



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES FOR APRIL 17, 2025

Call to Order – Randy Wiitala called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on April 17, 2025 at 9:03 a.m. in the Board Room of North Shore Health.

Recess to Closed Session – Patty Winchell Dahl 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. Milan Schmidt seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session Summary – The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from March 19, 2025, the Medical Staff Report from March 19, 2025 and the April 16, 2025 Credentials Committee Report were discussed.

Reconvene - The North Shore Health Board reconvened in regular session at 9:36 a.m.

Roll Call

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kimber Wraalstad; Nicole Siegner; Troy Batchelor; Jason Yuhas; Michelle Silence; Greg Ruberg; Todd Ford; Patrick O'Neil; Karen Schultz; Doug Sanders; Mary Sanders; Garry Gamble; Mike DeBevec; Josh Hinke; Steve Aldrich; June Tveekrem; and Dave Coleman

Approval of Minutes for March 20, 2025 – Milan Schmidt noted that the March 20, 2025 minutes on the website are not corrected. Past practice has been to note the correction in the next month's minutes, however, it was agreed that the minutes would be corrected and put on the webpage as approved minutes. Milan Schmidt made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2025 meeting as amended and the motion was seconded by Steve Frykman. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Reports: Nicole Siegner, Interim Chief Financial Officer, presented the March 2025 financial statements. There was a Loss from Operations for the month of March of \$135K, compared to the budgeted Loss from Operations of \$359K. The Statement of Net Position, Statement of Revenues and Expenses and Changes in Net Position were reviewed. Gross Patient Service Revenue of \$2.069M for the month of March was 7.0% higher than budget. Revenues from Inpatient, Swing Bed, Outpatient, Care Center and Home Care were below budget for the month. Contractual Adjustments and Other Deductions were -\$83K compared to the budget of \$404K. Total Operating Revenue for the month was \$2.156M, 18.0% more than budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$2.291M were 5.0% more than budget. The days cash on hand, debt service coverage ratio, current ratio and payer mix were also reviewed. Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to accept the March 2025 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Milan Schmidt and the motion carried unanimously.

Board Presentation – Rehab Services Update – Patrick O’Neil, DPT – Director of Rehab Services

Patrick O’Neil, the Director of Rehab Services at North Shore Health, provided an overview of the Rehab Services area. He shared pictures of the current team members and noted that North Shore Health has hired a new Physical Therapist, two Occupational Therapists and a Speech Therapist. With the additional team members, the Department is offering a Pediatric Summer Intensive Program. This will allow children and their families to receive Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapy Services in Grand Marais three times per week for the summer intensive program. Without this program, they would have to drive to Duluth for services. The schedule for this program is full. The Department is also becoming an early adopter of a program, Focus On Therapeutic Outcomes (FOTO), that tracks patient outcomes. With funding from the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation, the Rehab Department has purchased and installed a Solo Step Harness System. This supports full body weight while patients are participating in therapy; reducing the risk of falls. Hospital patients, Care Center residents and Outpatient Therapy patients have used this device. The Board Members thanked Dr. O’Neil and his team for their excellent work and congratulated them for the exciting services they are providing the community.

Old Business:

- a) **2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan Update:** The Scorecard for the Strategic Priorities #3 – Organizational Health and Viability were reviewed. The directional arrows and brief summary provide the status of each goal. The Strategic, Financial, Operational Assessment (SFOA) and the Health Care Needs Assessment were highlighted.
- b) **Board Coaching Proposal:** The proposal presented by Matt Anderson was reviewed. The timeline for board coaching would be from April through October, ending with the strategic planning retreat. It was the consensus of the Board Members that Mr. Anderson has worked well with the Board and this will be an excellent opportunity to enhance the functioning of the Board. In addition, Mr. Anderson will assist in developing a trustee job description, code of conduct and board self-assessment survey tool. Randy Wiitala made a motion to enter into a Board Coaching agreement with Matt Anderson. The motion was seconded by Milan Schmidt and the motion carried unanimously.
- c) **Board Confidentiality Agreement Review:** Dr. Schmidt and Ms. Winchell-Dahl reported they have met and are still working on a revised confidentiality statement.

- d) **Evaluation of Video Recording/Publishing of Board Meetings:** The taskforce update developed by Mr. Usem was reviewed. The document was a good beginning and additional information is still being obtained. The taskforce will meet and provide additional information at the May meeting.

New Business:

- a) **Financial Assistance Policy Review:** The following policies regarding financial assistance and collections were reviewed:

- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Bad Debt Collection
- Debt Collection Agency Policy
- Debt Collection Litigation/Garnishment
- Patient Financial Responsibility Policy
- Financial Assistance Program

Ms. Siegner noted that the policies were updated with the 2025 Federal Poverty Guidelines and various typo and grammatical errors were corrected. Annual review and approval of these policies are required by the Board. Dr. Schmidt commented that the Financial Assistance Program shows that North Shore Health cares about working with patients to set up payment plans and provide information about our Community Caring program. The Board Members recognized Kelly Swearingen and those who service for Patient Accounts for their work and support of our patients. Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to approve the policies as presented and the motion was seconded by Steve Frykman. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments: Steve Aldrich and June Tveekrem provided public comment.

Management Report:

The Management Report for April 2025 included in the Board materials was reviewed. The North Shore Health draft legislation regarding swing bed flexibility and reimbursement continues to advance. A fiscal note was received by the Minnesota Department of Human Services that shows no fiscal impact to the State. The Senate bill is included in the Senate Omnibus HHS bill, SF2669. There are two minor changes that need to occur in the Conference Committee: 1) the effective date needs to be changed from 01/01/2026 to 10/01/2025 in multiple places and 2) more importantly, in line #40.27: after "clause", "(1)," needs to be added. This was likely a drafting error because North Shore Health would not be able to use the exemption even if it passes into law. The House Health Committee does not yet have an Omnibus Health Finance bill. North Shore Health, together with Wilderness Health, has worked Adaptive Telehealth to add services for patients who are admitted to the Emergency Department in need of behavioral health services. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation from Adaptive Telehealth describing the service was included in the Board materials. North Shore Health was awarded a \$120,000 Rural Hospital Capital Improvement Grant to purchase an In-room and Mobile Digital Radiographic System for Radiology. Congratulations and thank you to Brian Hady for his work in preparing the material for the grant application! These efforts have resulted in another successful grant award. North Shore Health continues to work with Rural Health Innovations (RHI) and our community partners to translate feedback from the focus groups into action. RHI will present the Community Health Needs Assessment Report to the Boards of North Shore Health and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic on Tuesday, April 29 at noon in the lower level of the Clinic. Two additional sessions will be held, one in Grand Marais and one in Grand Portage. Individuals who participated in the focus groups will be specifically invited to attend the sessions and

they will also be open to the community. RHI will provide an overview of the assessment process, share a summary of findings and summarize their recommendations. The meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 at 5:00 p.m. in Grand Portage and Wednesday, April 30 at 10:00 a.m. in Grand Marais. Information was included in the Board materials from the National Rural Health Association, the Minnesota Hospital Association, the American Hospital Association, LeadingAge Minnesota/Long Term Care Imperative and Chartis. The Chartis report noted that rural health care continues to remain under intense pressure with over 18 hospitals either closing or converting to a Rural Emergency Hospital.

Adjourn:

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

The next regular meeting will be held on May 22, 2025 in the Board Room at North Shore Health.

The regular meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.


Chair


Clerk