

From: [Criss, Lori](#)
To: [Smith, Randy](#); [Reed, Katie](#)
Cc: [Warner, John - Chief Executive Officer \(OSUMC\)](#); [Thomas, Andrew - Chief Medical Officer \(OSUMC\)](#); [Meadows, Ryan \(OSUMC\)](#); [Lowe, Athena \(OSUMC\)](#); [Cousineau, Nicole \(OSUMC\)](#)
Subject: Proposal to Establish the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health
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[Center Application for ARCH 09.2025 FINAL.pdf](#)

Vice Provost Smith,

Thank you for your guidance with the process for proposing a university center. Attached to this email, you will find a pdf encompassing a cover letter from Dr. Warner, the proposal, and letters of support. We look forward to moving through the review process and hope to be considered by the University Senate at its November meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

My best,
Lori



Lori Criss
Rural and Appalachian Health Lead

259 Meiling Hall
370 W. 9th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210
614-293-2290 Office
lori.criss@osumc.edu



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

John Warner, MD

CEO of The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
and Executive Vice President at Ohio State

370 W. 9th Avenue
200 Meiling Hall
Columbus, OH 43210

614-685-4407

September 19, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
The Ohio State University
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to submit for your consideration the proposal to designate the **Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH)** as a university center at The Ohio State University. The creation of this center is a cornerstone of our strategic plan, **Impact 2035**, and reflects our deep commitment to improving health outcomes and eliminating differences in access to care and wellness across Ohio's rural and Appalachian communities.

Impact 2035 is our 10-year strategic roadmap to transform health care delivery, research and education across the state. One of its eight priorities, "A Healthier Ohio," calls for removing barriers to health and expanding access for all Ohioans. ARCH is a direct embodiment of this vision—leveraging the university's land-grant mission and interdisciplinary strengths to co-create sustainable, community-driven solutions.

On behalf of the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center and our partners, I respectfully request your support in designating ARCH as a university center. We believe this initiative will not only strengthen Ohio State's leadership in rural and Appalachian health innovation but also fulfill our shared mission to serve the people of Ohio and make our state and nation better.

I have designated Lori Criss to lead this strategic initiative and manage this proposal process for the medical center. She can be reached at lori.criss@osumc.edu.

Sincerely,

John J. Warner, MD

Chief Executive Officer, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center
Executive Vice President, The Ohio State University

Proposal to Establish the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a University Center

SEPTEMBER 2025

Contact: Lori Criss, MSW

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER | Lori.Criss@osumc.edu

Proposal to Establish the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a University Center

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Executive Summary: Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH)

Purpose

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center (OSUWMC) is proud to be part of a leading public and land-grant research university with a mission to serve the people of Ohio. The work of OSUWMC is rooted in the university's strategic plan framework, **Education for Citizenship 2035** ([link](#)) which is built upon the university motto, "Education for Citizenship" and guides us by three principles:

- *Everything we do must connect with our mission as a land-grant university.*
- *We exist because of and for the people we serve.*
- *We exist to make our state and nation better, and to equip our graduates to do the same.*

Through six themes, the university's strategic framework urges collaboration among faculty, staff, and students across Ohio State's colleges, campuses, and the medical center:

- **Accessibility:** scientific expertise accessible to communities and industry
- **Student Success:** complementing academics with training through internships and student employment; for students across disciplines, involvement in healthcare enterprise
- **Workforce Development:** expand co-ops, internships, and other extracurricular student experiences; utilize scholarship and research to improve the way industry partners operate
- **Outreach and Engagement:** utilize Ohio State scholarship and research to uplift surrounding communities; expand healthcare access to rural communities and families in Ohio and the region
- **Performance Excellence and Resource Stewardship:** bring clinical care to those who need it
- **Service to the State of Ohio:** research that benefits organizations and communities; producing/retaining talent for in-demand fields; improve the health and wellness of families with rural health centers

The medical center's 10-year strategic plan **Impact 2035** ([link](#)) is aligned with the university strategic framework through eight priorities. One of those priorities, entitled "A Healthier Ohio," calls for the creation of "*a center to study and improve health outcomes in rural Ohio.*" In pursuit of this, OSUWMC has developed and proposes the **Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH)** as a new university center. This center will advance "A Healthier Ohio" in Appalachian and rural Ohio communities. We aim to mobilize the

resources and advance the university priorities focused on academics, research and creative expression, and healthcare while also drawing from the talent, culture, and operations to create a center that attracts and cultivates a full range of faculty and staff across OSU devoted the mission of the proposed center.

ARCH's mission is to extend OSU's clinical, educational, and research capacity to rural and Appalachian partners, joining forces to create sustainable healthcare solutions. We enact this mission by improv health outcomes and eliminating health disparities in rural and Appalachian Ohio through a transformational and sustainable **healthcare extension service**. The core efforts of this extension service include:

- Establish and support ongoing long-term trusting partnerships among Ohio State's faculty, staff, and students with healthcare providers and communities across rural and Appalachian Ohio.
- Enhance and maintain the rural and Appalachian healthcare workforce with a goal of achieving equitable access, care and resources.
- Implement innovative and evidence-based clinical programs with local partners by co-creating scalable, community-driven solutions and translating research into practice faster.
- Advance state-of-the-art translational research and implementation science to inform and achieve the mission and goals of ARCH.
- Advocate for the health care interests of rural and Appalachian Ohio with local, state and federal partners.

Together, *Education for Citizenship 2035* and *Impact 2035* provide impetus for the creation of ARCH. The partnership approach mutually reinforces efforts by the Ohio State community and communities throughout Ohio to improve the health of rural and Appalachian Ohioans and make our state and nation better.

Vision

Put hope into action to co-create sustainable healthcare solutions in partnership with local communities to achieve a healthier Ohio.

Mission

Extend OSU's clinical, educational, and research capacity to rural and Appalachian partners, joining forces to create sustainable healthcare solutions.

ARCH is taking an asset-based approach as we develop the OSUWMC healthcare extension service. Focal OSU/OSUWMC assets with a pre-existing presence in Ohio's Appalachian and rural communities include, but are not limited to:

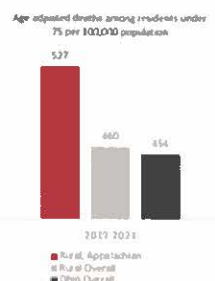
- OSU Extension with its existing presence in all 88 counties and focused programs on health education/promotion.
- Ohio State Health Network and Digital Consult Network which provide administrative and clinical support to over 30 hospitals and health systems in Ohio.
- Referring-hospital relationships that represent 50% of OSUWMC's admissions.
- Clinical and Translational Science Institute, State of Ohio Adversity and Resiliency Study (SOAR), and The James Comprehensive Cancer Center cancer prevention research networks.
- Local community strengths, assets, and subject matter experts.
- Subject matter experts at Ohio State and across the nation focused on community health and healthcare extension services in rural and Appalachian communities.
- Regional campus structure that is well-positioned to partner with local communities on certificate and degree-granting programs.
- OSU degree programs, courses, and organizations aligned with the ARCH mission.

ARCH will center its work on the most pressing opportunities and challenges to advance rural and Appalachian health. Ohio has the 4th largest rural population in the U.S.

- Ohio Ranks 9th in the U.S. for Least Healthy Populations.
- Rural and Appalachian communities face significant health disparities due to limited access to care, infrastructure, and workforce shortages.
- 50% of OSUWMC's inpatient admissions are from outside Franklin County.
- Seven of the top 10 largest employers in Ohio are healthcare systems ([link](#)), and in Appalachian and rural areas of Ohio, healthcare systems are often in the top 1-3 largest employers in their county. Strong healthcare systems are key to local community vitality and economic development.

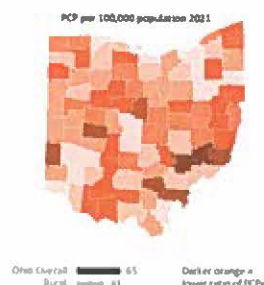
Higher Mortality

Significantly higher early death rates (<age 75/100,000)



Reduced Access to Care

Lower provider rates



Disparate Health Outcomes

Disparities in major causes of death, including suicide, overdose and heart disease



Phases of Work

- In FY25:
 - *In the Community:*
 - Worked to develop a strong relationship with individuals and organizations focused on the critical issues related to health in our rural and Appalachian communities.
 - Collaborating with the leadership of the Ohio Rural Health Association culminating in OSU being chosen to host the 2026 Annual Meeting for ORHA at the OSU ATI campus in Wooster.
 - Collaborating with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio on the development of a new “Growing Health” fellowship to be jointly sponsored by both organizations
 - Meeting with leaders of the Ohio State Health Network member hospitals to begin introducing the concept of healthcare extension in addition to the current work we do with those organizations
 - Meeting with leaders within the Governor’s Office as well as the Ohio Department of Medicaid, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and other state agencies to begin introducing the concept of healthcare extension and the fact that OSUWMC is planning a new commitment focusing on this topic
 - Meeting with Ohio University representatives from the Ohio Alliance for Population Health, College of Health Sciences and Professions, Heritage College of Medicine, and Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service to keep them informed of our enhanced focus on rural and Appalachian health and desire to collaborate in these shared interests.
 - *Within OSU:*
 - In follow-up to the OSUWMC strategic planning process, key stakeholders across the organization developed and refined the project plan based on the original work done during the development of **Impact 2035**.
 - In parallel, a team of faculty and staff from OSUWMC and the College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) Office of OSU Extension co-created a model for healthcare extension in Ohio. They researched healthcare extension and outreach models at other universities. This team included: OSUWMC team members: Dr. Andrew Thomas, M.D., Lori Criss, Ben Anthony, Scott Schroeder and from CFAES David Civittolo, Pat Bebo and Erik Porfeli, Ph.D.

- These efforts culminated in a presentation to the OSUWMC Board in November 2024 that received positive feedback from the Board. This presentation outlined the project's goals that are reflected in this Center application.
 - The OSUWMC team also began regular meetings with the Clinical and Translational Science Institute to collaboratively approach research in rural and Appalachian Ohio and met with the QI HUB for discussions on learning health systems and bringing best practices to scale in Ohio.
 - We held introductory meetings with the Office of Academic Affairs, the OSU Regional Campus Deans, and multiple Deans across the health science colleges to introduce the concept of a healthcare extension program.
 - Through the Executive Sponsor Dr. Andrew Thomas, OSUWMC Chief Clinical Officer, the team proposed a budget for FY26/27 and secured funding beginning July 1, 2025.
 - In late FY25, the team added two new members to focus on program operations and administrative support. A phased approach to hiring will position ARCH to manage these resources, hit key milestones, and build a sustainable organization.
- In FY26:
 - *In the Community:*
 - Meetings began in Q1FY26 with potential Appalachian and rural partners with a goal of finalizing the first three regional partner communities by the end of Q2FY26. Once formalized, the “Discovery” phase that involves the co-creation of local projects is expected to begin in the second half of FY26.
 - *Within OSU:*
 - We continue to refine the model and engage with key OSU partners to ensure that we have a unified plan and message as ARCH is implemented and university center status is pursued.
- In FY27:
 - Continue collaboration with existing partners to implement co-created projects.
 - Enlist two additional regional partners for a total of 5 regions by the end of year 2.
 - The arc of the center’s work will include expanded translational science and the opportunity for health sciences, social work, policy, and other students to learn and work in rural and Appalachian healthcare settings. *Translational science refers to the field focused on the translation of scientific discoveries into practical applications that improve health outcomes.*

Governance

- **Center Sponsor:** John Warner, MD, CEO OSU Wexner Medical Center and Executive Vice President at The Ohio State University
- **OSUWMC Executive Leadership:** Andrew Thomas, MD, Chief Clinical Officer OSU Wexner Medical Center, Senior Associate Vice President for Health Sciences, and Professor of Clinical Internal Medicine
- **Center Director:** Lori Criss, MSW
- **Advisory Boards:** Both internal and external advisory boards are planned to provide the leadership team with strategic guidance and feedback. Faculty involvement will be crucial internal advisors.

Budget & Staffing

- OSUWMC committed \$2.4 million in FY26 and is projected to commit \$3.2 million in FY27.
- ARCH will seek extramural funding from local, state, and federal public and private sources to augment the institutional support.
- We will hire staff in a phased approach across multiple fiscal years in accord with the development of ARCH and based upon its initiatives, funding, and achievement of milestones. In FY26, ARCH aims to have 13.25 FTEs and in FY27 that will increase to 18.00 FTEs.
- Concurrently, we will explore and engage faculty across OSU to advance the goals of ARCH and in alignment with their teaching, research, and service agendas. This may include the buy-down of time from some key faculty to be directly involved in implementing ARCH initiatives.

What Appalachian and Rural Center for Health **will** Do

OSU's Appalachian and Rural Center for Health will ...

- Strengthen partnerships within OSU and with rural and Appalachian communities and others.
- Listen to communities to understand their healthcare needs, community assets and challenges, and innovations they wish to pursue to enhance their OSU and local health care partners.
- Co-create solutions that are sustainable locally, can be scaled regionally or statewide and can inform similar efforts across the nation.
- Explore options for keeping local care through telehealth, digital consultations, and more.
- Foster community-based research that includes research questions generated by the community.
- Support local educational systems and workforce partners in creating pathways for residents into healthcare as a career.
- Provide technical assistance to enhance local care delivery.
- Contribute to advocacy for rural and Appalachian healthcare needs.
- Help convene others with knowledge and passion for designing workable solutions.
- Help pursue grants, look at revenue capture opportunities, create sustainability plans.

What Appalachian and Rural Center for Health **will not** Do

OSU's Appalachian and Rural Center for Health will not ...

- provide major investment for local projects.
- replace locally delivered healthcare services or compete with local providers.
- replace or duplicate local capacity for community planning.
- replace or duplicate local workforce development and higher education efforts.
- impose solutions on communities.
- speak for communities.

I. Mission

The Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) exists to extend OSU's clinical, educational, and research capacity to partners in rural and Appalachian Ohio, joining forces to create sustainable healthcare solutions.

Alignment with the University's Mission

The Appalachian and Rural Center for Health's mission echoes The Ohio State University's public, land-grant mission as we work to extend the expertise of the university to support healthcare providers, patients, and communities across the rural and Appalachian parts of Ohio. ARCH will foster a culture of engagement and service that positions our team to advance relationships, deepen partnerships, extend capacity to improve health outcomes in partner communities, and eventually scale solutions regionally or statewide.

Land grant Responsibility: Ohio State University was founded as a land grant university in 1870. Land grant universities were given a three-part mission: to educate residents of the state, to conduct research, and to engage communities across each state to meet their localized needs. OSUWMC is uniquely situated as Ohio's only academic medical center that is also part of a land grant institution.

Born out of Ohio State's land grant mission, OSUWMC's ARCH will be connected to an extensive network of campus-wide relationships, resources, and partners, including OSU Extension through the College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) and the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) which spans all of OSU's academic campuses. With these foundational elements in place and a strong ambition to create a Healthier Ohio, ARCH is well-positioned to translate clinical and implementation science discoveries into practical, sustainable health solutions in communities across Ohio. From an education perspective, we envision ARCH as a clearinghouse of opportunities for connecting OSU's certificate and degree-granting programs with local healthcare providers and community educational programs to enhance the healthcare workforce in those communities. This collaborative approach, rooted in OSU's land grant mission, is crucial for improving health outcomes and ensuring that the benefits of research and innovation reach the communities that need them.

Interdisciplinary Nature of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health

The core driver of ARCH is partnerships. Efforts will be aimed at coordinating work among rural and Appalachian communities in Ohio, the OSU community, and other stakeholders

through our Healthcare Extension service to enhance the health and vitality of rural and Appalachian communities.

Partnerships at OSU: To achieve the vision of ARCH, we are building bridges to the remarkable work already underway within the university community on the Columbus and regional campuses related to the health of Appalachian and rural communities. While not all of this ongoing work will report up to ARCH, we envision the Center serving as an entity to better align work being done across these regions as well as a connector for new opportunities on these topics. This is particularly important for translational science research, healthcare extension, workforce development, and innovative care delivery.

Healthcare Extension: The OSU Extension-OSUWMC partnership has been critical to moving a model of healthcare extension forward in Ohio. Since early 2024, OSUWMC and OSU Extension have been working collaboratively to create a model for healthcare extension. Core to the growth of this partnership have been faculty and staff from both organizations.

- OSU Extension had representation on the OSUWMC strategic planning workgroup for the center for rural and Appalachian Health.
- A small work group formed to stand up a novel approach to system level clinical extension that meshes with OSU Extension's Consumer and Family Services health education in local communities.
- This combined OSU Extension-OSUWMC team reviewed literature, met with others working in health extension around the country, and drafted a structure and approach to healthcare extension that is the centerpiece of ARCH's work.
- This partnership is moving from planning to implementation, emphasizing coordination among OSU Extension and ARCH for community presence, co-creation of solutions, and long-term efforts to improve health outcomes across Ohio.

Key to the creation of the healthcare extension is OSUWMC's hiring of **Healthcare Extension Agents**. These team members will be residents of the community or region being served. The Healthcare Extension Agent serves as a bridge between Ohio State University and local communities to advance community-centered health initiatives. This role emphasizes co-creation, advocacy, and partnership-building, connecting OSU's academic and clinical resources with community needs. Embodying trustworthiness and fostering it among partners is a primary responsibility of the Healthcare Extension Agent. Duties include integrating into the community, facilitating collaboration, maintaining open and transparent communication, and staying attuned to evolving local needs. Each agent's

role is shaped by the community they serve, requiring adaptability, inclusivity, and a commitment to meaningful, action-oriented work. Agents function as catalysts for health promotion, workforce development, and clinical transformation.

Translational and Implementation Science Research: The Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) has a host of activities that OSU can partner with to advance the health of rural and Appalachian Ohioans including:

- Data resources and AI,
- Study design,
- Trial implementation support,
- Regulatory support,
- Grant writing support, and
- Funding resources.

Coordinated work across the Health Science Colleges and CTSI will bring the robust research expertise of OSU to ARCH's efforts to partner in research efforts with rural and Appalachian communities with a focus on the translation of scientific discoveries into practical applications that improve health outcomes.

Innovative Care Delivery: Partners in this work will include researchers, practitioners, existing community engagement staff to assist healthcare providers and institutions across Appalachian and rural Ohio in standing up innovative clinical programs to tackle difficult clinical problems like maternal and infant health, mental health, addiction, chronic disease management, and nutrition/obesity.

- This work will leverage clinical staff across OSUWMC and The James Comprehensive Cancer Center (TJCCC), Health Science colleges, Ohio State Health Network (OSHN), CTSI, State of Ohio Adversity and Resiliency (SOAR) Study, and Care Innovation and Community Improvement Program (CICIP) (in partnership with the Ohio Department of Medicaid).
- Through engagement with OSUWMC's care delivery teams and researchers, we will find key services shown to get positive outcomes for patients and staff, document those practices in "playbooks" for innovative care delivery and offer those "playbooks" and technical assistance to partnering healthcare organizations for sustainable local care redesign.

Workforce Development and Retention: Building and maintaining the healthcare workforce delivering care in Appalachian and rural communities across Ohio will be key to ARCH's success in improving healthcare outcomes.

- ARCH will partner with a variety of OSU colleges and regional campuses and other

educational partners to support growth of educational opportunities to increase the healthcare training and workforce opportunities in and near rural and Appalachian communities including both degree-granting and certificate programs.

- ARCH will also partner with the OSUWMC human resources team to identify recruitment and retention practices that could be replicated with partners.

ARCH Operations: As ARCH grows in scale and complexity of operations, we plan to remain efficient and cost-effective by not replicating support resources that are already available in the institution. This will also have a positive impact on alignment of ARCH's mission with that of the rest of OSUWMC and OSU.

- Internally, ARCH will rely on partners across OSUWMC and OSU for assistance with strategic planning, communication, government relations, technology and AI, data, and quality improvement.
- These partnerships will also leverage data provided through the Government Resource Center (GRC), CHRR, and strategies being employed by the OSUWMC Office of Health Equity.

Rural and Appalachian Internal Network: Through the Rural and Appalachian Internal Network (RAIN), ARCH will engage individual OSU faculty, staff, and students with professional or personal ties to rural and Appalachian Ohio.

- RAIN will foster an environment to share the work of ARCH with those interested in Appalachian and rural health including research results, educational strategies, volunteer and internship opportunities, and other life experiences.
- We believe that RAIN will increase participation and investment of faculty, staff, and students in the work and outcomes of ARCH both on and off campus across Ohio.
- RAIN will also be an effective tool to better engage the leadership of service organizations across the university as well as the Alumni Association and other externally focused groups in the work of ARCH.
- Finally, RAIN will provide a platform for idea generation, feedback, and participation in workstream implementation.

Goals that Cannot be Easily Achieved in Any One Academic Unit

The Appalachian and Rural Center for Health aims to:

- Build and establish long-term trusting partnerships with healthcare providers and rural and Appalachian communities across Ohio.

- Enhance rural and Appalachian healthcare workforce to achieve equitable access, care and resources.
- Implement innovative and evidence-based clinical programs with local partners by co-creating scalable, community-driven solutions and translating research into practice faster.
- Advance innovative translational research to inform and achieve the mission and goals of ARCH.
- Advocate for the health care interests of rural and Appalachian Ohio with local, state and federal partners.

Even with all of the work being done on Appalachian and rural health within the university, these goals for the Center would be difficult to accomplish in any one academic unit due to the scale, scope and complexity of the work. ARCH is focused on our ability to create effective and sustainable partnerships with local communities across the Appalachian and rural parts of the state.

Collaboration with Community Organizations: ARCH will rely on input from community partners to inform its work. Community partners will include residents of rural and Appalachian Ohio, people with experience in providing and receiving medical care in rural and Appalachian Ohio, local and state government and policy groups, public health and public behavioral health groups, community-based organizations, philanthropy, research, and other technical experts. These partners will be engaged through the various workstreams of the center: community partnership, workforce development and retention, innovative care delivery, research, and advocacy. Healthcare Extension Agents who are residents of the local community and employees of OSUWMC will function as trusted liaisons between local communities and the university's health sciences, colleges, research, and extension systems. This role is modeled after the OSU Extension tradition and informed by national best practices in health extension.

Rural and Appalachian Communities: In year 1, ARCH will identify 3-4 partnering communities as our inaugural communities. Partnership efforts will be broad and inclusive across these communities, extending to local hospitals, safety net providers, primary care providers, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs), community-based organizations, local public health and public behavioral health organizations, locally elected leaders, educational institutions, faith leaders, businesses, and employers.

We recognize that healthcare is often one of the largest employment categories in rural and Appalachian regions. Health outcomes also have a tremendous impact on the health of the local economy and the ability of employers to effectively staff their businesses. OSUWMC will serve as a partner/facilitator extending its clinical, teaching, and research capacity for local benefit, but the local community and its partners will play a leading role in determining if and how OSUWMC will play a role. Local residents serving as Healthcare Extension Agents employed by OSUWMC will be the daily, on the ground presence of ARCH in rural and Appalachian communities cementing our local partnerships and relationships.

Government and Intersecting Private Sector: In addition to local communities, ARCH will establish strong relationships with the Ohio Department of Health Office of Rural Health, the Ohio Rural Health Association, and Ohio University. We will also explore partnerships with other state agencies such as Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, Ohio Department of Veterans Services, the Ohio Department of Aging, Appalachian Regional Commission and Governor's Office on Appalachia may also be interested in collaborating. OSUWMC and other OSU entities have deep ties to these entities, and we intend to build upon those ties with our OSU colleagues.

Private sector groups will help us extend and communicate the vision for and impact of ARCH. This includes the Ohio State Medical Association, the Ohio Hospital Association, and other professional and industry associations such as the Ohio County Commissioners Association, Ohio Association of Community Health Centers, Health Policy Institute of Ohio, the Ohio Business Roundtable, and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

ARCH will also establish meaningful engagement with organizations working at the national level to advance the vitality of rural and Appalachian communities, including the federal government and private sector partners such as the National Rural Health Association. ARCH will both learn from and contribute to progress in strengthening rural and Appalachian healthcare.

Finally, OSU has other private sector partnerships with industry that may be interested in contributing to the mission and goals of ARCH. These partners may include telecommunications, information technology, equipment, and other industries that have knowledge, expertise, and solutions to share.

II. Faculty

Criteria for Selecting the Center's Faculty Membership

ARCH will be a center grounded in the principle that partnerships both with faculty and staff on OSU's campuses and community partners will be equal collaborators in advancing opportunities for rural and Appalachian healthcare delivery. Modeled on the OSU College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) OSU Extension, ARCH as OSUWMC's Healthcare Extension, will extend relationships and capacity to rural and Appalachian communities in Ohio. Through this collaborative team approach, ARCH and OSU Extension will align our efforts and share resources at the local and state levels to implement healthcare extension programming to empower Ohio communities with knowledge and resources for optimal health and well-being and focus on science-based education and local health care delivery.

ARCH will lead the healthcare extension program across Appalachian and rural Ohio relying on key areas of expertise:

- OSU faculty and staff who are technical experts linked to clinical care innovations/playbooks, translational science/research, education and workforce strategies,
- Regional partners to discover opportunities, co-create and implement solutions to keep care local,
- Healthcare extension educators employed by OSUWMC to advance regional relationships and support program implementation, and
- Extension educators employed by OSU CFAES and experts in the local geography, relationships, and human and community development.

The core team of ARCH includes a mixture of faculty and staff from the OSU health science colleges, CFAES, the College of Education and Human Ecology, and the Wexner Medical Center. We envision that an even broader group of individuals from other colleges and centers across the university will eventually want to participate in the work of ARCH as it grows and matures.

OSU faculty and staff members looking to affiliate with the Center will have a number of options for how to be involved in ARCH's work based on their expertise on Appalachian and rural health topics as well as their current work in these communities. A Membership Committee will be established within the first year to oversee the details of the process for individuals to become a Member of the Center and to promote the benefits of Center membership.

- Membership status – Membership in the center will be reserved for individuals who have a demonstrated, long-term career focus on research, scholarship, teaching, or service to Appalachian or rural areas of Ohio – this could include healthcare delivery, health outcomes, workforce development, economic development, community development, policy, etc. Specific criteria will be developed in the first year of the Center to determine eligibility for membership.

In conjunction with the leadership of the Center, Center Members will be able to participate in helping shape the strategic focus of ARCH through advisory committees or other project-oriented steering committees. If an individual member takes on a formal or leadership role within the Center that requires significant dedicated time, there may be opportunities for those members to receive some funding support from the Center.

- Affiliate status - An affiliate status will be created for individuals with interest in topics related to Appalachian and rural health, but who do not have a specific focus or long-standing commitment to engaging in the work of the Center. In the preceding section, we outline RAIN (Rural and Appalachian Interest Network) as an opportunity to build a network among faculty, staff, and students to support the mission of ARCH. RAIN will play a role in attracting new faculty, staff and learners to the work of the Center leading to them initially to become affiliated with ARCH. Affiliates will be on mailing lists for updates on ARCH's work, will be invited to participate in RAIN events, open conferences, symposiums, volunteer opportunities, etc. The criteria for signing up to be an Affiliate of the Center will be quite open, which will allow many individuals from across the university to learn about the work of the Center and, hopefully, to become more engaged over time to eventually become a Member.

We anticipate the eventual addition of a faculty director with expertise in translational science, policy, and coursework that will advance rural and Appalachian health in Ohio as a complement to the leadership provided by the executive director. An ARCH faculty advisory group will be formed to help envision the faculty aspect of ARCH until the faculty director is onboarded. These advisors will help draft membership criteria, promote faculty recruitment, and contribute to the search process for the new faculty director when the time comes to do so. A strong and selective group of faculty advisors will establish the faculty foundation in collaboration with the leadership of ARCH.

List of Faculty and Staff Expressing Interest in Associating with the Center

Faculty	Dean	College
Cathann Kress, PhD	Cathann Kress, PhD	College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences
Karen Rose, PhD	Karen Rose, PhD	College of Nursing
Karla Zadnik, OD, PhD	Karla Zadnik	College of Optometry, Dean Health Sciences
Deanna Kroetz, PhD	Deanna Kroetz, PhD	College of Pharmacy
Carol Bradford, MD, MS	Carol Bradford, MD, MS	College of Medicine
Trevor Brown, PhD	Trevor Brown, PhD	John Glenn College of Public Affairs
David Jenkins, PhD, LCSW	David Jenkins, PhD, LCSW	College of Social Work
Jason Reece, PhD	Ayanna Howard, PhD	College of Engineering Vice Provost for Urban Research & Community Engagement
Eric Anderman, PhD	Don Pope-Davis, PhD	College of Education and Human Ecology; Vice Provost for Regional Campuses
Margaret Young, PhD	Eric Anderman, PhD	Dean and Director, Lima Campus
Kim Rathmell, MD, PhD, MMHC	John Warner, MD	The James Comprehensive Cancer Center
Elena Irwin, PhD	Cathann Kress, PhD	College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences
Erik Porfeli, PhD	Don Pope-Davis, PhD	College of Education and Human Ecology
Julie Johnson, PharmD	Carol Bradford, MD, MS	College of Medicine
Steve Gavazzi, PhD	David Horn, PhD	College of Arts and Sciences
Gil Liu, MD	Ohio Colleges of Medicine	Government Resource Center

Staff	Program
Pat Bebo, MS, RDN	College of Food, Agriculture, Environmental Science OSU Extension
Ben Anthony, BBA, BA	OSUWMC Office of Health Equity
Athena Lowe	OSUWMC Health Administration Fellow
Scott Schroeder	OSUWMC Strategy and Network Development
Brei Miller, MBA, MA	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation – OSUWMC/COM
Bridget Britton, MSW, LSW	College of Food, Agriculture, Environmental Science
Tom Blincoe, MBA	Ohio State Health Network/Digital Consult Network – OSUWMC
Chris Mizer, MS	Digital Consult Network – OSUWMC

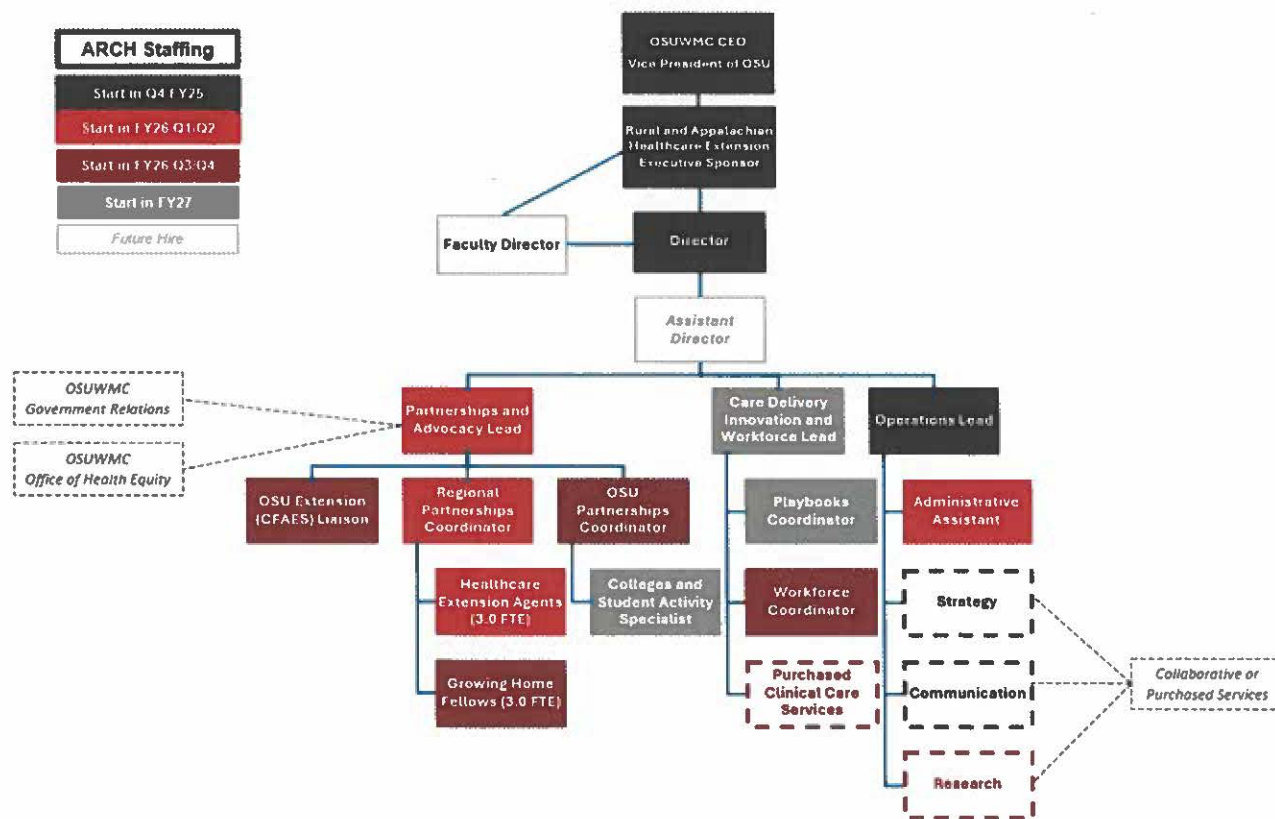
Extent to Which Staff and Students will be Involved

ARCH will be a place for people and organizations interested in extending the capacity of the university to advance research, practice, workforce development, and advocacy with rural and Appalachian Ohio. We envision that staff and learners involved in ARCH will be integral to its sustainability and success.

As noted above, ARCH will establish a Rural and Appalachian Interest Network (RAIN) to engage faculty, staff, and students with personal or professional ties to rural and Appalachian Ohio. The group will provide a platform for networking, idea generation, feedback, and participation in community initiatives. The goal is to foster an environment to share research, educational strategies, volunteer and internship opportunities, and life experiences with an aim of enlarging the number of OSU team members dedicating time and energy to the Center's goals.

III. Administration

The Appalachian and Rural Center for Health is staffed to support partnerships and workstreams in rural and Appalachian regions of Ohio and among OSU's campuses. The organizational chart below depicts the staffing model and timing for positions.



Executive Director and Responsibilities

ARCH is led by an Executive Director, Lori Criss, MSW.

Scope of Position

Under the direction of the Chief Clinical Officer, the Executive Director, Appalachian, and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) provides leadership and support within ARCH for the:

- Development of annual strategic goals and objectives
- Implementation of healthcare extension model
- Expansion of our partnerships with Appalachian and rural healthcare organizations, providers, and communities
- Strengthening our partnerships within OSU with departments, colleges, and regional campuses

- Fiscal management consistent with the annual budget
- Direction of the ARCH team to plan, develop, implement, and oversee initiatives and projects designed to improve healthcare outcomes in Appalachian and rural regions of Ohio.

Position Summary

The Executive Director participates in the development of operational strategy and is accountable for directing operations of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health. The Director supervises multiple activities including statistical, performance and managerial reporting, budgeting and fiscal management, recruitment and retention of staff, implementation of tactics to forward the strategic plan, and performance improvement initiatives. The Director will manage relationships with internal partners across the Medical Center and university departments, colleges, and regional campuses as well as external partners to facilitate progress toward strategic and operational goals.

Duties and Responsibilities

50% Strategic Direction

- Partner with Medical Center and other university leadership team to establish goals, objectives, and operational plans annually to support the strategic goals of ARCH, the Medical Center, and the university
- Guide the establishment of annual performance metrics/key performance indicators for the ARCH and oversee routine reporting of key metrics.
- Establish and enhance external partnerships with Ohio's Appalachian and rural healthcare organizations, providers, and communities through the healthcare extension model.
- Establish and enhance internal relationships within the Medical Center and university departments, colleges, and regional campuses to align efforts to support ARCH operations and strategic direction.
- Obtain and maintain Center status for ARCH within the university in collaboration with partners in the Office of Academic Affairs
- Actively monitors national trends and issues related to Appalachian and rural healthcare and considers how these trends affect current and future operations.
- Work to develop our statewide and national reputation as a convener and leader in healthcare extension and public policy related to Appalachian and rural health.
- Engage with local, state, and federal government officials, business leaders, and public policy experts on public policy issues related to Appalachian and rural health.

- Cultivate opportunities for external grant and contract funding from governmental entities, foundations, and corporate/private philanthropy.
- Develop and maintain internal and external advisory boards to advise ARCH on strategic direction and effectiveness of operations.

40% Operational Performance & Financial Management

- Establishes both formal and informal internal and external communication structures and processes to ensure effective information sharing.
- Responsible for recruitment and retention of staff, staff engagement, and annual evaluation of all direct reports
- Creates a culture that focuses on customer service, collaboration with external partners, staff participation, motivation, and effective communication.
- Oversee development and implementation of ARCH core functions.
- Utilizes productivity tools to manage resources and support determination of resource allocation.
- Monitors departmental financial performance and propose adjustments to operations if necessary.
- Actively supports the management of the key financial performance indicators.
- Capital and operating budget preparation.

10% other duties assigned by Administrator

Function and Composition of the Oversight Committee

The Oversight Committee will have 50% faculty representation from Columbus and regional campuses on the committee with remaining members representing non-faculty OSU staff, community members, direct care providers, rural health experts, and students. While operational activities and deliverables are the responsibility of ARCH staff, the Oversight Committee will support ARCH in strategic planning and external accountability to its mission and key performance indicators.

Format and Composition

- Meet at least twice yearly
- Initially comprised of staff/faculty from CFAES OSU Extension, College of Education and Human Ecology, and College of Medicine and may evolve over time to include other OSU colleges.
- Representation from multiple OSU campuses will be pursued.
- We will also recruit one undergraduate, one graduate and one professional student.

Functions:

- Support ARCH staff in strategic planning
- Lend subject matter expertise to workstreams
- Make connections with potential partners at OSU and externally
- Provide annual input for continuous quality improvement of ARCH

Reporting Line

ARCH reports directly to the CEO of the OSU Wexner Medical Center and Executive Vice President at The Ohio State University. The Executive Sponsor for ARCH at OSUWMC is the Chief Clinical Officer who reports to the CEO.

- John Warner, MD, CEO OSU Wexner Medical Center and Executive Vice President at The Ohio State University
- Andrew Thomas, MD, Chief Clinical Officer OSU Wexner Medical Center, Senior Associate Vice President for Health Sciences, and Professor of Clinical Internal Medicine

Main Components of a Pattern of Administration for ARCH

To ensure that ARCH is effectively and efficiently operating to achieve its mission and uphold the reputation of the university with transparency across key stakeholders, the following are being deployed:

- Accountability: meetings with the CEO of the OSUWMC and Executive Sponsor to review milestone achievement and progress with programmatic and fiscal key performance indicators
- Reporting and communications: newsletter, website, university publications
- Oversight Committee: Meets at least 2x per year
- Partners Meetings and Internal Network Meetings at least 2x per year

IV. Budget/Funding:

Budget for the First Year: \$2,430,586

OSUWMC committed \$2.4 million in FY26 and is projected to commit \$3.2 million in FY27. We are hiring staff in a phased approach across multiple fiscal years to support emerging Center and its initiatives. In FY26, ARCH aims to have 13.25 FTEs and in FY27 that will increase to 18.00 FTEs. Concurrently, we will explore and engage faculty across OSU to advance the goals of ARCH and in alignment with their teaching, research, and service agendas. This may include the buy-down of time from some key faculty to be directly involved in implementing ARCH initiatives.

Funding Sources and Sustainability

Initially, OSUWMC will fund this rural and Appalachian initiative prioritized in Impact 2035 strategic plan. Based on the experience of similar institutions at other universities, we predict the ability over time to bring in philanthropic and grant funding to help support the core functions of the ARCH. Securing philanthropic champions and creating a process for finding, pursuing, and securing grant funding for the university and local partners is a priority. ARCH will seek extramural funding from local, state, and federal public and private sources to augment the institutional support. Some permanent level of OSUWMC operating investment is expected.

Equipment, Space, Facilities Needed to Fulfill the Center

The OSUWMC is providing equipment and space for ARCH. No new facilities are needed.

Personnel Costs	FY26	FY27
Partnerships	\$ 378,010	\$ 555,132
Healthcare Extension	\$ 298,695	\$ 414,190
Workforce	\$ 67,501	\$ 206,214
Playbooks	\$ 231,001	\$ 546,295
(cost and FTEs in operations line) Advocacy	\$ -	\$ -
(cost and FTEs in operations line) Research	\$ -	\$ -
Operations	\$ 705,379	\$ 733,594
Total Personnel	\$ 1,680,586	\$ 2,455,426
Total Non-Personnel	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000
TOTAL	\$ 2,430,586	\$ 3,205,426

V. Evaluative Criteria and Benchmarks

Supporting healthcare providers and their partners in addressing challenging health behaviors and outcomes in rural and Appalachian Ohio is crucial for improving the well-being Ohioans and the state. Setting clear and measurable indicators will help us understand the impact of our efforts, ensure that we are making meaningful strides towards better health outcomes for the rural and Appalachian populations, deploy continuous quality improvement with our partners, and create data for advocacy and use by public policy makers.

The vision and mission for the ARCH positions the team at OSU to advance relationships, deepen partnerships, extend capacity to improve health outcomes in partner communities and eventually scale solutions regionally or statewide. Achieving this will take time. In the first two fiscal years, becoming efficient with the phases of work: Partner, Discover, Co-Design, Deliver, and Disseminate will be the priority. This will set us up for rapid and efficient expansion and scaling of the healthcare extension model in future years.

A comprehensive evaluation plan for ARCH will be developed this fall. Benchmarks for FY26 include the following.

Period	High Level Priorities
FY25 Q4	Secure budget, hire initial staff, identify inaugural communities
FY26 Q1	Outreach to the first two communities, establish partnership arrangements, apply for university center status, continue hiring staff
FY26 Q2	Begin discovery in first two communities, identify opportunities and begin co-design of solutions in two inaugural communities, begin outreach to third community
FY26 Q3	Continue and finalize design with the first two communities; finalize partnership arrangement with the third
FY26 Q4	Deliver co-created solutions in first communities; begin the discovery process with the third, begin partnership outreach with the next two communities
FY27	Expansion of additional opportunities with existing partner communities, begin dissemination and scaling solutions regionally/statewide; plan to add new communities

ARCH Goal FY26	Measurable Target for FY26
Create the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health and OSUWMC Healthcare Extension	• Secure funding for FY26 • Hire 13 FTE • Establish Faculty Advisory Committee, Rural and Appalachian Interest Network (RAIN)
Build and establish long-term trusting partnerships with healthcare providers and communities across rural and Appalachian Ohio.	• Formalize relationships with 2-3 inaugural regional partners • Identify two additional partner communities to scale up in FY27
Enhance and maintain the rural and Appalachian healthcare workforce with a goal of achieving equitable access, care and resources.	• Connect with regional campuses (OSU and other) and local healthcare employers to discover needs and opportunities
Implement innovative and evidence-based clinical programs with local partners by co-creating scalable, community-driven solutions and translating research into practice faster.	• Develop playbooks and technical assistance strategies for 3 areas of clinical program innovation
Advocate for the healthcare interests of rural and Appalachian Ohio with local, state, and federal partners	• Formalize partnership with Ohio Rural Health Association • Collaborate with Ohio University's rural health efforts • Establish relationship with Ohio Department of Health Center of Public Health Excellence

VI. Supporting Materials

Letters of Support and Collaboration follow this page.

Cathan Kress, PhD – Dean, College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences	Elena Irwin, PhD – Faculty Director of the Sustainability Institute at Ohio State
Karen Rose, PhD – Dean, College of Nursing	Julie Johnson, PharmD – Director of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute at Ohio State
Karla Zadnik, OD, PhD – Dean, College of Optometry, Dean of Health Sciences	Steve Gavazzi, PhD – Director of the Center for Human Resource Research at Ohio State
Deanna Kroetz, PhD – Dean, College of Pharmacy	Gil Liu, PhD – Director of the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center
Carol Bradford, MD, MS – Dean, College of Medicine	Beth Kluding, PhD –President of the Ohio Rural Health Association
Trevor Brown, PhD – Dean, John Glenn College of Public Affairs	Randy Leite, PhD – Executive Director of the Appalachian Children’s Coalition
David Jenkins, PhD, LCSW – College of Social Work	Cara Dingus Brook – President and CEO of the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio
Jason Reece, PhD – Vice Provost for Urban Research & Community Engagement	Arthur Kauffman, MD – Vice President for Community Health, University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
Eric Anderman, PhD – Vice Provost for Regional Campuses	Rick Hodges, MPA – Director of Ohio University’s Ohio Alliance for Population Health
Margaret Young, PhD – Dean and Director Lima Campus	Steve Stivers – President and CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Kim Rathmell, MD, PhD, MMHC – CEO of The OSU Comprehensive Cancer Center	Stacy Rastauskas Bretherton – Vice President for Government Affairs at The Ohio State University
Erik Porfeli, PhD – Chair of the Department of Human Sciences, College of Education and Human Ecology	Alexandra Martinez-Mendez – President of the Rural Health Initiative Student Organization at Ohio State College of Medicine



September 22, 2025

The Ohio State University
Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my support for the proposal to establish the **Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH)** as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Dean of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES), our portfolio includes OSU Extension, which provides high-quality research and education in all 88 Ohio counties through a cooperative structure with county, state, and federal governments. I recognize the critical importance of ARCH's mission to extend Ohio State's clinical, educational, and research capacity to rural and Appalachian communities across Ohio.

ARCH represents a bold and timely initiative that aligns deeply with Ohio State's land-grant mission and our shared commitment to serving the people of Ohio. The proposed healthcare extension model, co-developed by OSU Extension and the Wexner Medical Center, potentially builds upon the trusted presence of Extension in all 88 counties and leverages our combined expertise in health education, community engagement, and workforce development. This partnership exemplifies the interdisciplinary collaboration needed to address complex health disparities and improve outcomes in underserved regions.

CFAES is proud to have contributed to the foundational work of ARCH through the leadership of faculty and staff such as David Civittolo, Pat Bebo, and Bridget Britton. Their involvement in shaping the healthcare Extension model reflects our college's dedication to advancing community health and well-being. We are committed to continuing this collaboration as ARCH grows, and we look forward to engaging with the Wexner Medical Center to support its success, as new resources are identified to support a healthcare Extension model, which would go beyond the current Extension efforts in designated counties.

ARCH's focus on co-creating sustainable, community-driven solutions, fostering translational research, and strengthening the rural healthcare workforce is not only innovative but essential. The center's approach to listening first, building trust, and empowering local communities resonates with the values and programs of CFAES. It also replicates our current cooperative model, in which the focus and goals of the programs are driven by our partners. We believe ARCH will serve as a national model for how academic institutions can partner with rural communities to improve health and vitality.



I strongly endorse the establishment of ARCH as a university center and encourage its approval. This initiative will elevate Ohio State's impact across the state and beyond, and CFAES is eager to be a strategic partner in this important work.

Sincerely,

Cathann A. Kress
Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Dean
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Cc: David Civittolo, Interim Associate Dean and Director, Ohio State University Extension

August 21, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to offer my full support for the proposal to designate the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Dean of the College of Social Work, I recognize the transformative potential of ARCH to advance health outcomes, community engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration—particularly in rural and Appalachian regions where systemic barriers to care persist.

ARCH's mission to extend OSU's clinical, educational, and research capacity to underserved communities aligns deeply with the values and priorities of social work. Our faculty and students are committed to addressing the drivers of health, advocating for high need populations, and co-creating solutions that are rooted in community voice and lived experience. ARCH's healthcare extension model provides a powerful platform for social workers to engage directly with communities, build trust, and foster sustainable change.

Faculty from the College of Social Work will contribute expertise in behavioral health, addiction recovery, trauma-informed care, and community-based research. Our scholars are well-positioned to collaborate with ARCH on translational science initiatives that bridge the gap between research and practice, ensuring that evidence-based interventions are adapted to meet the unique needs of rural and Appalachian populations.

For our students, ARCH offers rich opportunities for experiential learning and professional development. Through internships, fellowships, and service-learning projects, social work students will gain firsthand experience working in rural settings, deepening their understanding of cultural humility, community resilience, and integrated care. The Rural and Appalachian Interest Network (RAIN) will further connect students with meaningful opportunities to contribute to ARCH's mission and build lasting relationships with communities across Ohio.

ARCH also strengthens our university's land-grant mission by fostering partnerships that support local healthcare systems, enhance workforce development, and promote economic vitality. By engaging with local providers, public health agencies, and educational institutions, ARCH will help build a resilient healthcare and social service infrastructure that reflects the values of community empowerment, integrity, and respect.

In closing, the designation of ARCH as a university center is a critical and timely initiative that will elevate Ohio State's leadership in rural health and community-based innovation. The

College of Social Work is proud to support this proposal and looks forward to collaborating with ARCH to advance our shared goals of justice, impact, and transformation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Jenkins", with a stylized, cursive script.

David Jenkins
Dean and Professor



August 27, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal to designate the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Dean of the College of Pharmacy, I am proud to support this initiative, which aligns deeply with our college's mission to advance health for all through transformative education, research, practice and community engagement, particularly in rural and urban communities across Ohio.

ARCH's vision to improve health outcomes and address barriers in rural and Appalachian regions through a healthcare extension model is both timely and transformative. The College of Pharmacy has a long-standing commitment to serving rural Ohio, including through decades of meaningful collaboration on shared faculty hires, grants, and outreach endeavors with OSU Extension, faculty-led research on medication access and adherence, community-based health initiatives, and partnerships with local pharmacies and health systems. ARCH will amplify and expand these efforts by providing a structured, interdisciplinary platform for collaboration and innovation.

Our faculty bring expertise in pharmacotherapy, public health, advocacy, and implementation science that will be essential to ARCH's success. We are eager to contribute to translational research initiatives that address chronic disease management, opioid use disorder, and medication safety - issues that disproportionately affect rural populations. ARCH's partnership with the Clinical and Translational Science Institute will further support our efforts to bring evidence-based solutions to the communities that need them most.

For our students, ARCH offers invaluable experiential learning opportunities. Through internships, fellowships, and service-learning projects, we aim to expand how our pharmacy students engage directly with rural and Appalachian communities, gaining hands-on experience in patient care, health education, and community engagement. These experiences will prepare our graduates to serve rural populations with cultural competence and clinical excellence.

ARCH also strengthens Ohio State's land-grant mission by fostering partnerships that support local healthcare systems, enhance workforce development, and promote



sustainable community health. By working alongside local providers, public health agencies, and educational institutions, ARCH will help build a resilient healthcare infrastructure that reflects the values of equity and collaboration.

In closing, the designation of ARCH as a university center is a strategic and impactful investment in the health of Ohio's rural and Appalachian communities. The College of Pharmacy is proud to support this proposal and looks forward to contributing to ARCH's success through research, clinical practice, education, and community engagement.

Sincerely,

Deanna L. Kroetz, BS Pharm, PhD
Dean
Professor of Pharmaceutics and Pharmacology



August 22, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Vice Provost for Regional Campuses, I see ARCH as a transformative initiative that will strengthen the university's engagement with rural and Appalachian communities across Ohio—communities that are central to our land-grant mission and to the work of the regional campuses in particular.

ARCH provides a unique and timely opportunity to connect Ohio State's academic, clinical, and research resources with the needs and priorities of underserved regions. Its healthcare extension model, grounded in collaboration with OSU Extension and the Wexner Medical Center, ensures that solutions are co-created with communities and delivered in ways that are locally relevant and sustainable. Our four regional campuses are well-positioned to support ARCH's mission. Faculty, staff, and students at these campuses bring deep ties to their communities and are eager to contribute to interdisciplinary research, experiential learning, and workforce development initiatives that improve health outcomes and expand access to care. ARCH offers a vital platform for aligning these efforts and creating shared opportunities for innovation and impact. I am particularly encouraged by ARCH's commitment to listening to communities, building trust, and keeping care close to home. These principles are essential for developing lasting partnerships and ensuring that our work reflects the lived experiences of the people we serve.

I fully support the designation of ARCH as a university center and look forward to continued collaboration in advancing its mission across Ohio. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

Eric Anderman, PhD
Vice Provost for Regional Campuses
The Ohio State University



August 25, 2025

TO: Lori Criss

FROM: Karla Zadnik

RE: Appalachian and Rural Center for Health

I offer my strong support for your Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) application to the Office of Academic Affairs. ARCH represents a strategic and interdisciplinary initiative that aligns with the health sciences colleges' shared commitment to improving health outcomes and advancing access to care across Ohio. That commitment is important to the College of Optometry. Specifically:

- (1) ARCH's focus on rural and Appalachian communities addresses a critical gap in healthcare access, infrastructure, and workforce development; given our connections to optometrists across the state, the College of Optometry is well positioned to contribute in this area.
- (2) ARCH creates a collaborative platform for faculty across the health sciences to engage in translational research, innovative care delivery, and community-based education.
- (3) The partnership between The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, OSU Extension, and our regional campuses ensures that ARCH is grounded in clinical excellence and community engagement, with a strong foundation for sustainable impact.
- (4) As you and I discussed last week, collaboration with OSU Extension is especially vital. Extension educators bring existing trusted relationships and deep local knowledge, helping ARCH listen to communities, remain present, and co-create solutions that reflect local priorities.
- (5) Our optometry students already serve externships during their fourth year of training in communities, and our satellite clinics address areas near Columbus that are underserved. ARCH will expand those experiential learning opportunities for our students, further preparing them to serve communities in Ohio and beyond.
- (6) ARCH will serve as a vital forum for aligning university expertise with community priorities, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and scaling solutions that improve health and well-being across the state.

I believe that ARCH embodies Ohio State's land-grant mission by extending knowledge and service to all Ohioans. Its efforts to sustain locally delivered healthcare sustainable are essential for strengthening community health systems and supporting economic vitality. On behalf of the College of Optometry, I offer my strongest support.



The Ohio State University at Lima

Public Service Building, Room 208A
4240 Campus Drive
Lima, Ohio 45804

567-242-7200

lima.osu.edu

August 22, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Dean and Director of the Lima Campus, I recognize the critical importance of ARCH's mission to improve health outcomes and strengthen healthcare systems in rural and Appalachian Ohio.

ARCH represents a timely and strategic initiative that aligns with Ohio State's land-grant mission and our shared commitment to serving all Ohioans. Its focus on co-creating solutions with local communities, extending clinical and educational capacity, and building sustainable healthcare partnerships is especially relevant to the needs of our region.

I've had the opportunity to meet with the ARCH leadership team alongside a local healthcare provider to explore the potential for a regional partnership. These conversations have highlighted the value of ARCH's collaborative approach and its ability to bring together university resources and community expertise to address pressing health challenges. We are excited about the possibilities for joint initiatives that support workforce development, innovative care delivery, and student engagement in real-world health settings.

ARCH also creates meaningful opportunities for faculty and students at regional campuses like Lima to participate in interdisciplinary research, experiential learning, and service. By connecting academic programs with community health priorities, ARCH will help prepare the next generation of professionals to serve rural populations with compassion, competence, and innovation.

I fully support the designation of ARCH as a university center and look forward to continued collaboration in advancing its mission across Ohio.

Sincerely,

Dr. Margaret Young
Dean and Director
The Ohio State University at Lima



September 16, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal to designate the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Dean of the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, I recognize the critical importance of ARCH's mission to improve health outcomes and improve health outcomes in rural and Appalachian Ohio through a sustainable healthcare extension model.

ARCH represents a bold and innovative approach to public service—one that is deeply aligned with the Glenn College's commitment to advancing evidence-based policy, community engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration. By co-creating solutions with local partners and translating research into practice, ARCH will serve as a catalyst for systems-level change in healthcare delivery and public health infrastructure.

Faculty from the Glenn College bring expertise in health policy, public administration, and community development that will be essential to ARCH's success. Our scholars are well-positioned to contribute to the center's translational science initiatives, policy advocacy efforts, and evaluation frameworks. ARCH's emphasis on implementation science and community-based research aligns with our strengths in designing and assessing public programs that are responsive to local needs.

For our students, ARCH offers a powerful platform for experiential learning. Through internships, fellowships, and collaborative projects, students will engage directly with rural and Appalachian communities, gaining firsthand experience in policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, and program design. These opportunities will prepare the next generation of public leaders to address complex health challenges with empathy, rigor, and innovation.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

ARCH also strengthens Ohio State's land-grant mission by extending the university's capacity to serve all Ohioans. By partnering with local governments, healthcare systems, and community organizations, ARCH will help build resilient health ecosystems that support both individual well-being and regional economic vitality.

In closing, the designation of ARCH as a university center is a timely and strategic investment in the health and future of Ohio's rural and Appalachian communities. The John Glenn College of Public Affairs is proud to support this initiative and looks forward to contributing to its success through research, education, and public service.

Sincerely,

Trevor Brown, PhD

Dean, John Glenn College of Public Affairs
The Ohio State University



August 29, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal to designate the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a University Center at The Ohio State University. As Dean of the College of Medicine, I believe ARCH represents a transformative opportunity to extend our academic medical mission to rural and Appalachian communities across Ohio—regions that face persistent health challenges and workforce shortages.

ARCH's vision to co-create sustainable healthcare solutions through a healthcare extension model aligns directly with the College of Medicine's commitment to advancing health equity, translational research, and community-based care. Our faculty are deeply engaged in clinical innovation, implementation science, and population health—areas that will be central to ARCH's success. Through partnerships with ARCH, we can accelerate the translation of research into practice, bringing evidence-based interventions to communities that need them most.

The College of Medicine is uniquely positioned to contribute to ARCH's mission. Our longstanding relationships with referring hospitals across rural Ohio—many of which account for nearly half of OSUWMC's inpatient admissions—provide a strong foundation for collaboration. College of Medicine faculty members are already engaged in rural health initiatives, clinical trials, and educational endeavors and will be instrumental in developing "playbooks" and technical assistance strategies for ARCH's partner communities.

ARCH also offers exceptional opportunities for our learners. Through experiential learning in rural and Appalachian settings, health professionals and medical students, residents and fellows will gain firsthand experience in community-engaged care, health systems innovation, and culturally responsive practice. These experiences will prepare future health care professionals to serve diverse populations and lead efforts to improve health outcomes in underserved areas.

Moreover, ARCH's interdisciplinary approach—connecting the College of Medicine with partners in Nursing, Pharmacy, Social Work and beyond—will foster a collaborative ecosystem for advancing translational science and workforce development. The Rural and Appalachian Interest Network (RAIN) will further engage faculty, staff and learners with personal or professional ties to these regions, strengthening our collective impact.

The designation of ARCH as a University Center is a strategic and timely initiative that will elevate Ohio State's leadership in rural health and community engagement. The College of Medicine is proud to support this proposal, and we look forward to contributing to ARCH's success through research, education and clinical innovation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carol R. Bradford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carol R. Bradford, MD, MS, FACS
Dean, College of Medicine
Vice President for Health Sciences, Wexner Medical Center
Leslie H. and Abigail S. Wexner Dean's Chair in Medicine
Professor of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery



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Office of Academic Affairs
Outreach and Engagement

University Square South
Columbus, OH 43201

Office of Academic Affairs
Ohio State University
15 East 15th Street
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) and its proposal to become a university center at The Ohio State University.

As Vice Provost for Urban Research & Community Engagement, I have the privilege of supporting faculty, staff, and students in building meaningful partnerships that advance Ohio State's land-grant mission and deepen our impact across the state. ARCH represents a powerful opportunity to extend this mission into rural and Appalachian communities through a model grounded in co-creation, shared responsibility, and translational research.

ARCH's commitment to engaging communities as equal partners in the design and delivery of health solutions aligns with our university's strategic focus on external engagement. The center's approach—rooted in listening, collaboration, and shared learning—mirrors the values that guide our work in urban neighborhoods and offers a complementary pathway to strengthen community connections across diverse geographies. ARCH's efforts in community engagement can provide a model of best practices for community engaged scholars and practitioners across our campus.

We are particularly excited about the potential for ARCH to enhance Ohio State's translational research efforts by creating new pathways for faculty and students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. By bridging academic expertise with community priorities, ARCH will help accelerate the movement of research into practice—especially in areas such as health equity, behavioral health, and workforce development.

Moreover, ARCH's cross-campus engagement strategy will create new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and experiential learning. By connecting colleges and regional

campuses with rural communities, the center will expand access to high-impact learning experiences for students while also supporting the development and retention of a skilled healthcare workforce in underserved areas.

I look forward to working alongside ARCH to strengthen Ohio State's community-engaged scholarship and to build a healthier, more equitable Ohio. Please count on my full support for this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Jason W. Reece

Jason Reece, PhD

Vice Provost for Urban Research & Community Engagement, Office of Outreach & Engagement,
Office of Academic Affairs

Associate Professor, City and Regional Planning, Knowlton School, College of Engineering
The Ohio State University

Reece.35@osu.edu



September 22, 2025

300 Heminger Hall
1577 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

614-292-8900 Phone
614-292-4535 Fax

Office of Academic Affairs
The Ohio State University
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

nursing@osu.edu
nursing.osu.edu

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal to establish the **Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH)** as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Dean of the College of Nursing, I recognize the urgent need to address persistent health challenges in Ohio's rural and Appalachian communities. ARCH represents a bold and innovative approach to improving health outcomes through interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, and sustainable healthcare solutions.

The College of Nursing is deeply aligned with ARCH's mission and is committed to contributing to its success. Our college has a strong history of advancing rural health through initiatives such as:

- **The Nurse Practitioner Residency Program**, which prepares advanced practice nurses to serve in underserved and rural areas with a focus on primary care, behavioral health, and chronic disease management.
- **Telehealth and Digital Health Innovation**, where our faculty and students are actively engaged in expanding access to care through virtual platforms—an essential strategy for rural communities with limited provider availability.
- **Community-Based Research Projects**, including partnerships with local health departments and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to address maternal and infant health, opioid addiction, and aging in place.
- **The Nursing Workforce Pipeline Initiative**, which collaborates with regional campuses and high schools to recruit and support students from rural backgrounds into nursing careers, helping to build a sustainable workforce in their home communities.

ARCH's healthcare extension model offers a powerful framework to scale these efforts and integrate nursing expertise into broader community health strategies. We are particularly excited about the opportunity to place nursing students and faculty in rural and Appalachian settings for clinical rotations, service-learning, and research, thereby enriching their education while directly contributing to community well-being.

The College of Nursing stands ready to partner with ARCH in co-creating solutions that are community-driven, evidence-based, and scalable. We believe this center will serve as a national exemplar of how academic institutions can collaborate with local communities to improve health equity and strengthen the healthcare workforce.

I fully endorse the establishment of ARCH as a university center and commend the leadership of the Wexner Medical Center and OSU Extension for their vision and commitment. The College of Nursing is proud to be part of this transformative initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen M. Rose". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Karen M. Rose, PhD, RN, FGSA, FNAP, FAAN
Dean and Professor
The Ohio State University College of Nursing
rose.1482@osu.edu

The James



The Ohio State University
Comprehensive Cancer Center –
Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and
Richard J. Solove Research Institute
Office of the Chief Executive Officer
460 W 10th Avenue
Suite D920D
Columbus, OH 43210-1240
cancer.osu.edu

August 22, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Chief Executive Officer of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – The James, I recognize ARCH as a vital initiative that aligns with our mission to reduce the burden of cancer through research, education, and community engagement—especially in underserved populations across rural and Appalachian Ohio.

ARCH's focus on improving health outcomes through a healthcare extension model and translational science approach is particularly relevant to our work. Rural and Appalachian communities face significant barriers to cancer prevention, screening, and treatment, and ARCH is uniquely positioned to help address these challenges by building trusted partnerships, co-creating locally relevant interventions, and extending the reach of academic medicine into areas where it is most needed. This work complements and strengthens our cancer prevention efforts and the cancer prevention research led by Dr. Electra Paskett, which has long focused on reducing cancer disparities in Appalachian Ohio.

The James is committed to serving all Ohioans, and ARCH provides a powerful platform for collaboration across the university and with communities. By partnering with ARCH, we can expand our efforts to reduce cancer disparities, engage in community-based research, and implement scalable, evidence-based strategies that reflect the lived experiences of rural residents.

Importantly, ARCH creates a forum for shared opportunities among OSU faculty, staff, and Ohio's communities. It fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, supports experiential learning for students, and ensures that the voices of rural and Appalachian Ohioans are represented in the university's research enterprise. This is essential for developing sustainable solutions and fulfilling Ohio State's land-grant mission to serve the public good.

The fact that ARCH is emerging from the Wexner Medical Center, in partnership with OSU Extension and regional campuses, adds significant strength to its foundation. It brings together clinical excellence, community engagement, and academic innovation to build a healthier, more equitable Ohio.

I look forward to continued collaboration with ARCH and strongly support its designation as a university center.

Sincerely,



W. Kimryn Rathmell MD, PhD

CEO, Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital &

Richard J. Solove Research Institute

The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center

Jeri B. Block and Robert H. Schottenstein Distinguished Chair in Cancer



August 25, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center. As Director of the Sustainability Institute, I am excited about ARCH's potential to advance health access, community resilience, and sustainable development in rural and Appalachian Ohio—goals that are deeply aligned with our mission.

ARCH's interdisciplinary approach and commitment to co-created, community-driven solutions reflect the values of sustainability and inclusive innovation. Its emergence from the Wexner Medical Center, in partnership with OSU's Columbus and regional campuses, ensures that ARCH is grounded in clinical excellence and academic collaboration, while remaining responsive to the lived experiences and priorities of local communities.

Importantly, ARCH will serve as a much-needed forum for shared opportunities among Ohio State's faculty and staff and the communities we serve. By fostering cross-campus collaboration and connecting researchers, educators, and practitioners with rural and Appalachian partners, ARCH will help catalyze innovative approaches to addressing the social, environmental, and economic determinants of health. This kind of integrative work is essential for building healthier, more resilient communities and for translating research into meaningful, lasting impact.

I look forward to supporting ARCH's development and contributing to its success through shared research, engagement, and policy initiatives.

Sincerely,

Elena Irwin
Faculty Director
Sustainability Institute



Office of the Chair
Department of Human Sciences
150 PAES Building
305 Annie & John Glenn Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210

614-688-2885 Phone
614-292-7229 Fax

go.osu.edu/HS

September 8, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to offer my full support for the proposal to designate the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As a faculty member and Department Chair of Human Sciences in the College of Education and Human Ecology and a co-architect of the healthcare extension model that underpins ARCH, I have witnessed firsthand the power of interdisciplinary collaboration and community partnership in shaping this transformative initiative to enhance healthcare for Appalachian and rural Ohio communities.

ARCH will advance an innovative and focused approach to better understand and address the persistent health disparities experienced by rural and Appalachian communities across Ohio. ARCH will center its work on community-based educational, workforce, and health assets that could be united to yield virtuous cycles of community vitality given that all three interact in reinforcing ways and root to the same social determinants. ARCH aims to unite and extend the university's clinical, educational, and research capacity through a healthcare extension service composed of personnel for and from rural and Appalachian Ohio communities. ARCH will empower communities to co-create health promotion resources and clinical services that reflect their unique strengths, challenges, aspirations and assets. ARCH will facilitate collaborations among an array of health professions educational partners to prepare students for and from rural and Appalachian communities to enter existing and new health professions job opportunities serving these communities. This model is rooted in the land-grant mission of Ohio State focused on advancing the interests of Ohio and builds upon the expertise of OSU Extension and the Wexner Medical Center to extend and deepen our engagement in rural and Appalachian communities.

Throughout the development of ARCH, I have worked alongside colleagues from OSUWMC, CFAES, and other units to design a framework that integrates translational science, workforce development, and community engagement. Our shared vision is to create a system where healthcare extension agents, employed by OSU and drawn from the communities they serve, act as conveners

and liaisons, bridging the gap between local communities and the remarkable portfolio of health-focused assets at OSU. This approach ensures that community-based healthcare innovations are evidence-based, contribute to translational science literatures, and are attuned to local conditions and cultures.

Our vision is also to be inclusive of all colleges and other units on campus that have an interest in the health and vitality of rural and Appalachian communities with a focus on healthcare innovation. Faculty and students across the university will find rich opportunities to engage with ARCH. From translational research to experiential learning, meaningful service and clinical care, ARCH will serve as a platform for the full agenda of OSU and our land grant mission. Students will gain hands-on experience in rural health settings, contributing to real-world projects that enhance healthcare delivery, inform policy, and strengthen community resilience. Faculty, staff, and students will collaborate across colleges to advance research, develop innovative curricula, and support the growth of a robust healthcare workforce.

ARCH is more than a center—it is an incubator of innovative community-based movements toward a healthier, more equitable Ohio. Its designation as a university center will formalize and elevate the work already underway, enabling us to scale our efforts, attract new partners, and deepen our impact. I am proud to support this proposal and remain committed to advancing ARCH's mission in collaboration with our university and community partners.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

875ED8844A254D6...

Erik Porfeli, PhD

Professor and Chair, Department of Human Sciences
College of Education and Human Ecology
The Ohio State University



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL
SCIENCE INSTITUTE

Clinical and Translational Science Institute

Prior Hall, Suite 260

376 W 10th Ave.

Columbus, OH 43210

614-685-4763

Julie.Johnson@osumc.edu

August 19, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
The Ohio State University
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Director of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI), I recognize ARCH as a strategic initiative that will significantly advance translational research and improve health outcomes in rural and Appalachian Ohio.

ARCH's mission to extend clinical, educational, and research capacity into underserved communities aligns directly with CTSI's commitment to accelerating the translation of scientific discoveries into real-world applications. By integrating community engagement, implementation science, and evidence-based innovation, ARCH will serve as a vital platform for deploying research-informed solutions where they are needed most.

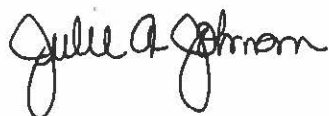
The center's emergence from the Wexner Medical Center, in partnership with OSU's Columbus and regional campuses, ensures that ARCH is grounded in clinical excellence and supported by a robust academic infrastructure. This cross-campus collaboration enhances the university's ability to address complex health challenges through interdisciplinary research and scalable interventions.

Equally important is ARCH's partnership with OSU Extension. Extension educators bring deep community relationships, local knowledge, and a trusted presence in all 88 counties. Their involvement ensures that research efforts are rooted in the realities of the communities we aim to serve and that solutions are co-created with those communities—not imposed upon them. This collaboration is essential for building trust, relevance, and sustainability in translational research.

ARCH also plays a critical role in expanding representation of rural and Appalachian Ohioans in OSU's research enterprise. By partnering with CTSI to engage these communities as active partners in research design, implementation, and dissemination, we will ensure that their voices, experiences, and priorities are reflected in the university's scientific work. This inclusive approach strengthens the relevance and impact of our research while advancing health outcomes across the state.

CTSI is proud to support ARCH and looks forward to continued collaboration in building research capacity, fostering innovation, and improving health outcomes for all Ohioans. I strongly endorse its designation as a university center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie A. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julie" and last name "Johnson" clearly distinguishable.

Julie A. Johnson, PharmD

Dr. Samuel T and Lois Felts Mercer Professor of Pharmacology and Medicine

Professor of Medicine (Internal Medicine) and Pharmacy (Pharmaceutics and Pharmacology)

Director, Clinical and Translational Science Institute

Associate Dean for Clinical and Translational Research, College of Medicine

Associate Vice President for Research



August 21, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

Dear Committee on Academic Affairs Members,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the proposal to designate the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As a faculty member in the College of Education and Human Ecology and present Director of the Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR), I have long been committed to advancing the university's land-grant mission through data-driven community engagement. ARCH represents a bold and timely initiative that embodies this mission by extending Ohio State's clinical, educational, and research capacity to rural and Appalachian communities across Ohio.

ARCH's healthcare extension model is a transformative approach to addressing health disparities in underserved regions. By co-creating solutions with local partners and translating research into practice, ARCH will foster sustainable change rooted in community voice and evidence-based innovation. This work is especially critical in regions where access to care, infrastructure, and workforce capacity remain significant challenges.

One of ARCH's most promising strengths is its commitment to rigorous data collection, analysis, and evaluation. As someone who has direct involvement in CHRR—a center dedicated to advancing research through high-quality data systems—I recognize the immense value that ARCH brings by integrating robust evaluation frameworks into its operations. The ability to measure impact, track progress, and inform policy through data is essential for ensuring that ARCH's initiatives are both effective and scalable. CHRR's expertise in survey research, data management, and longitudinal studies will be a vital asset to ARCH as it builds its infrastructure and evaluates outcomes across diverse communities.

Faculty across disciplines, including those in the social sciences, will find meaningful opportunities to contribute to ARCH's mission. Whether through research in healthcare access, behavioral science, public policy, or community development, ARCH offers a collaborative platform for interdisciplinary scholarship that is deeply rooted in the needs of Ohio's communities.

ARCH also provides rich experiential learning opportunities for students. Through the Rural and Appalachian Interest Network (RAIN), students will engage in service-learning, internships, and research projects that connect academic knowledge with real-world



challenges. These experiences will prepare our students to become thoughtful, data-informed leaders and practitioners.

In closing, the establishment of ARCH as a university center is a strategic investment in the health and vitality of Ohio's rural and Appalachian regions. It exemplifies the best of what a land-grant university can offer—rigorous scholarship, meaningful engagement, and a commitment to the public good. I am proud to support this initiative and look forward to contributing to its success.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Gavazzi, Ph.D.

Professor, College of Education and Human Ecology

Director, Center for Human Resource Research at The Ohio State University



25 August 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center. As Director of the Government Resource Center (GRC), I see ARCH as a transformative initiative that will help translate research into practice—especially for Ohio's Medicaid population, which faces significant challenges in accessing consistent, high-quality care.

ARCH's emergence from the Wexner Medical Center, in partnership with OSU's Columbus and regional campuses, brings together the full strength of the university's clinical, academic, and research expertise. This collaborative foundation ensures that ARCH is not only institutionally robust but also deeply connected to the communities it aims to serve.

What sets ARCH apart is its commitment to co-creation. The work is driven by local communities—by the people who live and work in rural and Appalachian Ohio. ARCH listens first, then builds solutions together. This approach is essential for developing sustainable models of care, improving chronic disease management, and advancing prevention strategies that save lives and reduce long-term costs for programs like Medicaid.

ARCH also creates meaningful opportunities for faculty and students to engage in applied research, implementation science, and community partnership. These experiences will help train the next generation of professionals to work effectively in diverse and underserved settings.

I fully support ARCH's designation as a university center and look forward to continued collaboration to improve health outcomes for Ohio's most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,



Gilbert Liu, MD, MS

Director

THE OHIO COLLEGES OF MEDICINE GOVERNMENT RESOURCE CENTER

150 Pressey Hall

1070 Carmack Road | Columbus, OH 43210

Phone: (614) 802-9345 (mobile)



August 27, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Ohio Rural Health Association (ORHA), I am pleased to offer our strong support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University.

ORHA is committed to advancing the health and well-being of Ohio's rural communities through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We believe that ARCH embodies these values by prioritizing community-driven solutions, equitable access to care, and the co-creation of sustainable healthcare innovations with rural and Appalachian partners.

We deeply appreciate Ohio State's leadership, particularly the Wexner Medical Center's commitment to launching ARCH in partnership with OSU's Columbus and regional campuses. This cross-campus collaboration ensures that ARCH is grounded in clinical excellence, academic rigor, and a deep respect for the lived experiences of rural Ohioans.

ARCH's focus on listening to communities, building trust, and translating research into practice is exactly the kind of work needed to address persistent health challenges and strengthen local healthcare systems. We are especially encouraged by ARCH's emphasis on prevention, chronic disease management, and keeping care close to home—strategies that improve outcomes and reduce long-term costs.

ORHA looks forward to a continued partnership with ARCH and its team as we work together to build a healthier, more resilient rural Ohio.

Sincerely,

Beth Kluding

Beth Kluding, President
Ohio Rural Health Association



Appalachian Children Coalition

5 Depot Street, Athens, Ohio 45701

info@appchildren.org

www.appchildren.org

August 27, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Appalachian Children Coalition (ACC), I am pleased to offer my strong support for the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) and its proposal to become a university center at The Ohio State University.

The ACC is a regional nonprofit capacity-building organization dedicated to expanding access to behavioral health services and supports for children across the 32-county Appalachian Ohio region. Through advocacy, resource generation, and convening, the ACC builds capacity and promotes investment in the systems that support child well-being. Our efforts extend across the workforce development, school health, prevention, and research domains. Our work is grounded in the belief that where a child lives should not determine the quality of care they receive, and we are committed to ensuring that every child in our region has access to the services they need to thrive. Collaboration, innovation, and community responsiveness are hallmarks of our work.

ARCH's mission to co-create sustainable healthcare solutions with rural and Appalachian communities aligns deeply with our own. We are particularly encouraged by ARCH's emphasis on community-driven innovation, translational science, and workforce development. These are critical components of addressing the persistent gaps in health and behavioral health outcomes that affect children and families in our region and they align with the priorities of our organization. Having driven similar work for the past five years, we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with ARCH to enhance outcomes for the children and families of the Appalachian Ohio region.

We at the ACC see great potential for collaboration between ARCH and ACC in supporting the existing healthcare and behavioral health workforce. By promoting the adoption of innovative clinical practices and helping move research into care delivery, ARCH can play a vital role in improving provider satisfaction and retention, especially in communities where workforce shortages are among the most significant barriers to care. I also believe there are ample opportunities for collaboration in the research and community engagement domains.

August 27, 2025

Page 2

Together, our organizations can help build a stronger system of local care for Appalachian Ohio. I fully support the establishment of ARCH as a university center and look forward to working in partnership to advance our shared mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Leite". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" being more prominent than the last name "Leite".

Randy Leite, Ph.D.
Executive Director



FOUNDATION FOR
APPALACHIAN OHIO

Aug. 28, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO), I am pleased to offer our support for the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) becoming a university center at The Ohio State University.

As a regional community foundation serving all 32 counties of Appalachian Ohio, FAO partners with individuals and organizations to meet needs and increase opportunities – including many projects and programs to address health disparities across our region. In fact, health and human services is one of five “pillars of prosperity” that serve as our roadmap in all we do.

With its mission to co-create sustainable health care solutions with local communities, ARCH presents a transformative opportunity to improve health outcomes in Appalachian Ohio – something that's incredibly important for our region. Here, life expectancy can be as much as 10 years shorter than in other parts of Ohio. We have fewer physicians per capita than the rest of the state. And our region's heart disease and cancer mortality rates are significantly higher than the national average.

By connecting Ohio State's clinical, educational, and research resources with community expertise, ARCH will help address persistent barriers to care, support workforce development, and promote locally delivered, sustainable health care solutions for rural communities in Appalachian Ohio and the rest of the state.

I've had the opportunity to engage directly with the ARCH leadership team to explore our shared interests in advancing health and well-being in communities across Appalachian Ohio. Throughout those conversations, I've appreciated ARCH's focus on creating partnerships, listening to local voices and building community trust as

important steps in addressing health disparities. It's only through such collaboration that our region will experience improved health outcomes – both today and for years to come.

I look forward to continuing our collaboration with ARCH as we work to ensure everyone in Appalachian Ohio has opportunities to flourish. FAO strongly supports its designation as a university center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cara Dingus Brook". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Cara" being the most prominent.

Cara Dingus Brook

President & CEO

Foundation for Appalachian Ohio

Date: 8/29/25

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the establishment of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University.

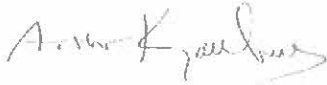
As a long-time advocate for health equity and the founding architect of the Health Extension Rural Offices (HEROs) model at the University of New Mexico, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact that university-based health extension can have on underserved communities. The ARCH initiative reflects the same core principles that have guided our work in New Mexico: community partnership, cross-sector collaboration, and the translation of academic resources into real-world solutions.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of collaborating with Dr. Erik Porfeli and the ARCH strategic planning group as they shaped the vision and structure of this center. Our conversations have been rich and productive, grounded in a shared commitment to co-creation with communities and a belief that universities must be active partners in addressing the social and structural determinants of health. I have been impressed by the depth of thought and intentionality that the ARCH team has brought to this work.

ARCH and our health extension efforts in New Mexico are part of a growing national movement to reimagine the role of academic health centers in service to rural and underserved populations. While our models are tailored to the unique needs of our respective states, they are deeply complementary. ARCH does not duplicate our work—it builds upon it, adapting key principles to the context of Appalachian and rural Ohio. In doing so, it strengthens the national network of health extension leaders and contributes valuable innovation to the field.

I strongly support ARCH's designation as a university center and look forward to continued collaboration as we collectively advance the mission of health equity through academic-community partnership.

Sincerely,



Arthur Kaufman, MD

Distinguished Professor of Family and Community Medicine

Vice President for Community Health

University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center



August 25, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) and its proposal to become a university center at The Ohio State University.

As Director of the Ohio Alliance for Population Health (OAPH) and the Ohio University Health Collaborative, I have seen firsthand the importance of building strong, cross-sector partnerships to improve health outcomes in rural and Appalachian communities. Our work at OAPH focuses on supporting local leaders and coalitions with the tools they need—whether that be research design, analytics, continuing education, or policy advocacy—to address the complex health challenges facing their populations.

The mission and approach of ARCH align closely with our own. Like OAPH, ARCH is grounded in the belief that sustainable health improvement must be co-created with communities, not imposed upon them. We share a commitment to advancing health, strengthening health infrastructure, and supporting the development of a robust and resilient healthcare workforce.

There is tremendous opportunity for collaboration between our institutions. Together, we can expand access to training and career pathways for rural and Appalachian health professionals, support innovative models of care delivery, and inform policy at the state and local levels. By combining the strengths of institutions, we can accelerate progress toward a healthier Ohio.

I look forward to working with ARCH as it grows into a vital exchange for rural and Appalachian health innovation and advocacy. Please count on my support for this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Rick Hodges, MPA

Director, Ohio Alliance for Population Health
Assistant Clinical Professor, College of Health Sciences and Professions
Ohio University



OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

August 28, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the designation of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University. As Vice Provost for Regional Campuses, I see ARCH as a transformative initiative that will strengthen the university's engagement with rural and Appalachian communities across Ohio—communities that are central to our land-grant mission.

ARCH provides a unique and timely opportunity to connect Ohio State's academic, clinical, and research resources with the needs and priorities of underserved regions. Its healthcare extension model, grounded in collaboration with OSU Extension and the Wexner Medical Center, ensures that solutions are co-created with communities and delivered in ways that are locally relevant and sustainable.

Regional campuses are well-positioned to support ARCH's mission. Faculty and students at these campuses bring deep ties to their communities and are eager to contribute to interdisciplinary research, experiential learning, and workforce development initiatives that improve health outcomes and expand access to care. ARCH offers a vital platform for aligning these efforts and creating shared opportunities for innovation and impact.

I am particularly encouraged by ARCH's commitment to listening to communities, building trust, and keeping care close to home. These principles are essential for developing lasting partnerships and ensuring that our work reflects the lived experiences of the people we serve.

I fully support the designation of ARCH as a university center and look forward to continued collaboration in advancing its mission across Ohio.

Sincerely,

Steve Stivers
President & CEO
Ohio Chamber of Commerce

September 9, 2025

Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to offer my strong support for the proposal to establish the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center at The Ohio State University.

ARCH represents a bold and timely initiative that directly aligns with the university's land-grant mission to serve all Ohioans and advance the public good. By addressing persistent health challenges in rural and Appalachian communities, ARCH will extend the reach of Ohio State's clinical, educational, and research excellence to regions that have historically faced barriers to care and opportunity.

This initiative represents The Ohio State University and Ohio State Wexner Medical Center's strong commitment to health, community engagement, and translational science. By co-creating solutions with local communities and demonstrating measurable impact, ARCH will elevate Ohio State's reputation in local communities and as a national leader in rural health innovation and public service. Furthermore, the center's work will inform state and federal policy discussions, foster productive relationships with government partners, and amplify the university's voice on critical rural health issues.

Equally important is the collaborative model ARCH will utilize — one that brings together the strengths of the Wexner Medical Center, the Columbus campus, and Ohio State's regional campuses. This type of statewide collaboration will ensure that the university's resources, expertise, and talent are coordinated and leveraged to meet the unique needs of rural and Appalachian communities across the state of Ohio. Such cross-campus collaboration not only enhances the impact of ARCH but also reinforces Ohio State's identity as a truly statewide institution committed to inclusive excellence.

I commend the collaborative and community-centered approach that ARCH embodies. Its emphasis on partnership, sustainability, and local empowerment reflects the best of what a university center can achieve. Please count on my continued support as this important proposal moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacy Rastauskas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stacy" being more prominent and the last name "Rastauskas" following in a similar style.

Stacy Rastauskas Bretherton
Vice President for Government Affairs
The Ohio State University

Date: August 25th, 2025
Office of Academic Affairs
University Square South
15 E. 15th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43201

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Rural Health Initiative of the Ohio State University College of Medicine, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the establishment of the Appalachian and Rural Center for Health (ARCH) as a university center.

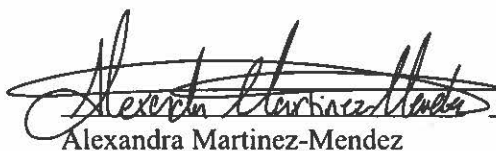
Our organization is dedicated to preparing medical students for careers in rural healthcare by offering opportunities to develop clinical skills alongside faculty and residents, engage in research and academic inquiry, and participate in educational presentations that highlight the disparities faced by rural communities. We also foster mentorship connections with providers who serve rural populations and organize outreach efforts to inspire youth in these communities to pursue science and higher education.

ARCH's mission to co-create sustainable healthcare solutions with rural and Appalachian communities aligns perfectly with our goals. We believe that experiential learning in these settings is essential to shaping well-rounded, compassionate healthcare professionals. Exposure to rural practice environments not only enhances clinical competencies but also broadens students' understanding of career pathways in medicine, public health, and policy.

We are especially excited about ARCH's commitment to engaging colleges across Ohio State's campuses, including regional campuses and professional schools, to create more experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. This cross-campus collaboration will not only enrich student education but also contribute to growing the healthcare workforce and capacity in rural and Appalachian Ohio. By connecting students with meaningful, community-based experiences, ARCH will help cultivate a new generation of providers who are prepared and inspired to serve where they are most needed.

Please count on our full support as ARCH moves forward in its journey to become a university center. We look forward to future partnerships that will benefit students, communities, and the health of our state.

Sincerely,
Alexandra Martinez-Mendez
President, Rural Health Initiative
The Ohio State University College of Medicine



Alexandra Martinez-Mendez



Jacob Hehn (Vice-President)



Seth Dotson (Treasurer)