

## Rural Texas Health Leader Named One of Two Rural Centers Selected Nationally for Medicare Innovation Kickoff

Washington, D.C. (April 13, 2026) — Frontera Healthcare Network was selected as one of only two rural health centers in the country to participate in a national, invitation-only event in Washington, D.C., marking the kick-off of the new LEAD Model. The event brought together federal leaders and healthcare organizations to discuss how to make Medicare work better for patients, providers, and taxpayers.

Frontera participated in the event through the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), with CEO Mikki Hand attending on behalf of the organization. Frontera was the only rural health center from Texas represented, highlighting its growing role in shaping the future of rural healthcare. Also in attendance from Texas was CommUnityCare Health Centers, a valued partner and one of the largest federally qualified health center systems in the state.

The event included national healthcare leaders and federal officials, including Dr. Mehmet Oz, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and Dr. Kyu Rhee, CEO of NACHC and a member of a federal advisory committee helping guide national healthcare strategy. Frontera's inclusion in this conversation reflects the work already being done in rural Texas to improve care and outcomes for patients.

At the center of the discussion was a new Medicare model called the LEAD Model. In simple terms, this model rewards healthcare providers for keeping patients healthier- not just for the number of visits or services provided. It encourages clinics, doctors, and hospitals to work together, use better tools and data, and focus on preventing problems before they become serious. The goal is to improve patient care while lowering overall healthcare costs and reducing unnecessary administrative work for providers. This approach mirrors the kind of care Frontera is already providing through its participation in an early accountable care model with Aledade. Using data, care coordination, and proactive support, the organization helps Medicare patients stay healthier while reducing unnecessary costs.

Federal leaders emphasized that rural healthcare providers will play a key role in this effort. They highlighted rural health transformation funding (RHTF) as an important opportunity to help clinics and health systems strengthen operations, invest in technology, and prepare to participate in models like LEAD. The goal is to ensure rural providers are equipped to succeed in value-based care while continuing to serve their communities. For patients, this means stronger local care, better coordination, and more support close to home.

“Our mission is to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care for rural communities,” said Hand. “Being selected as the only rural Texas health center in this conversation reflects the work our team is doing every day to improve care for our patients. What we’re building here is not only making a difference locally- it’s helping shape how care is delivered across the country.”

As healthcare continues to change, Frontera Healthcare Network remains focused on leading efforts to improve care for patients while supporting the providers who serve them.

#### **About Frontera Healthcare Network**

**Frontera Healthcare Network is a community-based healthcare organization serving six counties across Central Texas- providing comprehensive primary care, preventive services, and care coordination to improve access and health outcomes in rural communities.**