



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

BOARD MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 21, 2021

**Call to Order** – Randy Wiitala, Acting Chair, called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on October 21, 2021 at 9:17 a.m. on Zoom and in the Board Room.

**Adjourn to Closed Session** – Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to adjourn into closed session for the Quality Improvement, Medical Staff, Credentials Committee Reports and Litigation update. The motion was seconded by Steve Nielsen and the motion carried with all eyes.

**Closed Session Summary** - The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from September 15, 2021; the September 15, 2021 Medical Staff Report; the October 20, 2021 Credentials Committee information; and a litigation update were reviewed.

**Reconvene** - The North Shore Health Board reconvened in regular session at 9:32 a.m.

**Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Steve Nielsen, Mary Sanders, Randy Wiitala, and Patty Winchell-Dahl

**Members Absent:** Kay Olson

**Others Present:** Kimber Wraalstad; Paul Goettl; and Jon Moe (p)

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic members of the Board (Steve Nielsen and Mary Sanders); and Mr. Moe attended the meeting via Zoom technology with the ability to hear and see the other participants. Mr. Wiitala, Ms. Winchell-Dahl, Ms. Wraalstad and Mr. Goettl attended the meeting in the Board Room of North Shore Health.

**Approval of Agenda:** At the email request of Ms. Olson, a joint meeting with the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic was added to the agenda under the Management Report. Steve Nielsen made a motion to accept the meeting agenda with the addition; it was seconded by Mary Sanders. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

**Approval of Minutes from September 23, 2021** – Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2021 meeting as presented and the motion was seconded by Mary Sanders. The motion carried unanimously.

## Updates:

- a. **Clinic Board:** Kate Surbaugh was unable to join the meeting due to a conflict with another meeting. She provided a written update about COVID testing, COVID vaccinations, Flu shots and noted that Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) is waiting, as is North Shore Health, for the guidance regarding the vaccine mandate from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). With low weekend traffic and to allow for a full weekend off for the pharmacy employees, it has been decided that SMC will close the pharmacy on Saturday morning during the winter.
- b. **County Board:** Commissioner Mills was unable to join the meeting due to a prior commitment.
- c. **Board Members:** Ms. Sanders reported on the Community Leadership Committee meeting. The Racial Equity Workgroup presented information about the development of a land acknowledgement agreement and the draft statement that has been developed.
- d. **Correspondence:** None.

## Board Presentation – RELIAS Learning Management System – Jon Moe, RN

Mr. Moe shared that North Shore Health previously had a contract with HealthStream to provide a learning system. HealthStream was used primarily to meet regulatory requirements needs. In general it was determined that this system was not user friendly and the ability to create content specifically for North Shore Health was very difficult. After exploring other learning systems as possible options, Mr. Moe recommended a change to the Relias Learning Management System. Relias was much easier for Department Leaders and the System Administrator to navigate and create content. The cost for Relias over a three year period was determined to be cost neutral or slightly less than HealthStream. Mr. Moe provided a demonstration of Relias and included the education he developed about COVID-19 vaccination that is required to be completed by employees who are unvaccinated. Mr. Moe had contacted several large organizations to inquire about employee education about the COVID-19 vaccine, nothing was readily available so Mr. Moe created the education content in Relias. The system even allowed him to include videos in the education.

**Financial Reports:** Mr. Goettl presented the September 2021 financial statements. Patient days in the Acute Hospital were 11 days or 57.9% more than budget with inpatient revenue for the month being \$51K more than budget. Swing Bed days were 26 less than budget with revenue \$20K less than budget. Care Center days were 10 more than budget and revenue \$33K less than budget. Outpatient revenue of \$1,345K is \$92K or 7% more than budget. Net Operating Revenue of \$1,529K is 5% less than budget. Deductions from Revenue are \$166K more than budget; as a percent of Gross Patient Revenue, Contractual Adjustments are 16.3% compared to a budget of 12.1%. Total Operating Expenses of \$1,725K are 2.0% less than budget. The Net Income for the month of September 2021 of \$3,655K is \$3,680 more than budget. The COVID-19 grant income from Provider Relief Funds of \$3.8M was recorded in September. The grant report was due and submitted on September 30, 2021. The non-operating revenue includes lost revenue from 2020, a minor amount of lost revenue from 2021 and COVID expenses related to COVID-19. The net loss for September 2021 would have been \$157K had the COVID-19 grant funds not been recorded. The year-to-date Loss from Operations is \$1,106K, which is \$654K better than budget. Gross Patient Revenue is \$1,501K higher than budget year-to-date. The year-to-date Net Gain is \$3,188K, \$4,501K more than the budgeted loss. Year-to-date FTEs are 104.1, 9.4 less than budget. Days' cash on hand increased to 259 days. The current ratio has improved to 3.87; as Mr. Goettl discussed in previous months the recording of the lost revenue and COVID-19 related expenses decreased unearned revenue thus improving the current ratio. The 2021 forecast was reviewed by Mr. Goettl. The forecast this month used nine months of

actual numbers and three months of budgeted numbers. Gross patient revenue continues to be forecasted 6% greater than budget with total operating expenses forecasted to remain the same as budget. The non-operating income now includes the COVID-19 adjustments.

Mr. Nielsen asked about the significant increase in both contractual adjustments and provisions for bad debt. There was a lengthy discussion about both topics. As COVID-19 began, it was agreed that collection efforts would not be pursued due to the economic down turn occurring in both Cook County and Minnesota. As a result, accounts became uncollectable. In addition, the Business Office is focusing on account clean up, including timely filing adjustments and that activity has also increased bad debt. With regard to Contractual Adjustments, Medicare reimbursement currently uses 2020 information that has changed significantly. With the increase in gross patient revenue, particularly in the inpatient and outpatient area, compared to budget, an increase in Contractual Adjustments should be anticipated. Mr. Goettl completes a detailed Contractual Adjustment analysis with actual revenue and expenses each month using the model developed by CLA.

Steve Nielsen made a motion to accept the September 2021 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.

**Old Business:**

- a) **Other:** None.

**New Business:**

- a) **Unbudgeted Capital Equipment – Force Platforms, Physical Therapy:** During the beginning of 2021, Patrick O’Neil, DPT, and the other members in the Physical Therapy department, were seeing an increase in patients being seen with balance and fall risks who were pre-pandemic highly active individuals. Dr. O’Neil and his colleagues wanted to take a proactive approach and stop the decline before individuals experienced a higher risk of fall so Dr. O’Neil sought grant funding to allow for the purchase of Force Platforms, software and camera system. A grant application was submitted to the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation and was funded in its entirety. Approval of \$27,000 to purchase the unbudgeted capital equipment was requested. Steve Nielsen made a motion to approve the purchase of the of Force Platforms, software and camera system. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.

- b) **Other:** None.

**Management Report:** The Management Report for October 2021 included in the Board materials was reviewed. A COVID-19 update was provided. There have been two hundred forty-seven (247) confirmed cases of COVID-19 affiliated with Cook County. To date, there have been no individuals from Cook County who have died from COVID-19 and no Care Center residents have had COVID-19. The current vaccination rate for North Shore Health Employees is 91.0% and 100.0% for the Care Center Residents. No guidance has been received from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding the vaccine mandate. The doors between NSH and SMC have been closed. The SMC screener screens the individual in the same manner as NSH and then allows access between the buildings. Jennifer Dowden had been providing booster vaccines for NSH Employees, SMC Employees and Essential Caregivers. As of October 12, 2021, 115 Pfizer booster doses have been administered. The vaccination clinics at the community center are following the guidance from the CDC regarding booster doses. The Cook County COVID-19 Hub site can be used to sign-up for Pfizer first, second and third dose vaccines as well as boosters. The testing supply inventory continues to be closely monitored by Jennifer Backstrom. Currently North Shore Health has been averaging approximately 150 COVID-19 tests per week. The capacity for drive-up testing has been increased. Difficulties and delays in

transferring patients to higher level care remain. St. Luke's shared they have gone "live" with the Doxy.me consult with St. Luke's ED and Specialists. This technology will allow St. Luke's to assist regional hospitals with consultation and guidance when transfer of a patient is not possible.

North Shore Health is scheduled to participate in the Community Stakeholder meetings with Senator Bakk and Representative Ecklund on Saturday, October 30, in Grand Portage. They will also be stopping at North Shore Health for a tour after the Grand Portage event. Board Members were asked to contact Ms. Wraalstad if they are able to participate in those events. It is also flu vaccine time again and we will continue to make flu shots available to all our employees at no charge. This year, it was decided that all the vaccine given would be the single-dose preservative-free quadrivalent. The vaccine has not yet arrived and we are impatiently waiting for its arrival. The 2022 renewal rates for health insurance have been received. BCBSMN provided a quote to renew the health insurance plans currently offered to North Shore Health employees; the rates for the 2022 renewal were a 9.5% reduction from current premiums. In addition to the reduction in the 2022 rates, BCBSMN also offered a rate cap for the 2023 premiums of a 12.5% increase. North Shore Health has decided to stay with BCBS for our health insurance for the next two years working with USI as an insurance broker. Dustin Lucarelli, MD, General Surgeon affiliated with St. Luke's, held his first Outreach Clinic in Grand Marais. He saw two patients and had one consultation. Dr. Lucarelli's next clinic days will be on Friday, November 19, 2021 and December 10, 2021. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has announced they will be transitioning from emergency background studies back to studies with both fingerprints and photographs. In the past, North Shore Health was the only location in Cook County to obtain the fingerprints needed for the background studies. A contract with the new vendor, IDEMIA, was not appropriate for North Shore Health; however, we were able to introduce IDEMIA to Sandi McQuatters at Terra Bella Floral and Grand Marais DMV. Terra Bella will be "live" with IDEMIA by the end of October 2021. Work continues on the 2022 capital and operating budget. The 2021 Annual Program Review/Strategic Planning meeting was held on Tuesday, October 5 and Wednesday, October 6. It was agreed the five Strategies (Pillars) for North Shore Health remain as priorities and relevant for the next 24 months: #1 - Quality and Patient/Resident Experience, #2 - Access, #3 - Community, #4 - Viability and #5 - Culture and Workforce Development. The Administrative and Leadership Teams will now develop the priorities, areas of focus and goals for review and approval by the Board.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the joint meetings with the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic Collaboration Committee meeting and North Shore Health Board. Following the last meeting in July, it was agreed another meeting would be held in November. Kate Surbaugh and Ms. Wraalstad are attempting to work with schedules to find a meeting time. It was suggested North Shore Health develop our goals for ongoing discussions and desired outcomes. It was agreed that Ms. Wraalstad and Ms. Olson will meet and develop a plan to assist the Board to determine our goals.

**Adjourn:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Steve Nielsen and seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl. The motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting will be held on November 18, 2021.

The regular meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

  
Chair

  
Clerk