

Local hospitals enter "unique and rare" affiliation

(MSC News)--Hiawatha Community Hospital and Atchison-based Amberwell Health on Thursday announced an affiliation.

According to a joint news release, the affiliation “provides the opportunity to strengthen the future of healthcare in Northeast Kansas and surrounding areas, with the release noting that “within Amberwell Health, the affiliated organizations can share clinical service lines and operational infrastructures.”

A [study](#), cited in the release, showed that nearly 30% of rural hospitals in Kansas are at high financial risk for closure, with both organizations, according to the release, realizing “the importance of affiliating with other rural healthcare facilities in order to maximize the ability to invest in providing more care and services as well as invest in people, equipment, and facilities that allow both organizations to evolve with the rapidly advancing healthcare field.”

The release notes that “affiliation between rural healthcare systems is still unique and rare across the country,” adding that the affiliation of the two “will protect local jobs and allow both organizations to retain their current governing and leadership structure, while focusing on strategic quality and growth in Northeast Kansas.”

Rebranding, and individual service lines at existing Hiawatha locations will begin evolving over what the release calls “the next few months,” with the two organizations working together “to serve patients and communities.”