



Vote YES on the Hospital Sales Tax

By: Jack Nolte of Hiawatha KS

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Dear Editor,

I'm writing you today to provide a perspective on the hospital sales tax. As a medical student at the University of Kansas School of Medicine and a future physician, I feel compelled to advocate for the success of the community that raised me, as well as for the health and healthcare of those who live there. Though I am training in Kansas City, Hiawatha will always be the place I call home. Many opinions have been shared on this topic, and I hope to provide a perspective from someone in the process of obtaining a medical degree.

I cannot speak to all the intricacies of taxes, political science, finance, or business aspects of running a hospital in 500 words- so I won't. I will just encourage those who think that Medicaid expansion will financially boost the Hiawatha Hospital to look at the difference in Medicaid versus private insurance reimbursement rates.

I would like to speak from a medical student point of view with respect to the recruitment of medical professionals, specifically Allopathic and Osteopathic Physicians (MDs and DOs). It is challenging to recruit doctors to work in a small town. As medical students, we spend the majority of our training in metropolitan areas, putting down roots while starting our lives and families. A small fraction of my class entered medical school with the intent of practicing rural medicine. Those who do generally come from small towns and want to return to give back to the towns that supported them in their fundamental years. Despite their urge to give back to a small town, they do need to see that the community they are going to serve will support their practice with a quality health system. They are looking for job security and support, not the



threat of condemnation from individuals who see their salary and fail to consider the amount of their lives they give to the community.

Finally, we cannot base the organization, management, or funding of the hospital today solely on words spoken almost seven decades ago when the hospital was founded. The hospital that was established in 1951 was founded in a different time. The delivery of health care in the United States has changed dramatically. Hospitals were not legally desegregated until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Medicare and Medicaid were not established until 1965. Transplant medicine, Telemedicine, Immunotherapy, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), and the sequencing of the entire Human Genome were all still dreams and elements of science fiction. Today you can receive technically advanced medical procedures and have the results of your genetic testing interpreted and incorporated into your care from the comfort of your hometown.

The quality, complexity, and delivery of healthcare have changed dramatically in the 68 years since the hospital was founded. It is time for our community to embrace change to help ensure that excellent delivery of healthcare in Hiawatha continues.

Vote Yes on the Hospital Sales Tax.