

WINTER CONFERENCE 2026 CO-HOSTED BY THE AAHAM MISSOURI
HAWTHORN CHAPTER & THE HFMA GREATER HEARTLAND CHAPTER

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FROM EMBER TO IMPACT: EMPOWERING HEALTHCARE'S FUTURE

January 29th-30th, 2026 · Columbia, MO



Thursday, January 29, 2026

General Sessions

- 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM** **Exhibitors set up**
- 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM** **Registration**
- 12:45 PM – 1:00 PM** **Presidents' Welcome & Announcements**
- 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM** **Keynote Session – *Leading Under Pressure: Staying Grounded When the Numbers Matter Most***
TJ Sweet – Founder CEO/Sweet Enterprises
CPE Credits: 1 / CPE Type: Personal Development / Level: Basic / Prerequisites: None
- Session Description:** Healthcare finance professionals operate in one of the most demanding environments in healthcare 0 balancing financial stewardship, regulatory, complexity, workforce challenges, and decisions that directly impact patient care and organizational stability. In this keynote, TJ Sweet speaks directly to the reality HFMA Leaders face every day; the constant pressure to perform, decide, and deliver-often without pause. Blending neuroscience, leadership experience, and powerful storytelling. TJ explores how finance leaders can remain grounded, present, and purposeful when the stakes are high and the margin for error is small.
- Learning Objectives:**
1. Understand how stress and cognitive load affect judgment, communication, and financial decisions.
 2. Identify how purpose-driven leadership enhances resilience adaptability, and long-term effectiveness amid constant changes.
 3. Apply presence-based leadership skills to strengthen trust with teams, executives, and stakeholders during uncertainty and critical conversations.
- 2:00 PM – 2:10 PM** **Break with Exhibitors**
- 2:10 PM – 3:00 PM** **General Session: *Medicaid the Good, the Bad, the Ugly: Past, Present and Future***
Kim Dugan – VP of Medicaid & FRA/MHA Management Services
CPE Credits: 1 / CPE Type: Personal Development / Level: Basic / Prerequisites: None
- Session Description:** Uplifting review of Medicaid changes over the years and predictions for the future based on our years of experience working together on the FRA tax program and revenue maximization projects for Missouri hospitals. Historically, significant change in the Medicaid space has driven opportunity... where there's change lies opportunity for innovative payment models.

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Learning Objective:

1. Exploration of hospital financing strategies using the Missouri FRA provider tax and other state financing sources.
2. Review future hospital challenges resulting from federally mandated changes from the OBBBA with discussion of individual hospital preparation strategies.
3. Review of what we've learned from previous Medicaid payment changes as hospitals prepare for the future.

3:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Break with Exhibitors

3:15 PM – 4:15 PM

General Session: Operational Models Under Pressure: Technology Adoption and Work-Force Impact

Alicia Auman – Director of Rev cycle/Lake Regional Health System

Dana Christiansen – Administrative Director Patient Access/CoxHealth

CPE Credits: 1 / CPE Type: Personal Development / Level: Basic / Prerequisites: None

Session Description. Overview of projects in flight at CoxHealth and Lake Regional to adopt new technology and prepare the workforce. This session will explore the change management strategies for assessing and preparing your teams for major technology disruption.

Learning Objectives:

1. Define what technology adoption in healthcare operations entails.
2. Explore how technology drives cost savings, operational improvement, and employee retention/satisfaction.
3. Understanding change management strategies for technology disruption

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

Closing Remarks

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Board & Committee Chairs Meeting – (invitation only)

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Welcome Reception – Join us at The Tiger Hotel for light refreshments and appetizers to kick off the conference will follow attendees!

Friday, January 30th, 2026

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Breakfast with Exhibitors

7:30 AM – 8:30 PM

Registration

General Sessions –

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM

General Session – The Future of Healthcare Revenue Cycle; Trends, Technology, and Back

Susan Hayes – Director of Patient Financial Services/Hannibal Regional Health

CPE Credits: 1 / CPE Type: Personal Development / Level: Basic / Prerequisites: None

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Session Description: Top KPI's, Benefits of Back End Revenue Cycle, Challenges in Implementing and Strategies to Improve.

Learning Objectives:

1. Identify key performance indicators that pertain to revenue cycle.
2. Review the benefits of back-end revenue cycle
3. Discuss strategies that have worked to improve our facilities bottom line.

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Break with Exhibitors:

9:45 AM – 10:45 AM

General Session – *Creating Confidence Up-Front: Enhancing Experience through Financial Clarity*

Teresa Brooks – Executive Director, Rev/MU Healthcare

Jordan Real – Director, Revenue Cycle Info/MU Health Care

Mary Oberto – Manager, Financial Counselor/MU Health Care

CPE Credits: 1 / CPE Type: Personal Development / Level: Basic / Prerequisites: None

Session Description: MU Health will share several business cases impacting healthcare organizations today and demonstrate how placing the consumer/patient at the forefront of workflow decisions supports their mission and financial goals..

Learning Objective:

1. Describe how the HFMA consumer/patient matrix can be applied to strategic decisions and workflows.
2. Recognize the patient needs and “hat” at that point in time during the care experience
3. Deploy a culture of patient-centricity

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

Break with Exhibitors

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

General Session: *Navigating through Payor Negotiations*

Greg Damron – CFO/University of MU Health

CPE Credits: 1 / CPE Type: Specialized Knowledge / Level: Basic / Prerequisites: None

Session Description: This session will cover strategic and tactical considerations made during a recent, high profile payor negotiation between an academic health system and its most significant commercial health plan. Participants will hear about practical tips on preparing for potential significant conflict with a major payor.

Learning Objectives:

1. Prepare organization for conflict with a major payor
2. Communication to stakeholders is the complex issues between payor and providers
3. Mitigate when negotiations do no

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12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

General Session – *Provider Panel*

Kim Bruno – *Associate Vice President/Phelps Health*

Paula Littleton – *CFO/Lake Regional Health System*

Stephanie Schmidt – *Executive Director/University of Mo.*

Ed Clayton – *CFO/Boone Health*

CPE Credits 1 / CPE Type: Specialized Knowledge / Level: Basic / Prerequisites: None

Session Description: Listen to provider organizations spark meaningful conversations, as they share breakthrough innovations, to help turn today's challenges into tomorrow's opportunities.

Learning objectives:

1. Gain industry insights and perspectives from provider organizations across Missouri.
2. Identify current challenges facing healthcare leaders in 2026 and opportunities to make an impact within your organization.
3. Foster collaboration across healthcare providers and business partners with strategies to shape the next era of healthcare.

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Closing Remarks



Healthcare Financial Management Association - Greater Heartland Chapter is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors. State boards of accountancy have final authority on the acceptance of individual courses for CPE credit. Complaints regarding registered sponsors may be submitted to the National Registry of CPE Sponsors through its website: www.NASBARegistry.org.

CPE Credit: Upon verification of participant attendance, this program will be eligible for 11 credits in various fields of study. Credits may vary depending on individual state guidelines.

PROGRAM LEVEL: This program features sessions with program levels from basic to intermediate.

DELIVERY METHOD: Group – Live

PREREQUISITES: This program is appropriate for healthcare finance professionals with experience and knowledge comparable to CFO's, Revenue Cycle Executives, Consultants, Controllers, Finance Executives, and other similar positions.

ADVANCE PREPARATION: None

CPE Sign-in and Certificates

To receive CPE credits, you must sign in for each individual session you attend. Sign-in registers will be located in each session room. CPE Certificates and speaker presentations will be available on the hfma Greater Heartland website.

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About The Speakers

TJ Sweet – With over 20 years of leadership experience and training in neuroscience, TJ brings a powerful mix of real-world insight, science-backed strategy, and vulnerable storytelling to every stage he steps on. His keynotes don't just motivate; they move people to think differently, lead with intention, and show up fully in their work and lives.

Kim Dugan is Vice President of Medicaid and FRA for MHA Management Services, the for-profit subsidiary of the Missouri Hospital Association. She has been with MHA since 1983. Her current responsibilities include preparing Federal Reimbursement Allowance financial models, managing the bimonthly FRA payroll process, preparing and analyzing data.

Marga is a Certified Public Accountant with a Master's in Public Administration and more than 40 years of experience across state government, hospital finance, and healthcare consulting. She spent 30 years in state government with a primary focus on state budgeting, Medicaid policy, and hospital reimbursement, including serving as Missouri Medicaid CFO and Director of the Missouri House.

Alicia Aumun is the Director of Revenue Cycle for Lake Regional Health System, bringing with her more than 20+ years of healthcare industry leadership and experience in both revenue cycle management on the provider side, as well as the vendor side, having assisted healthcare leaders and systems in finding end to end RCM tech solutions with an emphasis on empowering patient access.

Dana Christiansen is the Administrative Director of Patient Access Services at CoxHealth, bringing more than 30 years of experience across all aspects of the healthcare revenue cycle. She currently oversees registration and financial clearance across CoxHealth hospitals and clinics and serves as the Revenue Cycle Project Lead for the organizations' Epic implementation.

Susan Hayes is the Director of Patient Financial Services for Hannibal Regional Healthcare System. She received her Master's Degree in Business Administration and Healthcare Management from William Woods University in 2011.

Teresa Brooks is the Executive Director of Revenue Cycle and recently celebrated her 6-year Anniversary at MU Health Care in Columbia, Missouri. Prior to coming to MU Health Care, Teresa served as the VP of Revenue Cycle Operations at the Detroit Medical Center in Detroit, Michigan and spent 22 years in various leadership roles within the Revenue Cycle at the eight (8) facility healthcare system.

Jordan Real is currently the Director of Revenue cycle Informatics at MU Health Care. Jordan is a certified member of the National Association of Health Care Access Management, NAHAM, and has served in a variety of revenue cycle roles over the past 20 years primarily in front end operations.

Mary Oberto is the Manager of Financial Counseling Services at MU Health Care, with over 13 years of Revenue Cycle experience in Patient Access, Insurance Verification and Authorizations, and Financial Counseling. In her current role Mary oversees Medicaid enrollment and patient cost estimates to strengthen front-end revenue cycle performance

Greg Damron is Chief Financial Officer of MU Health Care in Columbia, Mo. He has over 20 years of executive financial leadership experience in health care, serving in leadership roles at Banner Health, AU Health System and Duke University Health System. Prior to working in industry, he worked in public accounting with Ernst & Young, where he specialized in health care. He is a Certified Public Accountant.

Kimberley Bruno, MSL, CRCR, is the Associate Vice President of Revenue Cycle at Phelps Health in Rolla, Missouri. With more than two decades of healthcare leadership experience, she specializes in revenue cycle optimization, financial performance improvement, and patient-centered financial operations. Kimberley is known for translating strategy into measurable results

Paula Littleton, a certified public accountant and certified healthcare financial profession, has over 20 years of healthcare experience. Currently Chief Financial Officer at Lake Regional Health System. Paula served as the chief financial officer – critical access region for Saint Luke's Health System, overseeing the financial operations of four nonprofit hospitals. Previously, she worked for 14 years for Mu Health Care, earning the role of senior director of finance and controller.

Stehanie Schmidt Executive with University of Missouri.

Ed Clayton – CFO/Boone Health

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