

Hospital circulating petition for tax support

(KNZA)--The Hiawatha Community Hospital is circulating a petition to place a sales tax initiative on the ballot again to provide funding for the hospital.

The Brown County Commission Monday approved the petition, which allows the hospital to begin collecting signatures. Brown County Attorney Kevin Hill approved it last week.

According to a new release from the hospital, the hospital's Board of Trustees "have determined that pursuing a countywide ½-cent retailers sales tax on the November 5 general election ballot is the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars and shows long-term county commitment."

The decision follows what the release calls "countless conversations with community and county leaders."

The release says the tax proposal would provide about 50 to 70 percent of necessary funding to replace the hospital's aging equipment. Continued operational billing, collection improvements, and Foundation support will aid in raising the remaining funds.

Proceeds from the 10-year tax proposal are earmarked solely for the Hiawatha Community Hospital, which the release says will give the hospital the ability to refinance their current hospital bond. In addition, the release states that a ten-year tax "reassures potential new physician recruits that [the hospital] is focused on the future of healthcare thriving in Brown County."

The petition can be signed by Brown County residents through August 31 in the Hiawatha Community Hospital lobby.

The hospital will need to gather at least 343 valid signatures to place the sales tax initiative on the ballot. The hospital has set a target of 400 signatures.

The petition reads as follows:

Shall Brown County, Kansas be authorized to impose an additional five tenths percent (0.5%) general retailers' sales tax, thereby increasing the general sales tax rate to one and five tenths percent (1.5%), pursuant to the authority of K.S.A. 12- 187 et seq., to be used for the purpose of financing the provision of health care services in Brown County by Hiawatha Community Hospital , or its successors, ("Hospital") including the payment of Hospital expenses

and any payments with respect to bonds issued for Hospital purposes, with collection of such tax beginning on April 1, 2020, or as soon as provided by law, and ending ten (10) years after such tax is first collected?

More information is available at the Hospital's webpage, www.hch-ks.org/Focus-on-the-Future, on Hiawatha Community Hospital and Family Practice Clinic's Facebook page.

Many Signals Communications