better than they expected. Our hospital, given our very low inpatient volumes, is ideally suited to this model.”⁴
- *South Central Kansas Medical Center in Arkansas City, Kansas (established as an REH on August 26, 2023):* “It’s definitely going to make us viable and sustainable.”⁵
- *Smith County Emergency Hospital in Raleigh, Mississippi (established as an REH on February 26, 2025):* “The new Rural Emergency Hospital will be a lifesaver for Raleigh, Smith County, and neighboring communities, particularly during an emergency where every minute matters.”⁶ “When minutes may be the difference in saving someone, this new Rural Emergency Hospital will be a lifesaver for Raleigh, Smith County, and surrounding communities.”⁷
- *Parkland Health Center in Boone Terre, Missouri (established as an REH on January 1, 2024):* “This is going to be a really good thing for the city. [...] We know about the number of rural hospitals that have closed in the past several years. [...] Increasing the size of the emergency department definitely outweighs the closing of a couple inpatient beds.”⁸
- *Friend Community Healthcare System in Friend, Nebraska (established as an REH on January 11, 2024):* “Us being here, we can stabilize patients needing emergent care and we can get them transferred out if they need a higher level of care.”⁹ “Going REH meant a lifeline, and the potential for our (emergency department) to be there years into the future, that is what really drove this decision. [...] If we weren't here, there's a great potential an emergency patient would not make it 30 minutes down the road.”¹⁰ “I'm feeling relieved in the fact that I can now breathe easier knowing that for the foreseeable future, this community has an emergency room, and that could save lives.”¹¹ “Going REH still provides that emergent care that our community desperately needs, and I believe it will save lives going into the future.”¹²

- *Westfield Memorial Hospital in Westfield, New York (announced intention to become an REH):* “By converting to a rural emergency hospital, we can direct those resources toward new programs that are a better fit for our community and retain and grow the specialties and services that are most important to our patients.”¹³
- *Landmann-Jungman Memorial Hospital in Scotland, SD (announced intention to become an REH):* “We have done an extensive analysis from various perspectives, including operations, finances, and patient needs. [...] The board sees this as a better option for our local health care facility and sustaining local health care into the future. We are excited for opportunities that will exist to enhance local health services.”¹⁴
- *Wayne Medical Center in Waynesboro, Tennessee (established as an REH on December 1, 2024):* “Designation as a rural emergency hospital offers this region a sustainable option for emergency services.”¹⁵
- *Anson General Hospital in Anson, Texas (established as an REH on March 27, 2023):* “Based on our Rural Emergency Hospital conversion we are confident that our hospital now has a future, and that we will be here for years to come to meet the health care needs of our rural community.”¹⁶ “What it allowed us to do is continue to provide access to care.”¹⁷

¹ Yurkanin, Amy, *Alabama.com*, “Alabama hospital scales back, becomes state’s first Rural Emergency Hospital,” April 25, 2024, <https://www.al.com/news/2024/04/alabama-hospital-scales-back-becomes-states-first-rural-emergency-hospital.html>.

² Jared, George, *Talk Business & Politics*, “St. Bernards Five Rivers Medical Center designated as a ‘Rural Emergency Hospital,’” August 24, 2023, <https://talkbusiness.net/2023/08/st-bernards-fiver-rivers-medical-center-designated-as-a-rural-emergency-hospital/>.

³ Bestor, Collin, *Northwest Florida Daily News*, “North Walton Doctors Hospital revives healthcare access in northern Walton County,” <https://www.nwfdailynews.com/story/news/local/2024/09/18/north-walton-doctors-hospital-brings-healthcare-to-defuniak-springs/75269120007/>.

⁴ *The Lewiston Tribune*, “Regional News Roundup: Cascade facility to become Rural Emergency Hospital,” June 2, 2024, https://www.lmtribune.com/northwest/regional-news-roundup-cascade-facility-to-become-rural-emergency-hospital/article_98003d2c-d624-55f8-84a5-20a780835b98.html.

⁵ Shelman, John, *CT Courtier Traveler*, “Ark City hospital profitable in May,” June 24, 2023, https://www.ctnewsonline.com/news/article_03cddbcb-1212-11ee-9548-57d931ac0d1a.html.

⁶ Corder, Frank, *Magnolia Tribune*, “Emergency medical services return to Smith County good for healthcare delivery, economy,” July 16, 2024, <https://magnoliatribune.com/2024/07/16/emergency-medical-services-return-to-smith-county-good-for-healthcare-delivery-economy/>.

⁷ Bose, Devna, *Mississippi Today*, “Emergency-care hospital plans to open in Smith County,” December 6, 2023, <https://mississippitoday.org/2023/12/06/emergency-care-hospital-plans-to-open-in-smith-county/>.

⁸ Merrilees, Annika, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, “Missouri’s rural hospitals are struggling. This new plan could be a safety net,” June 7, 2024, https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/business/missouri-s-rural-hospitals-are-struggling-this-new-plan-could-be-a-safety-net/article_f1a5993e-2377-11ef-8ea9-4b453638f5f0.html.

⁹ Bartecki, Jake, *News Channel Nebraska*, “Six months later, Saline County hospital finds success as Rural Emergency Hospital,” August 14, 2024, <https://southeast.newschannelnebraska.com/story/51214807/six-months-later-saline-county-hospital-finds-success-as-rural-emergency-hospital>.

¹⁰ O’Brien, Meghan, *Nebraska Public Media*, “‘A different type of health care’: A look inside Nebraska’s only rural emergency hospital,” August 8, 2024, <https://nebraskapublicmedia.org/en/news/news-articles/a-different-type-of-health-care-a-look-inside-nebraskas-only-rural-emergency-hospital/>.

¹¹ Anderson, Julie, *Omaha World-Herald*, “First Nebraska hospital has converted to rural emergency model,” March 16, 2024, https://omaha.com/news/local/business/health-care/first-nebraska-hospital-converts-to-rural-emergency-hospital-model/article_d0ce8752-cf3f-11ee-8b67-074d6fec45d7.html.

¹² Barreto, Veronica, *KLKN*, “‘It will save lives’: As rural Nebraska hospitals struggle, one gets a boost,” February 12, 2024, <https://www.klknv.com/it-will-save-lives-as-rural-nebraska-hospitals-struggle-one-gets-a-boost/>.

¹³ Mamula, Kris, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, “The cost of rural medicine: AHN to downsize New York hospital,” January 7, 2025. <https://www.post-gazette.com/business/healthcare-business/2025/01/07/allegheeny-health-network-westfield-hospital-conversion-upmc-lock-haven/stories/202501070078>.

¹⁴ *Mitchell Republic*, “Scotland facility to become South Dakota’s first Rural Emergency Hospital,” May 15, 2025, <https://www.mitchellrepublic.com/news/local/scotland-facility-to-become-south-dakotas-first-rural-emergency-hospital>.

¹⁵ *Columbia Daily Herald*, “Wayne Medical Center to transition to Rural Emergency Hospital on Dec. 1,” November 29, 2024, <https://www.columbiadailyherald.com/story/sports/local/2024/11/29/wayne-medical-center-to-transition-to-rural-emergency-hospital/76619391007/>.

¹⁶ U.S. House of Representatives, Ways and Means Committee, “Opening Statement of Ted Matthews, Anson General Hospital,” March 2024, <https://gop-waysandmeans.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Matthews-Testimony.pdf>.

¹⁷ Condon, Alan, *Becker’s Hospital Review*, “Few rural hospitals go emergency only,” October 26, 2023, <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/finance/few-rural-hospitals-go-emergency-only.html>.