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For Immediate Release

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Capitol Federal Foundation and Topeka Rotary Foundation
Provide Lead Gifts for Emergency Dental Care

An overwhelming need for emergency dental care for the poor and uninsured in our region has resulted in two major gifts from local organizations.

During a press conference today, **The Capitol Federal Foundation** and the **Topeka Rotary Foundation** presented lead gifts of \$10,000 and \$2,000, respectively, to create the **Shawnee County Dental Care Fund**, a private fund that will be administered through The Topeka Community Foundation. The new Fund will help pay for emergency dental treatment to the area's uninsured who are living in poverty.

Establishing the Fund was the idea of staff at the Shawnee County Medical Society's *HealthAccess* program who recognized a need and decided to obtain community support to help meet it. Because of *HealthAccess*' initiative to solicit funds for this purpose, the new Shawnee County Dental Care Fund will be able to pay the costs of emergency dental care for low-income patients. In Topeka, emergency dental care to the uninsured poor is provided by **Marian Clinic Dental**, 3164 SE 6th Street, the only dental safety-net clinic in the region.

"We are deeply grateful for the financial support and faith in this community dental initiative shown by The Capitol Federal Foundation and the Topeka Rotary Foundation, as well as for our ongoing partnership with *HealthAccess*," stated Robert Trepinski, Executive Director of Marian Clinic. "We are seeing a tremendous need from our friends and neighbors who require emergency dental care. Because of this new Fund, patients who are in great pain and require emergency dental care can receive the help they need."

The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth founded Marian Clinic in Topeka, Kansas in 1988 to provide medical and (later) dental care to people of all faiths who are uninsured and live in poverty in this community. Marian Clinic Dental provides dental exams, cleanings, X-rays, extractions, and fillings, with limited dentures and sealants. New patients must enroll in advance and complete eligibility requirements before appointments can be made, however emergency cases are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Fees are based on a sliding scale of discounted prices, determined

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by the patient's income and the dental procedure; *however no qualified patient is turned away for an inability to pay!* During 2009, **Marian Clinic Dental treated 3,558 patients**; 1,198 of these were *new* patients (15% above the previous year). Further information is available on the Marian Clinic website www.marianclinic.org.

The Shawnee County Medical Society's HealthAccess program exemplifies the power of local collaboration to provide for low-income uninsured individuals that were falling through the cracks in our health care delivery system. Local physicians, optometrists, dentists, hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies generously volunteer to each do what they do best to provide coordinated charity care. Although the volunteers receive no reimbursement, claims are submitted to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas who donates the processing to track the care that is being donated. To date over \$40 million in donated medications and health care has been recorded for the program. Approximately 2,300 HealthAccess patients are currently receiving donated health care and over 80% of Shawnee County physicians volunteer for HealthAccess and/or the Marian Clinic. Grant funding providing dental care for HealthAccess patients was quickly exhausted within the first few months of this year due to the high numbers of referrals.

The HealthAccess program was designed to compliment and enhance the work done by the Marian Clinic and the Shawnee County Health Agency, increasing access to primary and specialty care and assisting with funding for generic medications. The Shawnee County Commission and the City of Topeka provide financial support for the generic medications for patients. Most of the administrative funding for the HealthAccess program comes from the Topeka Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Topeka.

Donations to the new Shawnee County Dental Care Fund may be mailed to the Topeka Community Foundation at 5431 SW 29th Street, Suite 300, Topeka, Kansas 66614.