

Community Foundation awarded \$25,000 health fund grant

August 18, 2011

The Salina Regional Health Foundation Community Health Investment Program (CHIP) has awarded a \$25,000 grant to the Ottawa County Community Foundation to help establish a public health fund for residents of Ottawa County. The grant will generate a 50 percent match from the Kansas Health Foundation, Wichita, as a part of the GROW II initiative.

CHIP was established in 1994 by Salina Regional Health Center, and the health center continues to provide the primary funding for the program. It was created as a vehicle for grants to organizations that, like the hospital, are working to improve the health of the people in north central Kansas.

The grants will assist the Ottawa County Community Foundation in a goal to leverage dollars from the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF) that will benefit their population forever. The CHIP grant will be of tremendous assistance as the foundation strives to meet this match.

The grant also meets a need for the CHIP committee. Since the establishment of CHIP, the committee has often discussed the need or desire to utilize some of the generous CHIP funds to benefit area communities, particularly those in the Sunflower Health Network, a network of 16 rural hospitals that work together for efficiency and advocacy. The hospital in Ottawa County is a member of the Sunflower Health Network. Approximately 40 percent of the patients at Salina Regional Health Center come from outside Saline County, mostly from hospitals in the Network.

The establishment of permanent public health funds gives CHIP the unique opportunity to provide ongoing support to the citizens in Ottawa County while staying within the broad guidelines that were part of the original establishment of CHIP: to benefit the health of the community outside of traditional health care.

The Greater Salina Community Foundation wrote the grant to CHIP on behalf of the Ottawa County Community Foundation. Three other rural foundations also received CHIP grants. They are: Smoky Hills Charitable Foundation, Smoky Valley Community Foundation and Post Rock Community Foundation. All of the grant recipients are affiliates of the Greater Salina Community Foundation, and all the hospitals in those communities are members of the Sunflower Health Network.