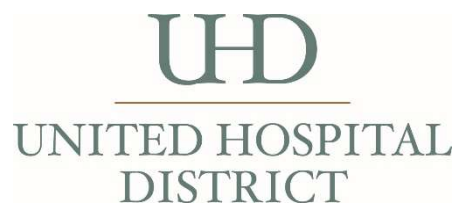


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Hospital District's CEO Named 2025 Minnesota Community Star Award Winner

Blue Earth, MN – November 18, 2025 — United Hospital District (UHD) is proud to announce that its CEO, Rick Ash, has been named as a 2025 Minnesota Community Star Award Winner by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Mr. Ash is one of four dedicated healthcare professionals MDH is recognizing who have made significant contributions to the health and wellbeing of their rural communities.

Minnesota Commissioner of Health Dr. Brooke Cunningham said, "I continue to be inspired by the level of dedication and service exhibited by our Greater Minnesota health care workforce and partners. In the heart of our rural communities, where resources are scarce, but needs are great, these remarkable people and organizations have gone above and beyond to deliver compassionate, innovative care that strengthens families, bolsters local economies and preserves the vital fabric of rural life. It is an honor to celebrate their extraordinary commitment to building a healthier, more resilient Minnesota."

Rick is being honored for his work to improve and expand rural health services in Greater Minnesota as well as his long-time service in state and local organizations representing and promoting rural health.

Asked how UHD makes a difference in rural health, Rick said, "At UHD, we believe healthcare is a community endeavor—shaped by listening to our patients, engaging community members in planning, and investing in services that reflect their priorities. UHD is the only 24/7 Emergency Department within 20 miles and the only facility within 50 miles offering obstetric care. To strengthen care close to home, we have expanded surgical and specialty services, introduced robot-assisted surgery, grown telehealth programs, and modernized facilities. These efforts ensure essential care remains local for families."

"The 'Power of Rural' is the resilience, creativity, and deep-rooted commitment that rural communities bring to every challenge," Rick said. "It's about turning geographic distance into an advantage—where our closeness as a community becomes our strength in providing care that is both high-tech and deeply personal."

For more information about United Hospital District please visit [uhd.org](https://www.uhd.org) or call 507-526-3273.

About UHD:

United Hospital District (uhd.org), based in Blue Earth, MN, is an independent system of care comprised of a 25-bed acute care hospital, comprehensive outpatient services, ambulance service and a home health/hospice care program, all supported by a 25-plus multi-specialty provider group with three clinic locations across two counties. UHD was recognized as a 2025 Best Small Hospital for Obstetrics, a 2024 Top 100 Critical Access Hospital, a 2023 Best Small Hospital Under 25 Beds, and a 2022 Top 200 Workplace in Minnesota.

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(Photo attached)



Rick Ash, Chief Executive Officer