

The Value of the 340B Program for Rural Communities

Who is Citizens Health?



Based in Colby, Kan., Citizens Health is an anchor health system for nearly a dozen counties throughout rural Northwest Kansas. As a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the

lives of the people it serves, Citizens Health is a trusted source of health and well-being for the local community. The health system includes Citizens Medical Center, which is a rural critical access hospital, the Family Center for Healthcare, which is a rural health clinic, and Prairie Senior, a 60-bed long-term care facility. Together, the system employs nearly 500 professionals, making Citizens Health the region's largest employer. The rural health clinic alone employs 24 medical staff, including 12 physicians and 12 advanced practice providers, who collectively saw 14,862 patients in 2025.

Who Does Citizens Health Serve?

The city of Colby has a population of about 6,000 residents, making it one of the largest cities in Northwest Kansas and the region's primary rural economic hub. Slightly less than half of Citizens Health's patient population is covered by Medicare or Medicaid, with an additional 5% of patients identifying as self-pay patients. With most area residents working in the agriculture industry, Citizens Health experiences a large influx of patients at certain times of the year coinciding with the area's harvest season. Moreover, the seasonal workers who do come to the hospital present with unique healthcare challenges and often require more advanced care to manage multiple chronic conditions.



What 340B Means for Citizens Health — and its Patients

In 2013, Citizens Health became eligible to participate in the 340B Drug Pricing Program, enabling the hospital to expand access to vital services across Northwest Kansas by using savings from drug company discounts. Each year, the 340B program generates approximately \$3 million in savings for Citizens Health, which it uses to meet and enhance the care needs of the local community through a variety of important programs that include:

- Supporting Access to Rural Specialty Services:** With savings generated by the 340B program, Citizens Health can support partnerships with other health systems from larger metropolitan areas and across state lines that enable local access to specialty care. Citizens Health offers access to care across 43 different clinical specialties each month, reducing the need for patients to drive to Denver or Wichita, Kan. to receive care. These specialty care services include neurology, endocrinology, oncology, ophthalmology, orthopedics and more — thereby expanding the continuum of care to benefit the Colby community and enhance the local workforce.

- **Saving Retail Pharmacy Access:** Citizens Health recently partnered with a local family-owned and operated retail pharmacy that has been a pillar of the Colby community for more than 100 years. Without this partnership enabled by the 340B program, this retail pharmacy would likely be unable to remain open to the people of Colby, forcing many patients to travel outside of the local community to access their medications.
- **Maintaining Labor and Delivery Services:** Citizens Health’s participation in the 340B program has also allowed it to expand its labor and delivery services. Much of Northwest Kansas lacks maternal care providers. If Citizens Health was no longer able to deliver babies, mothers would be forced to travel to the next nearest labor and delivery unit 3.5 hours away in Denver or 1.5 hours away in Hayes, Kan., which could endanger the health and safety of mom and baby.

“Without 340B, we would be looking at cutting services rather than investing in expanding access to new service lines and investing in recruiting and training employees needed to meet the high demand for care.”

David McCorkle
CEO of Citizens Health

- **Strengthening Workforce Support and Retention:** Finally, Citizens Health recognizes the importance of attracting more physicians, nurses and other care professionals to maintain and expand its patient services. To help, it established a childcare center for employees with support from the organization’s 340B savings, which now cares for more than 100 children while their parents work at the hospital. At a time when childcare costs are rising — and when Kansas is experiencing a shortage of healthcare professionals — the childcare center is a convenient, affordable and necessary service to ensure a robust workforce needed to meet the growing demand for care in the region.

340B Hospitals Need Support

Unfortunately, drug companies and their allies have repeatedly tried to curtail the program and the benefits it affords patients like those at Citizens Health. It is unequivocally true that the 340B program is a direct lifeline for the rural communities served by Citizens Health. If the 340B program were to be scaled back, the entire Northwest Kansas region would suffer, and it would undermine Congress’ intent to expand access to care. Lawmakers must protect this vital program so that hospitals like Citizens Health can continue to ensure the health and well-being of the rural patients and communities it serves.