

MCO-Rural Hospital Leadership Forum

Co-Hosted by TORCH and Episcopal Health Foundation

Kalahari Resort — [3001 Kalahari Blvd, Round Rock, TX](#)

Tuesday, August 25, 2026 | 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Networking Breakfast at 8:30

About the Forum

This conversation comes at a critical moment for rural health transformation. Funds tied to this effort are being released at a rapid pace, and ensuring their long-term sustainability and impact will require strong, strategic partnerships between MCOs and rural providers. The work of rural transformation and innovation will undoubtedly be difficult, and will require strategic, meaningful payer-provider partnerships. This forum offers a rare opportunity to convene MCO executives and hospital CEOs in the same room to focus on common ground and areas of future alignment.

Event Details

- Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2026
- Location: TORCH/TARHC Fall Conference - Kalahari Resort — [3001 Kalahari Blvd, Round Rock, TX](#)
- Networking Breakfast: 8:30 – Acacia Room
- Session: 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM – Room Kilimanjaro 7-9
- Format: Facilitated panel discussion between MCO and rural hospital/clinic leadership

Agenda

8:30 – 9:30 AM	Networking Breakfast – Acacia Room
9:30 – 9:45 AM	Welcome & Introductions – Room: Kilimanjaro 7-9 • John Henderson, President/CEO, TORCH • Shao-Chee Sims, PhD, Executive Vice President for Health Policy, Research and Strategic Partnerships, Episcopal Health Foundation (EHF)
9:45 – 10:30	Session 1: Challenges • Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) overview – John Henderson, Heather Willmann and Kevin Lambing, TORCH • Discussion on key challenges and where hospitals and clinics need the most help MCO Panel: • Stephanie Rogers, President and CEO Aetna Better Health Texas • Greg Thompson, President and CEO Wellpoint Texas • Salil Deshpande, MD, MBA, FACHP, Chief Medical Officer, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas Hospital/Clinic Panel: • Rebecca McCain, CEO, Electra Memorial Hospital; Chair, TORCH Board • Jennifer O’Riley, Practice Administrator at Port Lavaca Associates & Executive Director of the Texas Association of Rural Health Clinics (TARHC) • Lorenzo Serrano, CEO, Winkler County Memorial Hospital; Past-Chair, TORCH Board Facilitators:

	Laurie Vanhooose, EHF Consultant
10:30 – 11:15	Session 2: Opportunities - MCOs' role in system and provider sustainability – Laurie Vanhooose - Discussion on MCO priorities, payment pathways, and partnership models MCO Panel: - Stephanie Rogers, President and CEO Aetna Better Health Texas - Greg Thompson, President and CEO Wellpoint Texas - Salil Deshpande, MD, MBA, FACHP, Chief Medical Officer, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Texas Hospital/Clinic Panel: - Rebecca McCain, CEO, Electra Memorial Hospital; Chair, TORCH Board - Jennifer O'Riley, Practice Administrator at Port Lavaca Associates & Executive Director of the Texas Association of Rural Health Clinics (TARHC) - Lorenzo Serrano, CEO, Winkler County Memorial Hospital; Past-Chair, TORCH Board Facilitators: - Laurie Vanhooose, EHF Consultant
11:15 – 11:45	Session 3: Priorities and Alignment — building consensus on key areas of opportunity and shared interest Facilitators: EHF and TORCH Staff
11:45 – 12:00	Summary of Alignment Area(s) and Next Steps

Please register [here](#).