

QUALITY UPDATE

Quality improvement and patient safety news

Fall 2025



RESILIENCE IN ACTION: ADJUSTING OUR SAILS TOGETHER

Adjusting your sails to set a new course when the winds have turned. This issue is all about pivoting and adopting new strategies when needed. Click on the links to learn more.



Charting the Course

The pace of change in health care is accelerating like never before. There are many headwinds — workforce shortages, looming cuts to Medicaid and health exchange coverage, hospital closures, and reduced access to care. How can health care organizations meet the challenges?

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Resilience in Motion

So many of us in the health care field feel these pressures from the national to the local level. In the face of these increasing obstacles, we are confronted with the question of how we should respond and shift our sails when personally facing change.

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The Future of Care: Resilience, Efficiency, and Collaboration

Health care has been facing significant headwinds as disruptive forces continue to strain the current model of care delivery. The U.S. population growth has directly led to an increased demand for health care services, specialized care, and a greater strain on the existing health care system and workforce.

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Get the latest news on new Board members, National Rural Health Day, and an upcoming feedback opportunity.

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Charting the Course



Jennifer P. Lundblad, PhD, MBA, President and CEO, Stratis Health

The pace of change in health care is accelerating like never before. There are many headwinds — workforce shortages, looming cuts to Medicaid and health exchange coverage, hospital closures, and reduced access to care. At the same time, there are winds coming from new directions — AI and technology advancements, investment from private equity and venture capital, and emerging research.

With so many winds pushing in different directions, one question rises to the top: **how can health care organizations meet the challenges?** These headwinds and new winds require us to adjust our sails... choosing new routes to reach our destination, reframing our thinking, working alongside partners and allies, and focusing on what is within our control. In practice, that looks like:

- Building organizational resilience
- Increasing efficiency and embracing technology
- Creating intentional collaboration which bridges health care and community

As we lead health improvement work across the country, we at Stratis Health are both observing and actively engaged in this type of innovation and adaptation. New collaborations and partnerships are being formed that strengthen resilience by adjusting to scale, complementary skills, and shared expertise. Leaders and organizations with shared interests

The theme for this issue of Quality Update is “Resilience in Action: Adjusting Our Sails Together.”

I invite you to read the collection of articles in this issue with an eye toward the adjustments your organization may need to make by adopting new change management strategies and tools, leveraging technology and capturing efficiencies, and creating intentional collaborations which expand your capacity and expertise.



are coming together to have a stronger, more sustained voice and influence in health care policy and programs. Examples that will inspire your thinking include:

Clinically Integrated Networks (CINs) are emerging as a way to join forces, build alliances, increase resilience, and embrace technology, especially among independent hospitals and clinics in rural communities. CINs allow joint purchasing power and enable technology solutions by working at a larger scale, in support of independence and sustainability. Stratis Health supported Rough Rider Network and Headwaters Network CINs in North Dakota and Minnesota, respectively, to increase practice efficiency and help restore joy and purpose in work.

Correctional Health has been in the spotlight, especially as justice-involved individuals disproportionately experience substance use disorders.

Getting people rapidly assessed and on an evidence-based care path is critical for their health and for the efficient functioning of law enforcement systems. Stratis Health is providing training and technical assistance to county jails across the country to “adjust their sails” by implementing new workflows and processes that put medication for opioid use disorder in place as the gold standard of care.

The Partnership to Align Social Care facilitates the recognition and development of social care as part of overall health, including through community care hubs. The Partnership brings together community-based organizations, health care organizations, payers, and philanthropy to rethink and redesign how to best serve people and communities. Through Stratis Health’s Rural Health Value program, we are shaping how the Partnership aligns to support those in rural communities. ○

Stratis Health’s Three Strategies

Co-design system changes that connect health care and community organizations to improve health.

Advance a safe and compassionate health care environment for those receiving and those providing care.

Accelerate evidence-informed and culturally responsive care and services.

Stratis Health’s three strategies are guiding how we are adjusting our sails by re-framing our work, responding to emerging challenges and ensuring we meet the needs of our partners, collaborators, and customers in service to improving health and health care.

Resilience in Motion

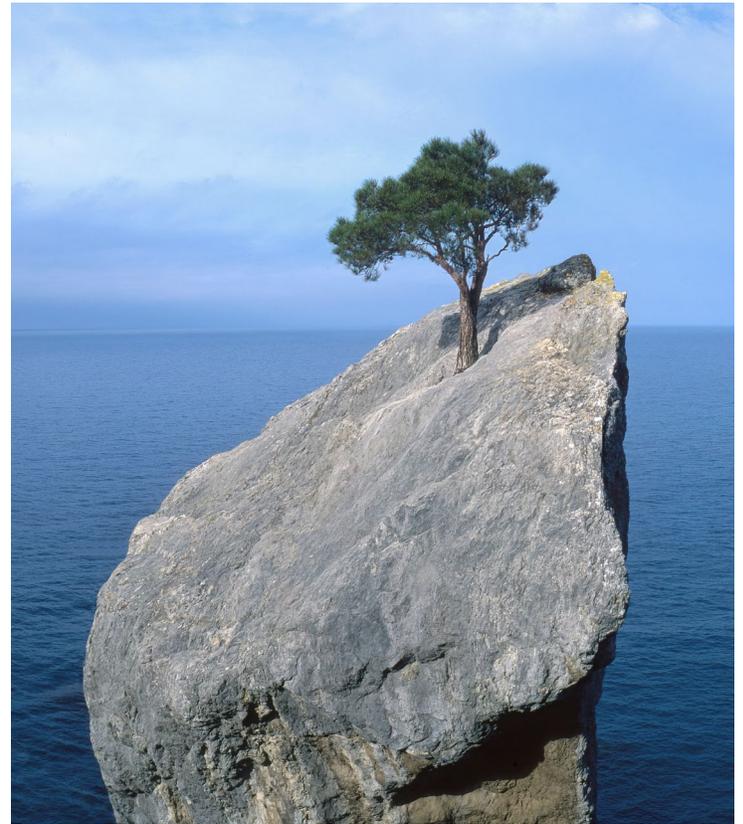


Kelly Fluharty,
MPH, Stratis Health
Board Member

This past May, I was told that my position was being eliminated. I had weathered many ups and downs at the rural hospital and clinic where I worked for the past ten years, but the pressures over the past two felt entirely different. Though I could see “sails shifting” and understood the “why”, it still left me grieving, untethered, and uncertain about what was ahead. This was not only a professional change, but a deeply personal one, as someone who has invested so much in improving their community’s health.

So many of us in the healthcare field feel these pressures from the federal to the local level. In the face of these increasing obstacles, we are confronted with the question of how we should respond and shift our sails. As we’ve collectively learned through COVID-19, workforce shortages, regulatory demands, and financial stresses, resilience isn’t about working ourselves back to where we were “before”. Rather, resilience is a process of adapting and learning, even when the future feels uncertain.

As I moved out of my prior role, I immediately turned to friends, mentors, and colleagues. These conversations helped me process this transition and opened possibilities that allowed me to envision new ways of serving my community. This time to reflect together provided a critical opportunity to recommit to personal values, which anchored me as I moved forward. These anchors reminded me that while titles and roles shift, the commitment to community and health endures.



As I considered what that meant for my future, I found myself returning to one central question: how do we respond? For me, a few practices made all the difference:

- **Stay connected:** Lean on friends, family, colleagues, and community. Our relationships are our lifeline.
- **Hold tight to personal (and organizational) values:** Remembering why you chose this work can turn struggle into purpose.
- **Lean into adaptability:** When faced with pressure, we can sometimes react with rigidity. Opening ourselves to possibility can lead to creative directions.
- **Take care of ourselves (and each other):** Notice when you need a breather, and notice when others might need that, too.
- **Recognize the wins:** Often, we work so hard for small gains, but we need to relish those bright moments to keep the wind in our sails

Looking ahead, resilience will only grow in importance for those of us connected to healthcare. Let’s not allow the challenges of these times to fracture us; instead, let them pull us together in closer collaboration and mutual support. ○

The Future of Care: Resilience, Efficiency, and Collaboration



Kristina Bloomquist, M.Ed., Senior Vice President, Quality, Safety, and Health Equity, Stratis Health

Healthcare has been facing significant headwinds as disruptive forces continue to strain the current model of care delivery. The U.S. population growth, particularly the aging of the population, has directly led to an increased demand for healthcare services, specialized care, and a greater strain on the existing healthcare system and workforce. Health expenditures per person in the U.S. were \$13,432 in 2023, which was over \$3,700 more than any other high-income nation ([Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker, 2025](#)) Research has documented that increases in cost fail to produce high quality or equitable outcomes in healthcare. Building resilience is necessary to the survival of healthcare... to both stay afloat and enable forward progress. Healthcare needs new sails that transform headwinds into momentum for innovation.

Sails that bring efficiency with speed can be seen in how organizations are responding to workforce challenge. For example, [Humla Health](#) has reimagined staffing and scheduling through a streamlined technology platform that connects healthcare facilities with credentialed W-2 nurses, operating as a digital matchmaker. Efficiency in creating closed-loop referral systems to address the social determinants of health is embodied by [Unite Us](#), which has reimagined how non-medical services can be seamlessly integrated into the clinical journey—as a sail that shifts when you do to stay on course. Building resiliency



“Rural health across the country is at an inflection point where traditional approaches and models must be retooled for the sustainability of high-quality care for rural residents. This challenge opens the door to innovate and partner in new ways. All 50 states have responded to the RHTP and await this funding to transform the rural health care system for the future.”

Laura B. Hudson, MPA, Senior Director of Program Services and Contracting, National Rural Health Association

also means removing non-medical activities that slow down the provision of high-quality care and replacing them with purposeful, well-designed technology.

When groups of sailboats travel together as a flotilla, navigation is coordinated to reach a pre-determined destination as headwinds are managed collectively. Within healthcare, ‘flotillas’ may

take the form of strategic alliances, networks or collaboratories. Recently, [Medical Alley](#) has sought to “float all boats” by exploring strategies to develop a pool of qualified mental health professionals who are better representative of diverse patient populations through similar background, culture or shared lived-experience. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is also bringing collaboration into the laboratory (The Future of Care... continued on next page)

(The Future of Care... continued from previous page)

to address issues of major public health importance by gathering evidence faster and more efficiently through the implementation of cost-effective, large-scale research studies that engage health care delivery organizations as research partners. Clinically Integrated Networks (CINs) are another example of group travel that drives efficiency, reduces

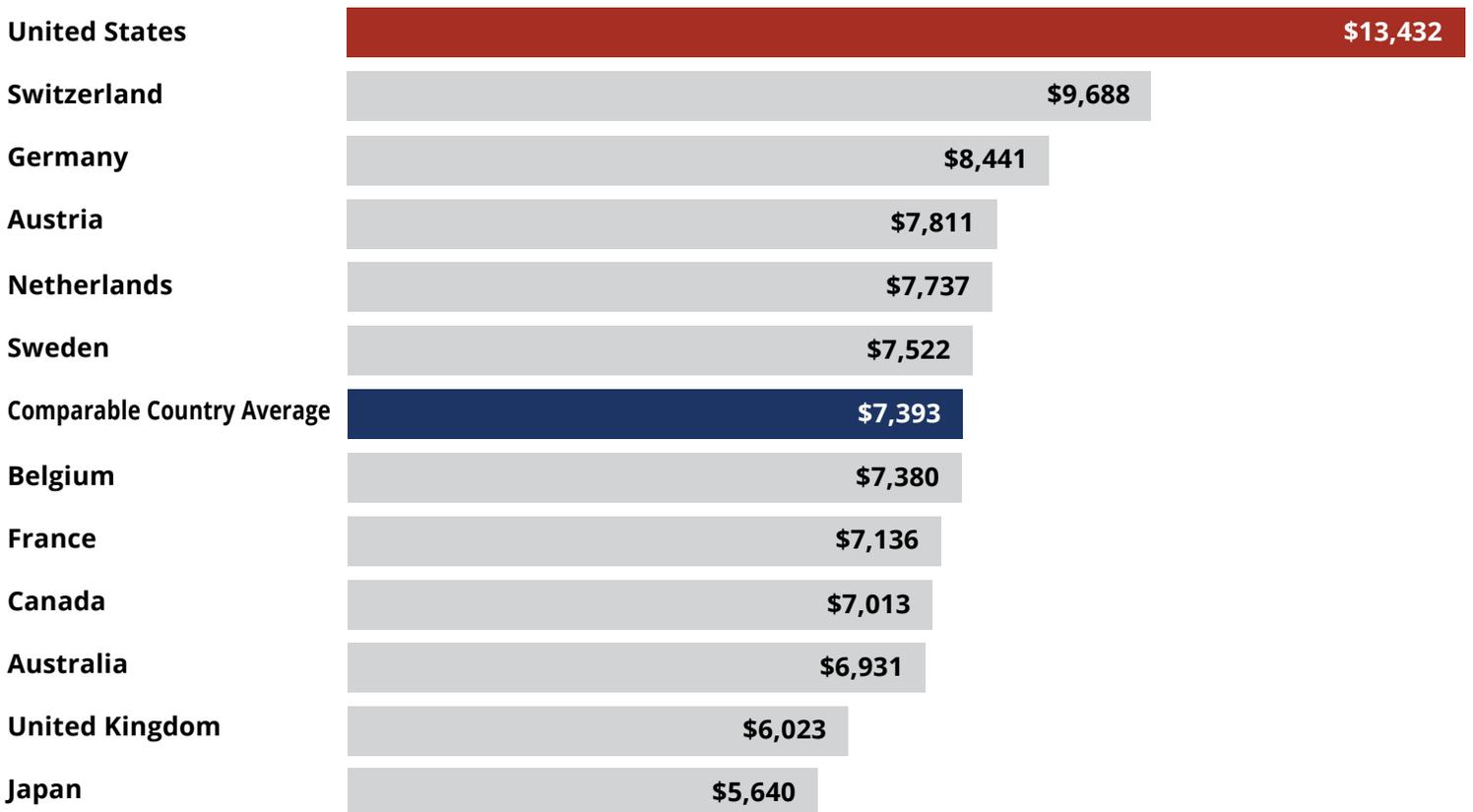
cost, and improves quality. These intentional collaborations create resilience to avert headwinds by traveling together, as a flotilla, navigating systemic challenges that persist in healthcare.

Are your sails set and are you working together with partners to chart a course that adds value

to the healthcare system? Stratis Health brings expertise in navigating headwinds in reaching new levels of performance to stay resilient in today's ever-changing environment. We'd welcome a conversation to explore your headwinds and work together to make lives better for those you serve.



Health expenditures per capita, U.S. Dollars, 2023 (current prices and PPP adjusted)



Notes: Data from Australia, Belgium, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and United States are estimated. Data from Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom are provisional. Source: KFF analysis of OECD data

STRATIS HEALTH NEWS



Kelly Fluharty, David Satin, and Jennifer Lundblad

Thank You For Your Service And Leadership

Karen Monsen and **David Satin** complete their Stratis Health board terms on December 31, 2025, after six year and nine years, respectively. David was also recognized in October 2025 as a Notable Nonprofit Board Member by Twin Cities Business.

Stratis Health Reaccredited

Stratis Health has been reaccredited through 2029 as a Continuing Medical Education (CME) provider by the Minnesota Medical Association.

Welcome New Employees!

Briana Williamson joins Stratis Health as a Quality Improvement Advisor and **Jan Wagner** joins Stratis Health as a Program Manager.

Mission Statement

Stratis Health is a nonprofit organization that leads collaboration and innovation in health care quality and safety and serves as a trusted expert in facilitating improvement for people and communities.

Stratis Health is dedicated to “making lives better.” The following values guide our everyday interactions in support of our mission:

Our Values:

1. In all interactions and decisions, we are committed to quality, defined as excellence in execution; respect, defined as being fair and inclusive; and integrity, defined as being honest and transparent.
2. Our staff emphasizes collaboration — team work and partnership — in all relationships.
3. We aspire to be an organization where staff is continually learning, optimistic, and having fun while delivering high-quality work.

[View the Stratis Health Fact Sheet](#)

[View the Stratis Health Transformation Framework](#)



Congratulations!

Stratis Health CEO Jennifer Lundblad was recognized for her six years of service on the Superior Health Quality Alliance board of directors, including serving as the first board chair when the organization was established by Stratis Health and seven partners in 2018.

National Rural Health Day

Since 2011, the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health (NOSORH) has set aside the third Thursday of November to celebrate the “Power of Rural” on National Rural Health Day (NRHD). This day is an opportunity to bring attention to and honor the incredible efforts of rural healthcare providers, communities, organizations, State Offices of Rural Health, and other stakeholders dedicated to addressing the unique healthcare needs of rural America.



Your Voice Matters: Survey Coming Spring 2026

Thank you for your continued support of and engagement in improving health and health care. To continue delivering meaningful insights, fresh perspectives, and cutting-edge ideas in Stratis Health’s Quality Update newsletter, we want to hear from you. In our Spring 2026 issue, we will launch a brief survey where you can share feedback and recommendations that will help share future issues of Quality Update. Stay tuned for more information to follow.

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- Karen Monsen
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