



Dear Residents of Southwestern Nebraska,

We are excited to announce plans for the expansion and renovation of our Rural Healthcare Clinic (RHC) in Stratton, NE. As the CEO of Dundy County Hospital (DCH), I am reaching out to our wonderful community for support in making this project a reality.

Our Stratton Rural Health Clinic has provided essential services to patients of all ages for decades. It is crucial that we continue to focus on providing quality healthcare in Stratton and surrounding areas through excellent, caring providers and staff, in addition to safe and modern facilities. Communities across Southwestern Nebraska continue to grow closer bonds. One milestone that has proven to be mutually beneficial was the addition of Stratton to the Dundy County school district. Bill Zahl, long-time Stratton Industrial Commission Director, businessman, and contributor to countless projects that have benefited the local community, stands united in our mission to improve access to high-quality healthcare in Southwestern Nebraska.

Why This Expansion Matters:

Improved Patient Care: The renovation will allow us to expand square footage, upgrade medical equipment, and create a safer and more comfortable environment for our patients. Improved facilities will also enable us to operate the clinic more days per week.

Community Well-being: A modernized clinic will help attract and retain skilled healthcare professionals in our area, ensuring that we have the expertise needed to address diverse health concerns. It will also foster a sense of pride and well-being in our community, knowing that we have top-notch healthcare facilities right here at home.

The Financial Challenge:

Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) like ours operate on extremely thin and often negative margins, making projects like this difficult to fund. Today, 50% of America's rural hospitals are operating in the red. This is the highest percentage of rural hospitals losing money in the past decade. Access to inpatient care continues to deteriorate as 167 rural hospitals since 2010 have either closed or converted to a model that excludes inpatient care. Between

2014 and 2022, 382 rural hospitals have stopped providing chemotherapy services.¹ This financial reality underscores the importance of community support in maintaining and improving our healthcare facilities.

How You Can Help:

We are seeking to raise \$50,000 to fund this vital project. Your contributions, whether big or small, can make a significant difference. Here are some ways you can support:

Donations: Direct financial contributions can be made to the Dundy County Hospital Foundation, earmarked for the Stratton Clinic expansion. The Hospital Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, meaning that your contributions are tax-deductible. Please email dchfoundation@dchbenkelman.com or call 308-423-4677 to donate. For convenience, donations can also be given to Administration at DCH in Benkelman, NE. These will be routed to the Hospital Foundation as well.

Spread the Word: Share this initiative with friends, family, and local businesses. The more people know, the more support we can garner.

Together, we can ensure that our community continues to thrive with access to exceptional healthcare. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to the health and well-being of Dundy County.

Warm regards,

Jeremiah Hanes, Ph.D.
CEO, Dundy County Hospital

References

1. <https://www.chartis.com/insights/unrelenting-pressure-pushes-rural-safety-net-uncharted-territory>