



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 14, 2023

Contact: Paris Ervin  
(217) 541-1153  
pervin@team-iha.org

## ***IHA, ICAHN to Celebrate National Rural Health Day on Nov. 16***

***Illinois' Small and Rural Hospitals Continue to Transform the Delivery of  
Healthcare, Provide Access, Offer Quality Care to Rural Communities***

**NAPERVILLE** – In recognition of National Rural Health Day on Nov. 16, the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) and Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN) are celebrating Illinois' rural hospital community for their tireless efforts to provide high quality care to their patients and address healthcare challenges facing rural communities across the state.

"IHA and ICAHN are proud to represent Illinois' rural hospitals and thank our healthcare heroes for their hard work and dedication to improve the lives of patients they serve," IHA President and CEO A.J. Wilhelmi said. "Illinois' rural hospitals are critical to the communities they serve and remain committed to providing primary to long-term care, offering quality services, and stimulating the economy."

More than 1.4 million Illinoisans live in rural communities and rely on their local hospital as an important—and often only—source of healthcare. Illinois' rural hospitals are continuously identifying new ways to serve their patients, including obstetrics (OB) services. A few examples include:

- **Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services, Gibson City** – This Critical Access Hospital has been providing OB services to eight counties in east central Illinois since it opened in 1952. Patients as far away as 50 miles come to Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services (GAHHS) to deliver. Every year, the hospital brings between 225 and 250 babies into the world, or about half the deliveries in its market. In 2014, GAHHS invested over \$3 million into a new, state-of-the-art OB unit with five labor and delivery rooms, a dedicated C-Section suite, and nursery unit. The hospital has partnered with UI Health to open a rural track family practice OB residency. Second and third-year residents will work at GAHHS for their entire residency, learning rural medicine. The first resident joined the hospital on Jan. 1, 2022.
- **Jersey Community Hospital, Jerseyville** – This tweener hospital no longer delivers babies, but it still provides OB services for its patients. An employed OB/ GYN sees patients in Jerseyville but delivers at Alton Memorial Hospital in Alton—about 20 miles away. This physician is also part of the Alton Memorial Hospital call group. This creative arrangement has made it possible for families to receive OB services and deliver without driving long distances. Jersey Community Hospital is located in western Illinois outside of St. Louis.

- **Crawford Memorial Hospital, Robinson** - The OB physician at this Critical Access Hospital in eastern Illinois identifies patients with complicated or high-risk pregnancies who need maternal-fetal medicine services. Every first Wednesday of the month those patients can meet with a maternal fetal medicine specialist via telemedicine instead of having to travel. In the first three months of 2022, Crawford Memorial Hospital provided these services to seven women.

“ICAHN is proud to partner with IHA to celebrate all the many accomplishments and innovations our member hospitals have created or enhanced to make rural healthcare even better. Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services, Jersey Community Hospital and Crawford Memorial Hospital are three of 58 critical access and small, rural hospitals in our membership that should be lauded for their efforts to make their communities healthier,” said Pat Schou, ICAHN Executive Director.

Illinois has 84 small and rural hospitals, which includes 54 Critical Access Hospitals, and an annual economic impact of more than \$13 billion.

National Rural Health Day is an opportunity to bring attention to and honor the efforts of rural healthcare providers, communities, organizations, State Offices of Rural Health (SORH), and other stakeholders dedicated to addressing the unique healthcare needs of rural America. For more information about National Rural Health Day, visit <https://www.powerofrural.org/>.

#### **About IHA**

The Illinois Health and Hospital Association, with offices in Chicago, Naperville, Springfield and Washington, D.C., advocates for Illinois’ more than 200 hospitals and nearly 40 health systems as they serve their patients and communities. IHA members provide a broad range of services—not just within their walls, but across the continuum of healthcare and in their communities. Reflecting the diversity of the state, IHA members consist of nonprofit, investor-owned and public hospitals in the following categories: community, safety net, rural, critical access, specialty and teaching hospitals, including academic medical centers. For more information, see [team-iha.org](http://team-iha.org). Like IHA on [Facebook](#). Follow IHA on [Twitter](#).

#### **About ICAHN**

Quite simply, the mission of our organization is – and always has been – to strengthen critical access and small, rural hospitals through collaboration. Better together, ICAHN and its 58 member hospitals make it their overarching goal to preserve access to rural healthcare while improving the vibrancy and viability of the communities served. ICAHN accomplishes this goal by:

- Ensuring appropriate funding and financial resources
- Continuing efforts to be a recognized resource on critical access hospitals and rural healthcare in Illinois
- Promoting efficient use of information technology services for the network and members alike
- Maintaining and further developing specific-type peer networks, activities, and listservs that promote hospital operational efficiencies and connectivity
- Offering ongoing educational opportunities and resources
- Developing and offering projects that are self-sustaining and which add value to the organization and its members
- Developing and offering shared services that offer value to members

- Establishing an institute that specializes in rural health population management

ICAHN is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation established in 2003 and is governed by a nine-member board of directors. For more information, see <https://icahn.org>. Follow ICAHN on [Facebook](#).

###