

Ronald McDonald House and its essential role in healthcare access

Ronald McDonald House Kansas City is much more than a “nice-to-have” experience for families whose children face critical illness, it’s a key player in reducing barriers to healthcare access

In 2023, Ronald McDonald House Kansas City served a record 5,931 families with children battling the most-extreme forms of healthcare crisis: Pediatric cancer, organ transplants, Neonatal Intensive Care stays, emergency situations, major surgeries and more.

For many of these families--who come from a diverse array of backgrounds, ethnicity, geography, socioeconomics, languages and family makeup--Ronald McDonald House provides more than a bed, meal, shower and life essentials. RMHC-KC is a key component in a family’s ability to access critical, lifesaving care. The intentionally inclusive environment at RMHC-KC reduces many of the most recognized burdens in accessing health care. Ronald McDonald House’s role in the health landscape widens the possibilities that families can access the care they



PAUL KEMPINSKI

CEO, Children’s Mercy

“Children’s Mercy would not be one of the preeminent children’s hospitals without Ronald McDonald House.”

desperately need by providing transportation and language services, reducing financial burdens, shrinking the geographic delta between “home” and the hospital and being a resource in bridging the cultural divide. We create an environment that promotes healing on the scary, arduous and often traumatic journey surrounding serious pediatric illness. Without these essential services, fewer families would achieve the best healthcare--and be prepared to advocate--for their children.

Who is staying at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City?

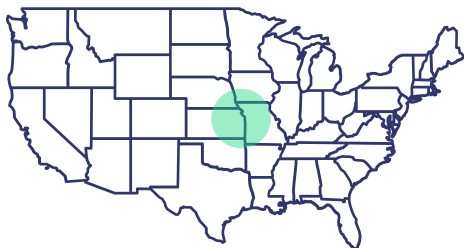
All families staying at Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City have a child battling serious medical illness. It's the uniting thread among a diverse group of guest families that bring with them varied complexities, needs and values. It's our goal that each individual feels a sense of belonging and support.

5,931 Families served at RMHC-KC in 2023

99.1% of guest families said RMHC-KC helped them access the care they needed for their child.



94% of guest families are from Kansas or Missouri.



93% of guest families said RMHC-KC helped them access the health care their child needed.

Low income families rely on Ronald McDonald House

78%

of RMHC-KC guest families are below the HUD designated low income mark for a family of four in Kansas City (\$82,000/year).

32%

of RMHC-KC guest families have a household income below \$31,200, the Federal Poverty threshold for a family of four.

A light blue arrow pointing downwards.

How RMHC-KC helps remove barriers in access to care



Geographic Barriers

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), “geographic distance is a critical barrier to healthcare access.” RMHC-KC serves guests from every corner of our region, including the most urban and most rural parts of Kansas and Missouri. Being hours from home and having daily appointments make it impossible for most RMHC-KC guest families to drive between home and the hospital every day.

64% of families staying at Ronald McDonald House Kansas City live two or more hours’ drive from Children’s Mercy. **Providing lodging close to the hospital is more than helpful, it’s essential.**

Financial Barriers

The cost of health care--and the cost to access it--are staggering. We impact families in two ways here: We reduce a family’s cost to access care by providing a room, food, transportation and basic life essentials. There is no cost to stay at RMHC-KC, saving a family an average of \$1,440 (\$160 per day for an average stay of nine nights). For families already experiencing financial instability, avoiding costs to access care has a massive impact.

Additionally, we help families avoid longer-than-necessary inpatient stays. For example, after a transplant, CMH will discharge a patient to stay at RMHC-KC, before approving a transition home due to proximity to the hospital.



Language Barriers

Close to 10% of RMHC-KC guest families speak a primary language other than English (most often, Spanish). To ensure these guests experience a sense of belonging, we intentionally seek bilingual staff during the hiring process. Bilingual staff are offered \$2 per hour more as we prioritize our ability to effectively communicate with guests in a language comfortable for them. Ronald McDonald House staff often receive questions about a guest’s appointments, procedures, protocols and medical jargon. We want to help guests be comfortable and equipped as they advocate for their child’s health care with the most effective levels of communication.

Removing barriers



Mistrust of healthcare system

Ronald McDonald House is the bridge connecting a family and the healthcare their child needs. We fill a gap between the healthcare system the cultural mistrust that families often bring with them. We are not the hospital--or a health care provider--but because of our affiliation and partnerships, families trust us as an intermediary. Families easily trust RMHC-KC, with 94% of guest families

Children's Mercy often has important discussions with patient families at Ronald McDonald House because our environment is comfortable and offers a sense of safety from an institutional environment.

Insurance Barriers

Nearly 50 percent of Ronald McDonald House guests are Medicaid eligible. We've worked with Medicaid providers in both Kansas and Missouri to educate our staff team on insurance benefits as we assist families in navigating options available to them.



About Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City

The mission of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City (RMHC-KC) is to reduce the burden of childhood illness on sick children and their families.

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kansas City alleviates the worry and expense of finding a close, comfortable and affordable place for a family to stay while their child receives the medical care they need. That can make a world of difference to a child bravely battling an illness or recovering from a serious injury. It costs RMHC-KC \$100 a night to house a family. We have 94 bedrooms in Kansas City and are full most nights.

All families at RMHC-KC are caring for a critically ill child; the families we serve also have diverse backgrounds, experiences and cultures. RMHC-KC is committed to providing a culturally and psychologically safe environment for everyone associated with our charity: guest families, visitors, volunteers, staff, donors, vendors and partners.

All are welcome here, and we celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion in our spaces.