

# 2026 ICAHN ECONOMIC SUMMIT

**MARCH 31, 2026**  
CROWNE PLAZA SPRINGFIELD, IL

ADVANCING RURAL ECONOMIC GROWTH  
AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

## EVENT AGENDA

### 8:30 - 8:50 AM Opening Remarks

**Tracy Warner**, ICAHN Executive Director  
**Don Robbins**, MHA, Chief Executive Officer, Massac Memorial Hospital  
**William Davis**, MBA, CLSS, Illinois Region President | Administration Deaconess Illinois

### 8:50 - 9:45 AM A New Prognosis: Why Rural Health Depends on a New Economic Model

**Amanda Weinstein**, PhD., Director of Research, Knowledge, and Evaluation at the Center on Rural Innovation

This session will equip rural hospital leaders with ideas to reframe their role from healthcare providers to essential partners in their community's economic transformation, providing an actionable economic development framework to build more resilient, prosperous, and healthy rural communities.

### 9:45 - 10:15 AM Break and Networking

### 10:15 - 10:45 AM Unlocking Entrepreneurial Opportunities

**Chris Egelston**, Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship, TEDx speaker, Community Engagement Leader

This session details a proven structure to engage, educate, and empower youth entrepreneurship while inspiring collaboration between healthcare networks and community organizations to develop the next generation of leaders.

### 10:50 - 11:50 AM How Rural Hospitals Can Power Innovation

**Roger Leenerts**, Director of Entrepreneurship Quincy University

This session will explore how building innovative partnerships with local businesses can create a strong, sustainable ecosystem that supports rural hospitals and promotes long-term community prosperity.

### NOON - 1:00 PM Lunch

**12:30 - 1:00 PM**

**Lunch and Lightning Sessions**

**USDA Funding Opportunities**

**Julie Hatfield**, Community Programs Director, USDA Rural Development

**From Data to Action**

**Alison Spenner**, Assistant to the Chair, and **Sowmy Thuppal**, Vice Chair and Resource Associate, Southern Illinois University, Department of Population Science and Policy

**1:00 - 1:50 PM**

**Panel Discussion: Community Engagement and Transformation**

**Kathy Hull**, CHNA and New Service Coordinator, ICAHN

**Dolan Dalpoas**, Chief Community Impact and Philanthropy Officer, Memorial Health

**Valeria Cueto**, Vice President of Equity & Experience, Memorial Health

**Ashlyn Housewright**, Executive Director Community Health & Wellness, Memorial Hospital Carthage

This panel discussion will focus on rural community needs and highlight how effective leadership engagement at the local level can drive collaboration, innovation, and meaningful community impact.

**1:50 - 2:00 PM**

**Break**

**2:05 - 2:55 PM**

**Creating Collaborations and Partnerships for Community Success**

**Deb Barnett**, PhD., Executive Director, Southern Illinois Now (SI Now)

**Woody Thorne**, MSeD, Chief Development Executive, Southern Illinois Healthcare

**Kathy Lively**, Southern Illinois NOW (SI NOW) Board

This session will explore healthcare's role as a catalyst for economic development and discuss how healthcare organizations can spark regional growth and collaboration.

**3:00 - 3:30 PM**

**Action Planning and Next Steps**

**Marie Barry**, Director of Community Economic & Workforce Development, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative

In this closing session, participants will discover how organizations similar to their own have moved from ideas to action, offering a practical plan to use when returning to their community.

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU  
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