



Date: June 12, 2025

Time: 7:30 AM

Crowne Plaza Springfield

Registration is open only to IHA-member hospitals and health systems and 2025 IHA Corporate Sponsors.

First person per hospital or health system: \$195/person

Each additional person*: \$150/person

**The additional registrant(s) must be employed at the same hospital or hospital system corporate office as the first registrant to qualify for this discount.*

Caring for communities and improving lives: Small and rural hospitals are the heartbeat of their communities. To support your critical work, this year's annual meeting will focus on opportunities to strengthen community ties, address a vital need for behavioral health care, and respond to regulatory and reimbursement changes and to challenges with Medicare Advantage. You'll benefit from sessions offering new approaches to common concerns and networking with your peers. Join us for the rural health perspective on today's top issues. See [our brochure](#) for more details.

7:30 a.m.

Registration and Breakfast

8:30 a.m.

Welcome

Gina Thomas, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, President, Carle Richland Memorial Hospital and Chair, 2025 IHA Small and Rural Hospitals Constituency Section

8:40 a.m.

President's Address

A.J. Wilhelmi, IHA President and CEO

9:05 a.m.

Beyond the Hospital Walls: Building Trust and Transforming Communities

Andrew McCrea, Keynote Speaker and Oscar-Winning Broadcaster

Through strategic partnerships, innovative programs and community outreach, hospitals across rural Illinois are working to improve their community's health and well-being. At the same time, public trust in institutions has fallen. Just over a third of Americans say they have a great deal or quite a lot of trust in the medical system. How can your organization strengthen confidence in healthcare while deepening connections within the community? This keynote address will challenge you to rethink how your hospital engages with the people it serves—through authentic storytelling, trust-building and strategic initiatives that go beyond patient care.

10:15 a.m.

Networking Break with Corporate Partners

10:45 a.m.

Panel Discussion: Innovative Strategies to Address Community Behavioral Health Needs

The rise in patients seeking mental health services has created new challenges for hospitals. To help meet your community's behavioral health care needs, a panel of hospital leaders will identify creative solutions to expand access, strengthen services and support individuals. They'll share best practices and strategies that have made a meaningful impact in their organizations—and are tailored to the realities of rural healthcare delivery.

11:45 a.m.

Networking Luncheon with Corporate Sponsors

1:15 p.m.

Hot Topics in Rural Hospital Regulations and Reimbursement

Martie Ross, JD, Consulting Principal, PYA and Director, PYA Center for Rural Health Advancement

Federal regulations and reimbursement policies are shifting rapidly, creating both challenges and opportunities for rural hospitals. Keeping pace with these changes is critical to your hospital's financial stability and long-term success. This session, led by a seasoned regulatory expert, will break down the latest federal policy changes impacting small and rural hospitals. You'll hear about Medicare payment updates, new compliance requirements and shifts in reimbursement methodologies. With a look at opportunities ahead—including potential shifts under the new administration—you'll gain actionable insights and practical strategies to help navigate the road ahead.

2:25 p.m.

Networking Break with Corporate Sponsors

2:45 p.m.

Uncovering How Medicare Advantage Plans Are Not Paying You – Finding Solutions

Richelle Marting, JD, MHSA, RHIA, CPC, CEMC, CPMA, CPC-I, Attorney, Marting Law, LLC

Rural hospitals experienced a more than 100% increase in inpatient days covered by Medicare Advantage (MA) between 2018 and 2023. With continued growth in MA plans expected in rural areas—and reimbursement below traditional Medicare—this session will uncover tactics that MA plans may use to disguise underpayments and nonpayment of claims. You'll also come away with strategies to identify if those tactics are occurring at your facility, as well as practical steps to rectify MA reimbursement issues.

4 p.m.

Closing Comments

At the conclusion of this event, participants will be able to:

- **Strengthen Community Engagement and Trust** – Identify strategies to enhance hospitals' roles as community anchors through innovative storytelling, strategic initiatives and partnerships beyond traditional care delivery.
- **Address Behavioral Health Challenges** – Explore creative solutions and best practices for expanding behavioral health services and addressing community mental health needs in a rural setting.
- **Navigate Regulatory and Reimbursement Changes** – Gain insights into evolving federal policies, reimbursement shifts and compliance requirements.
- **Improve Financial Resilience** – Learn how to identify and combat reimbursement challenges, particularly those associated with Medicare Advantage plans, to ensure financial sustainability.
- **Expand Professional Networks** – Connect with rural healthcare leaders, industry experts and peers to exchange ideas, share challenges and explore collaborative opportunities.

This meeting is designed for teams of healthcare leaders and decision-makers from small and rural hospitals and health systems. By participating as a team, your organization's leaders can learn together and take advantage of our multiple attendee discount.

The meeting will benefit:

- Hospital administrators
- Board of trustee members
- Finance leaders
- Operations leaders
- Quality leaders

- Human resources leaders
- Medical staff leaders
- Nursing leaders
- Compliance leaders
- Government relations leaders

Andrew McCrea

Keynote Speaker and Oscar-Winning Broadcaster

McCrea is a nationally syndicated radio broadcaster, farmer, rancher and motivational speaker. Since 1996, he has hosted the “American Countryside” radio program, heard daily on over 100 stations and XM satellite radio. Through interviews with people from all walks of life—ranging from celebrities to everyday heroes—McCrea shares inspiring stories of resilience, leadership and community.

McCrea is the author of six books, including *The Total Town Makeover*, and has spoken to groups of up to 10,000 people. He is an active farmer and rancher in northwest Missouri and has served as a vice-chairman for the Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri, a three-term school board member, and past chairman of the Missouri Beef Industry Council.

With his unique combination of real-life experience and a passion for building stronger communities, McCrea inspires individuals to make meaningful, lasting changes in their lives.

Richelle Marting, JD, MHSA, RHIA, CPC, CEMC, CPMA, CPC-I

Healthcare Attorney, Marting Law LLC

Marting focuses her legal work on medical coding, billing and reimbursement; HIPAA privacy and security; health information management; and regulatory compliance. She has in-house experience as a health information management professional, including as interim director of managed care contracting, interim health system privacy officer, compliance coordinator, billing office coordinator, medical coder, medical records clerk and certified nurse aide. Marting has helped successfully recover or retain millions of dollars for healthcare organizations and individuals through defending payor audits and preparing appeals. She has also served as an expert in litigation, supporting attorneys on matters related to health information management, reimbursement and privacy.

Martie Ross, JD

Consulting Principal, Office Managing Principal, Kansas City and Director of PYA Center for Rural Health Advancement, PYA

Following a successful two-decade career as a healthcare transactional and regulatory attorney, Ross now serves as a trusted advisor to providers navigating the ever-expanding maze of healthcare regulations. Her deep understanding of new payment and delivery systems and public payer initiatives is an invaluable resource for providers seeking to strategically position their organizations for the future. Ross identifies opportunities and develops realistic action plans, synthesizes complex regulatory schemes, and explains their impact on providers in straightforward and practical terms. She has led hundreds of presentations to professional and community organizations on a broad range of industry topics.

Ross is an active member of the American Health Law Association, Kansas Association of Hospital Attorneys and Greater Kansas City Society of Healthcare Attorneys. She was chosen as a Missouri/Kansas Super Lawyer in 2008 and 2009. She was also selected as one of the Best Lawyers in America® from 2005 to 2011. Ross previously worked as Staff Counsel for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia as well as a Law Clerk for the Hon. Deanell Tacha of the U.S. Court of Appeals for

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