

Hospital Markets in Iowa *at a glance*

A snapshot of hospital market structure, concentration, and ownership across the state — and how they've changed since 2000. This analysis reflects data available through May 2026.

In Iowa, the share of hospitals owned by a multi-hospital system increased from 53% to 64% since 2000, and average market HHI increased slightly from 5,439 to 5,942.

WHAT THIS ANALYSIS COVERS

This analysis focuses on the state's 118 general short-term acute care (GSAC) hospitals — the facilities where most privately insured, Medicare, and Medicaid patients receive inpatient care, and where market concentration most directly affects the prices employers and workers pay. Each hospital's market is defined via a 30-minute travel radius around that facility. Within it, we measure concentration using the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) — a standard antitrust metric calculated as the sum of the squared market shares of the owners in a market. HHI ranges from 0 (many small hospitals, low concentration) to 10,000 (a monopoly market, which has a single owner). Our hospital-centric HHI is a consistent analytical proxy for market concentration, not a legally defined antitrust market.

● **GSAC Hospitals (118)** ● VA / Military ● Psychiatric / Behavioral ● Rehabilitation ● Children's Specialty

Market Concentration

The average hospital market HHI in Iowa rose slightly from 5,439 to 5,942, an increase of 503 points. Every hospital now operates in a market with HHI above 1,800, the threshold the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Department of Justice (DOJ) consider “highly concentrated.” The number of monopoly hospitals rose from 17 to 22. From 2000 to 2026, six hospitals closed and four opened, leading to a net loss of two hospitals. During the same period, 28 transactions reshaped ownership. Eleven of those transactions (39%) qualified as “Red Zone” mergers. A Red Zone merger raises at least one merging hospital's market HHI by over 100 points to above 1,800, which DOJ and FTC guidelines presume is likely to raise prices.

2000 | 120 hospitals overall

2026 | 118 hospitals overall



CONCENTRATION SCALE (IN HHI)

● **Low** (<1,000 HHI) ● **Moderate** (1,000 to <1,800) ● **High** (1,800 to <5,000) ● **Higher** (5,000 to <10,000) ● **Monopoly** (10,000 HHI)

Explore the data yourself

Our tool has three components. **The Market Explorer** tracks how hospital market concentration has evolved from 2000 to May 2026, drawing on ownership data from the AHA's Annual Survey, validated against state health department filings, SEC disclosures, and public reporting. **The Closures Explorer** tracks hospital closures and openings nationwide, each year since 2000. **The Forecast Lab** uses that same data to model how a proposed merger, closure, or opening would reshape a hospital market as it stood in 2026 — it models the scenarios you specify and does not identify potential mergers.

Note on the data: The tool uses a first-of-its-kind database that we built from scratch. We have done our best to gather and validate the data; however, if you notice an error (e.g., a hospital's name, a merger year) or if you have questions about our methodology, please notify us at HealthCareAffordabilityLab@yale.edu.

Health Care
Affordability Lab
at Yale

Explore Market Concentration at
Markets.HealthCareAffordabilityLab.org



QR code to IA Hospitals

Hospital Markets in Iowa

October 2026

Key Stats

SYSTEM OWNERSHIP

53% → 64%

64/120 → 75/118 part of system

AVG HHI INCREASE

+503

5,439 → 5,942

RED ZONE TRANSACTIONS

11 of 28

39% in Red Zone

2 LARGEST SYSTEMS

54 of 118

46% · UnityPoint + Trinity

Consolidation Around Two Systems

The share of hospitals in Iowa owned by hospital systems rose from 53% in 2000 to 64% in 2026 as 11 more hospitals became system-owned. Two systems own a substantial number of hospitals in Iowa: UnityPoint Health (28 hospitals) and Trinity Health (26) together own more than two-thirds of the state's system-owned hospitals. Avera Health (7) is the next largest hospital system.

2000 | 120 hospitals overall

■ 64 in 11 systems □ 56 independents

53%

47%

2026 | 118 hospitals overall

■ 75 in 11 systems □ 43 independents

64%

36%

Iowa's Largest Systems

Eleven systems own 75 of Iowa's 118 hospitals; UnityPoint Health and Trinity Health lead.

SYSTEM	HOSPITALS IN STATE	AVERAGE MARKET HHI	HOSPITALS WITH CONCENTRATION ABOVE 1,800 HHI
UnityPoint Health	28	7,349	28 of 28
Trinity Health	26	5,900	26 of 26
Avera Health	7	5,354	7 of 7
CommonSpirit Health	3	5,035	3 of 3

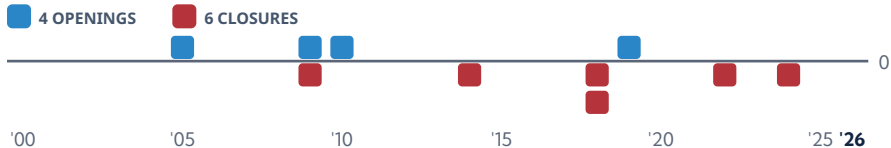
Average market HHI reflects the mean HHI across each system's hospitals within the state. HHI is calculated within a 30-minute travel radius of each facility. National hospital data typically lags by one to two years for new openings and recent ownership changes, so figures for 2024–2026 are preliminary and may not yet reflect all recent activity.

Rising Concentration

Average HHI in Iowa's hospital markets rose by 503 points between 2000 and 2026.

By 2026, the number of monopoly hospitals had risen from 17 to 22. Of the state's 28 transactions, 11 qualified as "Red Zone" mergers.

Hospitals opened & closed by year



Transactions by year

