



Vermeer, Sukup cultivate access to health care for their rural employees



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 15-19
Employee Voter
Registration Week

SEPTEMBER 16
Webinar: Workers’
Compensation Webinar –
Session Three
VIRTUAL

OCTOBER 3
Manufacturing Day

OCTOBER 3-14
Elevate Iowa Manufacturing Tour
STATEWIDE

OCTOBER 14
Iowa Manufacturing Conference
ALTOONA

NOVEMBER 4
Webinar: Workers’ Compensation
Webinar – Session Four
VIRTUAL

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the “Events” tab for details on
upcoming events.

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A VIEW FROM ABI:

Strengthening Rural Health Care, Strengthening Iowa

This month’s publication focuses on rural health care and highlights ABI members who are addressing one of the most pressing challenges facing Iowa communities. Access to quality care is essential for businesses, employees, families, and the long-term health of our workforce. Strong health systems are also a foundation for economic growth, helping businesses attract and retain talent across the state.

Rural communities in particular face unique obstacles, from provider shortages to infrastructure needs. Yet ABI members continue to find solutions that strengthen care options close to home. Whether it is through partnerships with local providers, innovative benefits for

employees, or advocacy that drives better access, ABI members are working every day to ensure Iowa’s communities remain strong and vibrant.

In this month’s cover story, you will hear directly from leaders who are navigating these issues and shaping the future of rural health care in Iowa. Their insights underscore both the challenges and the opportunities that exist when business and community leaders come together.

September also follows ABI’s annual public policy committee meetings, which were well-attended and highly productive. These meetings give members the opportunity to guide ABI’s legislative agenda for 2026 and discuss

topics such as the future of health care in Iowa. Member input ensures that ABI advocates for policies that not only strengthen health care access but also enhance Iowa’s overall competitiveness.

Looking ahead, ABI will continue to highlight the great work of our members and provide opportunities for businesses to connect, share, and learn. In October, ABI is launching an Elevate Iowa Manufacturing RV tour to help educate Iowans about the manufacturing industry and careers in manufacturing. I encourage you to visit www.iowaabi.org to learn more about the tour and take advantage of the valuable programming available to you and your team. ABI



Nicole Crain
President
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CAPITOL BUSINESS:

State Policy Developments in Rural Iowa Health care

Iowa employers carry much of the cost of providing health care through the benefits they extend to employees and their families. Access to high-quality, affordable health care remains essential for a strong and reliable workforce.

When ABI's Public Policy team testifies at the Capitol, we often describe a "typical" ABI member: a manufacturer with fewer than 100 employees, often located in a suburban, exurban, or rural community. With this profile in mind, it's easy to see why rural health care was a top priority for Governor Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Legislature during the 2025 session.

The discussion began with Governor Reynolds' Condition of the State Address, where she proposed sweeping rural health

care legislation. The measure, later passed with near-unanimous, bipartisan support, became House File 972.

Key provisions of HF 972 include:

- Expanding loan repayment programs and pursuing federal funds to create new medical residency slots.
- Strengthening maternal health services.
- Streamlining the approval process for new health care facilities through changes to the certificate of need process.
- Revamping financial incentive programs to encourage health care workforce education and training.
- Developing a "hub-and-spoke" delivery system to connect rural providers with regional specialists, ensuring rural

Iowans can access advanced care.

- Creating more residency opportunities for Iowans pursuing advanced medical degrees, increasing the likelihood they remain in-state to practice.

In addition to HF 972, legislators advanced SF 383, a bill designed to fix prices for pharmacy services. The stated goal was to help small, independent rural pharmacies, many of which serve ABI members and their employees in those communities. ABI testified to the importance of supporting these pharmacies during the legislative session. The law now faces a federal lawsuit alleging it may be preempted by federal legislation and infringes on protected commercial speech. **ABI**



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SF 383 is harmful to Iowa small businesses and families



The Problem



SF 383 is a bill that was recently signed into law by the governor that regulates the health plans and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) - companies that help manage prescription drug coverage. Several parts of the law pose significant threats to everyday Iowans.

\$\$\$

The law may **cost** well over **\$300 million** annually for the Iowa health-benefits-plan community.

The Harms



The law requires a new minimum \$10.68 dispensing fee for every prescription filled at the pharmacy counter. **This will cost hundreds of millions of dollars annually for businesses and employers who offer health benefit plans, and for insured Iowans.**

The law also restricts constitutionally-protected commercial free speech related to pharmacy benefits and networks by making it illegal for employers to tell their employees about ways to save money, such as avoiding the \$10.68 fee by using certain pharmacies.

The Lawsuit



A federal law called the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) stops states from making rules that interfere with certain job-based health plans. The federal law overrides SF 383, making it unlawful. Therefore, a group of plaintiffs have filed a lawsuit in a federal court in Des Moines to stop the severe harms that would be caused by this law.

Current Status As of June 30, a federal judge paused the implementation of the law for the plaintiffs.

What does this mean for you?

For an individual who takes a specialty drug like Skyrizi®, this law will eliminate cost-saving tools like PrudentRx that often allow them to access high-cost medications at no cost. One analysis found that this means the individual would go from paying \$0 to \$4,380 at the pharmacy counter.

For a family with two children where each person consistently relies on one Rx medication, this law will mean the family pays over \$40 more every time they are at the prescription counter.

For a small business that provides health coverage to employees, this law will prohibit the employer from directing its employees to a lower-cost or more affordable pharmacy to fill their prescriptions.

COVER STORY FROM PAGE 15

Vermeer, Sukup cultivate access to health care for their rural employees

BY CHELSEA KEENAN PRIEST
AND EMERY STYRON

Nearly 40% of Iowa's 3 million people live in a rural area, according to the most recent U.S. Census data. With that comes a variety of oft-reported health care issues, including provider shortages, hospital closures, declining maternity care and difficulty accessing specialty services. But two Iowa employers are bridging some of these gaps — bringing health care to their employees.

Pella-based Vermeer Corporation — a global manufacturer of industrial and agricultural machines — and Sheffield-based Sukup Manufacturing — a family-owned and operated manufacturer of grain storage, drying and handling equipment — have both opened on-site medical clinics, providing primary care and occupational health services to their employees.

The two Iowa companies are among only 16% of employers nationwide with 500 to 4,999 employees providing an on-site medical clinic, according to a na-

tional benchmarking survey conducted by The National Association for Workplace Care and Mercer. Another 8% of smaller manufacturers surveyed said they planned to add a general medical clinic, while 44% of U.S. employers with 5,000 or more employees already offered the service.

Vermeer Corp. has operated its own on-site clinic delivering care to approximately 3,700 employees and their families since 2002, while Sukup Manufacturing and Iowa health care provider MercyOne have worked in partnership to operate a clinic since 2018.

Improving Employee Health and Productivity

Dr. Dale Andringa, a Vermeer family shareholder, was the architect behind the on-site clinic and wellness center, Teresa Hovell, benefits manager at Vermeer, said. "He saw a need in line with Vermeer's core principles, finding a need and filling it, for episodic care."

Dr. Andringa helped open a small clinic

doing things like blood pressure checks for employees, which later expanded to serve their family members as well.

"Today we have a chronic care nurse who does health care coaching and nurse practitioners on site. We serve as a trusted resource, helping patients with their health care questions. We can take on some of the primary care tasks, such as labs and checkups," Ms. Hovell said.

"We try to take away the barriers people might have to get health care. Start here and we can help guide you. Health care is very complex and knowing where to start is important."

The clinic saves employees time and frustration, helping them get appropriate care, while saving Vermeer lost productivity when people are off work, she added. The clinic sees 400 to 500 visits per month.

More than 2,000 prescriptions per month are filled at Vermeer's pharmacy, which opened in 2007. Ms. Hovell said the company is one of the few workplaces to provide an on-site pharmacy outside of a hospital system.

"Our on-site pharmacists take the time to educate and care for team members, ensuring personalized support and guidance for their health needs," she added.

An on-site chaplaincy also supports employees and families, helping them get appropriate mental and emotional health care and other care as needed.

Making the right health care decisions is not easy for people facing an unfamiliar maze that includes local hospitals, major medical centers and a "plethora of specialists," Ms. Hovell said. "People just don't know where to go. Vermeer's clinic helps employees understand how it all works together. That's crucial in getting them what they need in the health care system."

The clinic also addresses the barrier of cost. Individuals on Vermeer's traditional health insurance plan can access clinic services at no cost, while those on high-deductible plans enjoy lower costs than in the community. Occupational care at Vermeer handles a variety of tasks, from onboarding to management of workplace injuries, Ms. Hovell said.

Sukup Manufacturing employs 600



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people, many of whom travel to Sheffield each day from nine surrounding counties, said Samantha Petersburg, project manager overseeing strategic partnerships.

"The company really does look at their employees as family members. It takes very good care of employees — benefits, vacation, pay and flexibility. Policies are designed around employees," she said.

Ms. Petersburg said the company noticed employees were taking either a half or whole day of vacation to attend a doctor's appointment. "Nobody wants to use a day of vacation for something like that," she said. "We'd done some research and we knew what Vermeer was doing. They had talked about their on-site clinic's success."

MercyOne provides the health care professionals and expertise, while Sukup Manufacturing provides the space. The clinic has more than 120 encounters per month. Services are provided by four staff members, including two primary care providers, a registered nurse and CNA.

The on-site clinic gives employees a chance to establish care with a health care provider, address potential health issues, get preventive services and complete biometric screenings.

Mental health services are also provided via telecounseling, which helps avoid the stigma some people experience in seeking those services in rural Iowa.

The clinic is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., allowing employees on both first and second shift to utilize its services. In addition, MercyOne Sheffield Family Medicine offers imaging and lab services if employees need additional care.

When workers can't easily access preventive services or treatment, health problems often go unaddressed until they become more serious, leading to higher medical costs, more time away from work, and added stress at home, Ms. Petersburg said.

Since opening the clinic, employees are discovering chronic illnesses — such as thyroid issues, high cholesterol or pre-diabetes — sooner, she added.

"The biggest success I've seen over the last five years is helping individuals get established with a provider so they can receive the care that they need," said Amber Marzen, advanced registered nurse practitioner for Sukup Health Solutions. "I have enjoyed meeting so many Sukup employees that have chronic (or acute) conditions. And now they are able to receive the care they need conveniently and without missing a lot of time away from work. The employees are so appreciative of this."

Challenges to Access Remain

Despite significant progress addressing rural health care barriers, challenges remain. Often in small communities, there is no urgent care, meaning residents must rely on emergency department services outside of normal clinic hours, Ms. Hovell said.

In addition, rural hospitals aren't always able to provide a lot of specialty services.

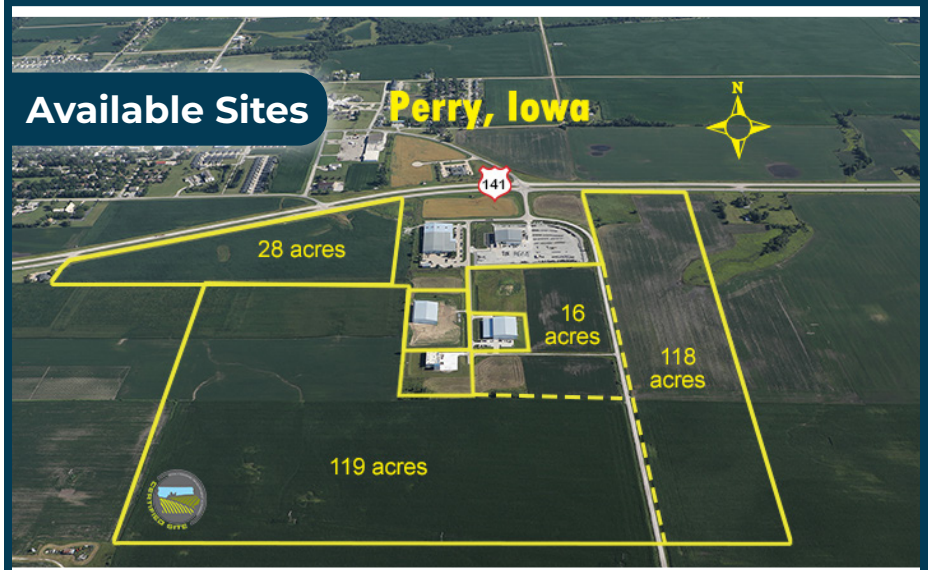
Ms. Hovell said she enjoys seeing the Vermeer clinic's direct impact, by helping employees drastically cut prescription costs or get into see specialists in days instead of weeks. "During COVID, we were able to vaccinate people and test people at a time when lines were long," she said. "We were able to care for our people. It gives them that good feeling of 'I have someone I can trust, I have access, they'll take time to talk to me.'"

Educating and motivating employees to make good lifestyle choices is part of the mission, she said.

"Behavioral health and mental health is a large focus," added Ms. Hovell. "Obesity, diabetes, hypertension...how do we get people to start thinking about their own health care decisions? We want to make an impact outside of the health care system and drive them to make good decisions." ABI

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EVENT REWIND:

Executive Forum – August 7&8 - Clear Lake

ABI hosted its annual Executive Forum this August in Clear Lake, bringing together executive business leaders from across Iowa for a day of connection, strategy, and forward-looking discussion. Attendees engaged in thought-provoking sessions on leadership, workforce, and innovation.

Beyond the programming, the Forum offered a unique space for executives to build relationships and share ideas with fellow leaders shaping Iowa’s business climate. The event concluded with a tour of Sukup Manufacturing in nearby Sheffield, Iowa. ABI



FROM THE FOUNDATION:

Next-Gen Innovators Take the Stage at Business Horizons

Summer is wrapping up and so are the ABI Foundation programs including the 42nd Business Horizons at Drake University. More than 60 students from 37 high schools spent the week building entrepreneurial solutions, learning from business leaders, forming lasting friendships, and earning three transferable college credits through the Jacobson Institute at the University of Iowa. Working in teams, students tackled real-world challenges by developing business ventures, pitching ideas to judges, creating infomercials, and showcasing their work at a trade show for peers, families, and local professionals.

Many of the student business ideas focused on connecting their peers with valuable opportunities like internships, part-time jobs, summer camps, and clubs. Industry B earned the “Best Pitch” award for their website, NextSumr, designed to help high school students easily find and register for summer experiences. Industry C developed a portable projector that allows users to take notes on the go. Catch a full recap of the program and watch the team infomercials at www.youtube.com/BusinessHorizons

“[Business Horizons] has shown me how to take leadership in things and having the confidence to speak my mind,” shared Avery C. of Des Moines Christian High School. After completing the program, students left Business Horizons equipped to face new challenges and are more confident in their decisions and future goals.

Throughout the week 70+ volunteers took part in creating the success of the program with the support from sponsors like Collins Aerospace, an

RTX Company, Atlantic Bottling Company, Emerson, Grinnell Mutual, Wellmark and many more. Visit BusinessHorizonsIowa.com for the list of all of our sponsors who make this possible.

Leadership Iowa University Continues to Keep Students in Iowa

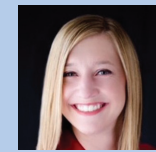
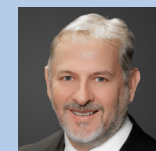
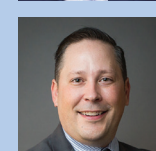
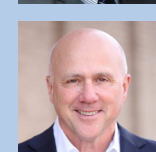
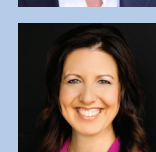
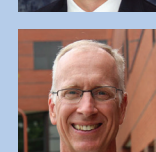
Last month, 20 college students and interns came together to explore leadership, build their networks, and discover why Iowa is a great place to live. Over five days, participants from across the state joined the ABI Foundation team to tour local businesses, engage with professionals and industry leaders, and uncover the opportunities available right in their own backyard.

The group took a behind the scenes look at Iowa’s thriving communities. With the support of many volunteers, participants had the chance to connect with local leaders and ask candid, insider questions about business and leadership.

“I feel more confident in my strengths, my role as a leader, and my place in Iowa. I’m not sure what’s next after graduation, but I know that wherever I go, my time at Leadership Iowa University will have played a big role in getting me there,” said Grant Ward, a senior at St. Ambrose University.

With the help of our sponsors like the Emerson, Farm Bureau Financial Services, Grinnell Mutual, the Iowa Soybean Association, Pella Corporation and many more, this program helped participants to attend at little or no cost.

To see the list of sponsors for the 2025 program and photos from the week, visit LeadershipIowaUniversity.com. **ABI**

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