

Gov. Beshear: Kentucky Included in UnitedHealthcare Rural Health Expansion, Supporting Rural Hospitals and Enhancing Care for Families

Nationwide program launched to lower costs and simplify processes for health-care providers

Submitted by the
Office of Governor Andy
Beshear

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 21, 2026) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear announced that Kentucky is one of five states included in UnitedHealthcare's expansion of its Rural Payment Acceleration Pilot, a program focused on lowering health care costs and increasing access in rural communities. The program helps local hospitals get paid faster, cut down on paperwork and increase care for families.

"Rural health-care

facilities are a lifeline for Americans across our country, and the federal government's dangerous Medicaid cuts are causing them to face closure or reduce services, which ultimately puts lives at risk," said Gov. Beshear. "UnitedHealthcare is working to provide real solutions to keep these health-care facilities open and operating so that families in rural communities can continue to access the care they need and deserve. Kentucky is one of the states hit hardest by the federal cuts, and this forward-thinking program will

make a difference."

The Kentucky hospitals included in the initial rollout are Harrison Memorial Hospital in Cynthiana, Murray-Calloway County Public Hospital in Murray, Pikeville Medical Center in Pikeville, Taylor Regional Hospital in Campbellsville and T.J. Samson Community Hospital in Glasgow.

"Reducing administrative complexity in health care is critical to improving access and efficiency," said Neil Thornbury, CEO of T.J. Regional Health. "This is a meaningful step forward for patients and

providers alike. Simplifying prior authorization allows our clinicians and staff to spend less time on paperwork and more time at the bedside. We appreciate UnitedHealthcare for recognizing the impact of this issue and Gov. Beshear for including our hospital in this effort."

UnitedHealthcare's Rural Payment Acceleration Pilot seeks to strengthen rural hospitals through more reliable and quicker payments, to ensure their doors remain open and able to serve rural communities. The initial pilot, launched in four

states in January 2026, helped hospitals receive Medicare Advantage payments faster. On average, payment times decreased from fewer than 30 days to fewer than 15 days.

Yesterday, the company announced it was taking new steps to build on this progress by introducing the following initiatives:

Speeding payments by up to 50% for approximately 1,500 rural hospitals and all Critical Access Hospitals;

Exempting rural providers from most medical prior authorization requirements across all

lines of business; and

Launching new hub-and-spoke partnerships designed to deliver essential services directly to patients in their communities.

The original four states included in the pilot were Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri and Oklahoma. Now, nine states are included with the addition of Kentucky, Alabama, Arkansas, Virginia and West Virginia.

UnitedHealthcare is immediately expending accelerated payments to independent rural hospitals in Kentucky following today's announcement.

Looking back to April 23, 2018

Written by Christy Hoots

The following information was entered into the April 23, 2018, edition of The Ledger Independent:

Mason FCCLA heads to nationals

Numerous Mason County High School FCCLA students will be attending the national competition in Atlanta, Ga. this summer.

Family Consumer and Community Leaders of America holds a state competition each year, where students can present projects they have completed. Those who place in the state competition will go on the nationals.

This year, 40 MCHS students will attend nationals, according to FCCLA Advisor Shannon

Roberts.

"We had 40 kids that attended," she said. "They competed in STAR events, which is students taking action with recognition. They do projects within the schools and communities and then present their projects in front of a panel."

According to Roberts, the students who placed included Noah Dunaway and Josh Coleman, first place in Chapter in Review Display; Asher Braughton, Drew Denham and Dillon Osgood, second place in Sports Nutrition; Erin Hasler and Meya Myrick, second place in Chapter Service Project Display; Hannah Applegate, Maddie McDowell and Abigail Spencer, second place in Advocacy; Jenna Planck, Sydney Lilley and Stacey

Williams, second place in Food Innovations; Alyssa Cracraft, Kendra Shoemaker and Lexie Burns, first place in Food Innovations; Maegan Jones and Riley Horch, first place in Promote and Publicize FCCLA.

Applegate said the project she, McDowell and Spencer worked on was for Jenna's Law, House Bill 101, which will change KRS 510.020 to state that a 16 or 17-year-old is incapable of consent when the other person involved is 28 years old or older. It would also amend KRS 510.060 to add third-degree rape when a person who is age 28 or older has intercourse with a person 16 or 17 years old.

Cracraft, Shoemaker and Burns created a recipe for an Oishi Oishi

Wasabi Cheesecake.

"We had to create a traditionally American dessert with an international touch," Cracraft said. "It's not everyday you come up with a foreign flavor that you incorporate into a dessert, and even though you may not use those things in the real world, it stills gives you the opportunity to enhance your public speaking and leadership skills for down the road. We were new to the experience, but we really enjoyed it and we received first place, so we're excited to be representing our school at nationals."

Other projects included a fitness and nutrition plan and a sepsis awareness and fundraising effort.

Roberts said she also wanted to recognize

Olivia O'Hearn for completing her office as 2017-2018 Kentucky Vice President of Parliamentary Law and Dunaway for being elected as 2018-2019 Kentucky FCCLA State President.

Roberts said Dunaway is the first male president of FCCLA in 15 years.

"I have several goals for my time as state president," Dunaway said. "One of those includes increasing male membership. Out of 4,000 members in the state, only about 400 are male. I also want to increase the amount of affiliated and active chapters across the state. We're going to make a tool kit to implement on our website to give to chapters across the state to help them affiliate easier and do STAR events better. My

last goal is to bring us into the 21st century a little more. We do well on social media, but our website isn't used that much, so we're going to try to beef that up."

Dunaway said though the conference can be stressful, it is also rewarding.

"For me, it was stressful, because I was running for a state office, but at the state leadership conferences, it prepares us for adult life," he said. "There are workshops for time management and other issues. They're really encouraging. I've made some of my best friends that I never would have met had it not been for FCCLA."

He had one toe

Van Yandell

Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Have you ever known where you were, but not exactly? We were working an area in East Africa north of Nairobi, Kenya, in the Embu province somewhere between Kerugoya and Nyeri.

Not knowing exactly

where we were prohibits me from giving an exact location; however, we knew Nairobi was south of us and that was enough.

This is in the Mt. Kenya (17,057 feet) area. Being the second highest mountain in Africa, it is a sight to behold. With its rugged peaks, that mountain has a beauty all its own.

Traveling through such an area preaching the Gospel is a unique experience and one I would like to have again. We met some unique people and found the Africans to be

very gracious.

It was not uncommon for villagers to invite us to a meal. To feast on githeri, a mixture of corn and beans, is a pleasant surprise, especially when one has been walking the bush or jungle for hours.

Where there were roads, we had an old Toyota pick-up truck we used for a speaker's stand. With microphones and speakers in the back, we would pull into a market, town or village and someone would speak to gather a crowd. Then one of us would provide, with an interpreter, a Gospel message.

The people were anxious to meet and talk with us. One man wanted his grandson to meet me.

He left for a while; then returned with a young boy about seven, maybe eight years old.

I was the first white man the little boy had ever seen. He could not take his eyes off me. White man in Swahili is "Wazungu." He could not stop staring at my blue-green eyes. My eye color was a new experience for him.

In one village we were called the "Umbaba" meaning "going around in circles." The British occupied Kenya until 1963 and the nationals saw them as constantly "going around in circles," thus the name.

In other villages the children always gathered around to get a closer look and feel. They always wanted to feel my arms. The African men have no hair on their arms so here I was the main attraction once again. Thinking of the children running their hands over my arms still brings a smile.

In the market in Embu, was a vegetable stand; it had plantain. I'd never eaten plantain and thought it was a kind of banana. I bought one for two schillings and proceeded to try to peel it like a banana.

My trusty pocketknife managed to get into the "tasty" part. Not realizing it had to be cooked, it puckered me up like a persimmon and the locals couldn't stop laughing. Laughing when puckered

is not easy but an effort was made.

One man that educated the Wazungu wore one flip-flop on his right foot. He only had one toe on that foot and none on his left foot. He was probably seventy plus years old and had walked so many miles on the sandy trails and roads, the abrasion had worn off all his toes but one.

His flip-flop was wired to the one toe. He didn't seem to be in pain and appeared to be a happy guy. We sat on a log by the entrance to the market. I explained to him the beliefs of Christianity. He prayed to receive Jesus on that log that sunny day in East Africa. What a great blessing that was for both of us!

When we leave such a place, we know we'll probably never be back. Parting words are usually "If I don't see you again here on Earth, I'll see you in Heaven."

Another time we were close to the Indian Ocean. In one village an elderly lady received Jesus. I'll never forget the tears in her eyes as she heard the Gospel story. No one had ever told her that God loved her so much He was willing to shed His blood and die for her so she could have eternal life.

The next Sunday the Utange church held a baptism in the ocean about two miles from the church. She walked for

those two miles, barefoot on a gravelly road to be baptized. I will never forget the look on her face when she came up out of the water.

Christ Jesus voluntarily, sacrificially shed His blood, gave His life for the sin of all mankind. Salvation is because of His sacrifice; because of what He did.

We have found people of many nationalities, many ethnic groups, many skin colors, and many other differences that embrace Jesus when they hear of His sacrifice because of His love for them.

We must always teach that eternal salvation is attained by a faith-based belief (Ephesians 2:8) in Christ Jesus crucified (Matthew 27:35) for the remission of sin (1 John 1:9), resurrected (Matthew 28:6) and ascended alive into Heaven (Acts 1:9).

Reaching people for the Lord Jesus has been one of the most satisfying and blessed things I have ever participated in. We don't have to go to the "uttermost parts of the Earth" to find someone to tell. Go for the blessing and tell someone. You'll be glad you did and so will they.

Van Yandell is a retired Industrial Arts teacher, an ordained gospel evangelist and commissioned missionary. His email is vmy3451@gmail.com

THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT

JENNIFER DONAHUE, Publisher
jdonahue@cmpapers.com, ext. 1240
LESLIE BAKER, Sales Manager
lbaker@cmpapers.com, ext. 1119
PEYTON DUNAWAY, Editor
pdunaway@cmpapers.com, ext. 1270
DANIEL MILLER, Sports Editor
dmiller@cmpapers.com, ext. 1273
CHAD SHELTON, Production/IT
Manager
csnelton@cmpapers.com, ext. 1224
MELODY EVANS, Graphics/
Pagination Manager, melodyevans@
championcarolinias.com

News
Story ideas, news tips, etc., should be called in to the newsroom between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Call 564-9091.

Delivery Problems
Circulation Customer Service:
Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Comments, Letters

The Ledger Independent welcomes and encourages comments from its readers on a wide variety of local, regional, state, national and international issues. Letters to the editor should be typed, double-spaced and mailed to the Editor, The Ledger Independent, 120 Limestone St., Maysville, KY 41056. We welcome comments 24/7 at 606-564-9091 x1251. Please speak slowly and clearly when leaving a comment.

The newspaper reserves the right to edit all letters and comments for libelous, obscene or other inappropriate material.

Corrections
The Ledger Independent seeks to correct all significant errors brought to the editor's attention. If you have a question or correction on news coverage, contact Peyton Dunaway, editor.

Subscriptions

Periodical postage paid at Maysville, KY. I understand that delivery and billing will continue beyond the initial order period unless I contact the newspaper at 564-9091. Rates may change after introductory offer period. Subscription rates are subject to change.

Postmaster/Subscribers

Please send notice of address change or correction by enclosing mailing address label, plus new address, two to four weeks in advance to: The Ledger Independent, 120 Limestone St., Maysville, KY 41056.

Back Copies

Back issues of The Ledger Independent are for sale at our office at 120 Limestone St. in Maysville. The Ledger Independent keeps a file of back issues for at least one month and can often provide newspapers up to a year after publication.

Advertising

To purchase display or classified advertising in The Ledger Independent, call one of the numbers listed above and an advertising representative will be happy to serve you.

Advertising Deadlines

Placement and cancellation deadlines for classified in-column line ads for Tuesday-Thursday are accepted until 2 p.m. the day before publication. Classified in-column ads for Saturday are accepted until 11 a.m. the day before publication. Ads for Monday are accepted until 2 p.m. the Friday before publication. Display advertising is accepted until 2 p.m. daily, 48 hours before publication date. Ads that require color, proofs or special camera work require an additional 24 hours added to the above deadline.

SIA Schumacher
INSURANCE AGENCY
BUSINESS • LIFE • HEALTH •
COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST
www.schumacherinsuranceagency



Eric Schumacher
Owner

895 US 68 Maysville, KY 41056
129 West Miami St., Brooksville, KY 41004
58 South Main St., Mt. Olivet, KY 41064

Phone:
(606) 759-5663