



**CONTACT:**

Angela Breer

[angela@dotstrategiesks.com](mailto:angela@dotstrategiesks.com)

(316) 518-7117

Carrie Lindeman

[carrie@lindemancollective.com](mailto:carrie@lindemancollective.com)

(316) 393-1076

Oct. 1, 2025

*For Immediate Release*

## **New Book Aims to Mobilize Kansans to Tackle State's Declining Health Rankings**

**WICHITA, Kan.** – The Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) and Ed O'Malley, KHF's President & CEO, have released, *Leading Health*, a new book that shows how to harness leadership and influence to guide Kansas to the very top of the health rankings. The book calls on 30,000 Kansans to expand our definition of Health to go beyond doctors and healthcare.

"The Kansas Health Foundation has a bold vision to make Kansas the healthiest state in the nation. This isn't just a vision; it's a movement powered by Kansans," said O'Malley. "We've fallen from being the 8<sup>th</sup> healthiest state in the nation in 1991 to 29<sup>th</sup>. This decline has a major impact on everything from our economy to our schools. Our goal is to take Kansas to number one."

According to **America's Health Rankings**, Kansas was ranked 29th in the nation in 2024. O'Malley emphasizes that poor health has a direct negative impact on the economy:

- **Individuals:** Reduced work capacity due to absenteeism.
- **Companies:** Lower productivity and higher costs.
- **Communities & States:** Slower GDP growth and a shrinking tax base.

<MORE>

These findings are based on screening 1,000 academic articles and a literature review of 225 articles, which reveals a powerful two-way relationship: better economics equals better Health, and better Health equals better economics.

### **Understanding Health vs. health**

The book makes a key distinction between lowercase **health** and uppercase **Health**.

- Lowercase **health** refers to traditional healthcare, such as doctor's visits and blood pressure monitoring.
- Uppercase **Health** is a much broader concept about a person's ability to thrive. It encompasses everything from happiness and friendship to having agency over your life and the success of future generations.

In *Leading Health*, O'Malley introduces nine mindsets that can help create policy and programmatic changes to improve Health outcomes.

"We know it's a bold vision, and it's going to take work," said O'Malley. "Regardless of job title or community involvement, everyone can play a part in improving Health. Collectively, we have the power and influence to shift Health outcomes."

A full report from the Kansas Health Foundation, which dives deeper into the relationship between Health and economics, will be released later this year. To receive a copy of the report, sign up at: [kansashealth.org/leadinghealth](https://kansashealth.org/leadinghealth).

Ed O'Malley will also present "The Economic Argument for Health" on Thursday, Oct. 2, at the [2025 Kansas Economic Outlook Conference](#) at Century II.

###

[Link to Press Kit](#)

#### **Author Bio**

Ed O'Malley is President and CEO of the Kansas Health Foundation. He believes in the power of bold vision and longer-term impact, including KHF's goal to make Kansas the Healthiest state in America. A former state legislator and gubernatorial aide, Ed has co-authored four other books including *Your Leadership Edge* and *When Everyone Leads*.

#### **Kansas Health Foundation**

The Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) is a nonprofit organization based in Wichita but statewide in its focus. At KHF, all our work centers on our mission: to improve the health of all Kansans. As part of the KHF strategic framework, developed by our staff and board of directors, KHF also strives to accomplish

three primary purposes: empower Kansas to lead the nation in health; eliminate the inequities that create health disparities; and, for KHF to become THE model for philanthropic impact.