



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES FOR MARCH 19, 2026

Call to Order – Patty Winchell-Dahl called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on March 19, 2026 at 9:01 a.m. in the Board Room at North Shore Health.

Recess to Closed Session – Milan Schmidt made a motion to recess into closed session permitted pursuant to Minn. Stat. §145.64 subd. 1(d) to discuss decisions, recommendations, deliberations or documentation of a Review Organization and pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 2 to discuss not public medical data. Steve Frykman seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session Summary – The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from February 18, 2026; the Medical Staff Report from February 18, 2026 and the March 18, 2026 Credentials Committee Report were discussed.

Reconvene - The North Shore Health Board reconvened in regular session at 9:30 a.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Steve Frykman, Milan Schmidt, Sam Usem, Randy Wiitala (virtual) and Patty Winchell-Dahl

Members Absent:

Others Present: Kimber Wraalstad; Nicole Siegner; Megan Thurston; Jason Yuhas; Michele Silence; Todd Severnak, MD; Samantha Pykkonen, CRNA; Greg Ruberg; Karen Schultz; Danielle Hefferan; Brian Hady; Doug Sanders; Mary Sanders; Kay Olson; Sharon Berglund

Mission and Vision: Patty Winchell-Dahl read the North Shore Health Mission Statements to begin the meeting.

Public Comments: No comments were offered.

Approval of Minutes for February 19, 2026: Milan Schmidt made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2026 meeting as distributed and the motion was seconded by Steve Frykman. The motion carried unanimously.

Board Presentation – Pain Management Program – Samantha Pykkonen, CRNA – Holistic Pain Management

Samantha Pykkonen joined the meeting to share information about the newly established pain management program at North Shore Health, developed in collaboration with Holistic Pain Management. Ms. Pykkonen, a Nurse Anesthetist, provided examples of the services she offers, focusing on patients with chronic back, joint, or nerve pain. She utilizes minimally invasive procedures and does not rely on opioid medications. Initial appointments typically exceed one hour to allow for a comprehensive patient assessment. Her approach emphasizes not only pain relief, but also improved mobility, function, and overall quality of life. Ms. Pykkonen works closely with the Rehabilitation Department, noting that outcomes are often enhanced when her treatments are combined with therapy. Patients may self-refer or be referred by primary care providers or rehabilitation services. She expressed appreciation for the collaborative support of the Nursing, Radiology, and Rehabilitation staff at North Shore Health. The Board thanked Ms. Pykkonen for her contributions and for supporting the organization's mission to provide high-quality care to the community.

Radiology Tour – Brian Hady BSRT(R), Director of Diagnostic Imaging

Mr. Hady provided the Board with a tour of the Imaging Department, offering the opportunity to view the newly installed in-room and mobile radiographic equipment. During the tour, he demonstrated several key features of the new systems. Mr. Hady also highlighted the C-arm equipment that is utilized in the pain management program.

Financial Reports: Nicole Siegner, Chief Financial Officer, presented the February 2026 financial statements. North Shore Health reported a Loss from Operations of 226K for the month of February, compared to the budgeted Loss from Operations of \$202K. The Statement of Net Position, Statement of Revenues and Expenses and Changes in Net Position were reviewed. Gross Patient Service Revenue of \$2.371M for the month of February was 1.0% lower than budget. Revenues from the Swing Bed and Outpatient were above budget for the month while Inpatient, Home Care and Care Center were below budget. Ms. Siegner noted that the revenue for February improved compared to January, trending closer to budget expectations. Contractual Adjustments and Other Deductions were \$265K compared to the budget of \$389K, a 32% favorable variance. Total Operating Revenue for the month was \$2.117M, a 5.0% positive variance from budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$2.342M exceeded budget by 6%. The days cash on hand, debt service coverage ratio, current ratio and payer mix were also reviewed. Key financial indicators, including days cash on hand, debt service coverage ratio, current ratio, and payer mix, were also reviewed. Ms. Siegner provided additional detail regarding Days Cash on Hand and the transfer of funds from Board Designated Funds for Capital Purchases. Revenue Less Than Expenses for February resulted in a net loss of \$45K, compared to a budgeted loss of \$40K and a loss of \$206K in February 2025. Mr. Usem shared he had a helpful discussion regarding Board Designated Funds and expressed fiduciary concerns related to aligning these funds with strategic priorities. Ms. Winchell-Dahl stated that it was not the Board responsibility to be focused on financial details at an administrative level. North Shore Health yearly independents audits that have had no findings. Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that Ms. Siegner and the Finance Team will provide Board education sessions on healthcare finance.

Steve Frykman made a motion to accept the February 2026 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Sam Usem and the motion carried unanimously.

Big Rocks/Strategic Plan Discussion:

The Board reviewed the three priority areas of the Big Rock/Strategic Plan, with approximately ten minutes dedicated to each priority:

- a. **Priority 1 - Establish the most effective and useful strategic partnerships and relationships.** Current strategic partnerships and relationships at North Shore Health were reviewed, including the organizations involved and their intended purposes. It was suggested that the purpose of the partnerships would benefit from further clarification and definition. Additional potential partners were also identified for future consideration.
- b. **Priority 1A - Electronic Health Record (EHR) platform selection.** An update was provided on the evaluation of options for upgrading the Electronic Health Record system. North Shore Health is finalizing the decision regarding the IT outsourcing that will assist with the selection decision. The selection has been narrowed to two vendors: Meditech Expanse and Epic. It was noted that selection of Epic would require a Community Connect partner, underscoring the importance of identifying an appropriate strategic partner. In preparation for transition, efforts to optimize PointClickCare in the Care Center are ongoing. In addition, an analysis of financial software systems is beginning. It was requested that a timeline for transition be developed.
- c. **Priority 2 - Attract and retain the best talent and develop succession plans.** North Shore Health has entered into an agreement to implement UKG as its Human Resource Information System, with a planned go-live date of October 1, 2026. The system is expected to enhance and streamline recruitment processes, including job application workflows. In response to a question regarding immigration, Ms. Wraalstad stated that a detailed protocol has been shared with employees about appropriate response should they be approached by government officials. Should a situation arise, employees would be connective with legal counsel if interacting with immigration officials.
- d. **Priority 3 - Update the safety net plan for the care center.** The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has submitted the State Plan Amendment (SPA 25-30) related to the swing bed provision for North Shore Health to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). In anticipation of approval, inquiries have been made to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) regarding preparatory activities and planning steps. A response has not yet been received.

Old Business:

- a) **Employee Appreciation:** Ms. Wraalstad highlighted the recently introduced beverage cart, which is being offered to North Shore Health staff on a pop-up basis. A survey will be distributed to gather team member feedback on continuation of the beverage cart and its scheduling. Mr. Usem suggested providing employees with a gift such as a backpack or tote bag. Ms. Winchell-Dahl requested Board support for the employee picnic, including Board Members assisting with cooking and/or contributing funds to purchase food. She also recommended including handwritten notes as part of the employee appreciation efforts.

New Business:

- a) There was no New Business offered for discussion.

Management Report:

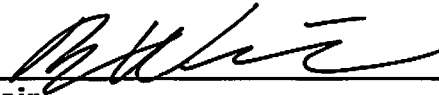
The Management Report for March 2026, included in the Board materials, was reviewed. Ms. Wraalstad shared the LeadingAge Minnesota's 2026 legislative priorities, including: preventing further cuts to long-term care funding amid a projected \$1 billion funding gap by 2029; reducing regulatory burden that increases costs without improving resident protections; and restoring timely Medicaid eligibility processing, as approval delays are creating financial strain for providers and delaying care plan changes. A related proposal of interest would allow nursing homes and assisted living communities to host resident social events (e.g., "happy hours") without requiring a city liquor license, which is relevant to North Shore Health's weekly "happy hour". The Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA) continues to monitor healthcare-related policy proposals, including legislation involving 340B program requirements, health insurance reinsurance extensions, immunization coverage requirements, federal Medicaid implementation, immigration enforcement in healthcare settings, and infectious waste management oversight. LeadingAge Minnesota will host its 2026 Day at the Capitol on April 22, 2026; Board Members interested in participating are encouraged to contact Kimber Wraalstad for registration. Implementation of the new virtual rounding and discharge process began on March 16, 2026. Progress continues on the bi-directional interface between North Shore Health and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic for laboratory and radiology orders and results. The laboratory interface went live on February 24, ahead of schedule, and efforts are now focused on the radiology interface, with User Acceptance Testing conducted the week of March 16 and a targeted go-live date of April 7, 2026. Recruitment of foreign employees remains active. By mid-April, I-140 petitions are expected to be filed for nine of ten green card applicants. Following approval, applicants will enter an extended waiting period before becoming eligible for embassy appointments based on priority dates. Currently, federal processing is addressing November 2021 priority dates, while North Shore Health applicants hold August 2024 priority dates, indicating a significant delay. Additionally, one H-1B extension has been approved and a second has been filed, with both employees' green card applications in process. The audit team from CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) began fieldwork on March 2, with most work conducted remotely through secure system access. Audit requests are being managed electronically, with designated staff responding and submitting documentation through the portal. CLA leadership reported that the audit is progressing smoothly and commended the North Shore Health team for their responsiveness. Presentation of the 2025 financial audit remains scheduled for the May Board meeting. Department leaders continue to implement action plans developed in response to the Employee Engagement Survey, advancing initiatives in collaboration with their teams. The American Hospital Association's 2026 Rural Advocacy Agenda was also shared, highlighting priorities such as supporting flexible payment models, ensuring fair reimbursement and access to capital, promoting commercial insurer accountability, strengthening the workforce, and protecting the 340B program.

Adjourn:

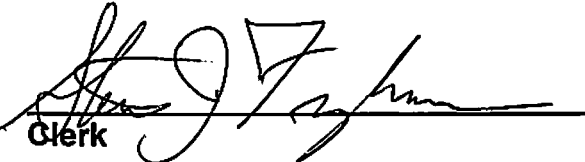
A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Randy Wiitala and seconded by Milan Schmidt. The motion carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting will be held on April 23, 2026 in the Board Room at North Shore Health.

The regular meeting adjourned at 12:14 p.m.



Chair



Clerk