



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 23, 2025

Call to Order – Randy Wiitala called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on October 23, 2025 at 9:02 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 September 17, 2025 and the Medical Staff Report from September 17, 2025 and the October 15, 2025 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 and Randy Wiitala and

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Kimber Wraalstad; Nicole Siegner; Megan Thurston; Jason Yuhas; Michele Silence; Greg Ruberg; Patrick O'Neil; Steve Underdahl; Todd Ford; Karen Schultz; Doug Sanders; Mary Sanders; Kay Olson; Josh Hinke; Garry Gamble

Mission and Vision: Dr. Schmidt read the North Shore Health Mission and Vision Statements to begin the meeting.

Approval of Minutes for September 25, 2025: Milan Schmidt made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 25, 2025 meeting and the motion was seconded by Steve Frykman. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments: No comments were offered.

Board Presentation – Rehabilitation Services Update – Patrick O'Neil, DPT

Patrick O'Neil, Director of the Rehabilitation Department, provided an update on departmental activities. In 2025, the Rehab Department launched its inaugural Pediatric Summer Intensive Program, involving three Occupational Therapists, one Speech Therapist, and two Physical Therapists. The program served 23 children and their families, providing a total of 460 pediatric intensive visits. Mr. O'Neil highlighted that the program allowed children to receive necessary services locally, eliminating the need for families to travel four hours for each visit. The department recorded an increase of over 100 visits in July 2025, a notable increase compared with July 2024. The addition of new service lines, such as dry needling, hand therapy, pediatric therapy (Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy), pediatric pelvic floor therapy, lymphedema therapy, and soon musculoskeletal ultrasound imaging has resulted in more than 660 additional visits in 2025 compared with 2024. Mr. O'Neil also shared that North Shore Health is collaborating with ISD 166 to provide partial Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy support during the school year with implementation anticipated in January 2026. The Department has implemented the Focus on Therapeutic Outcomes (FOTO) program, which provides scorecards on completion rates, utilization, effectiveness, and efficiency of services. Current data for orthopedic and neurological impairments indicate that North Shore Health's care exceeds predicted benchmarks for both effectiveness and efficiency. Patient satisfaction remains high, with results showing over 90% satisfaction and a Net Promoter Score of 94.12%. The Rehab Department recently began using an Artificial Intelligence Scribe, allowing therapists to focus more fully on patient care while maintaining excellent documentation quality. Mr. O'Neil also highlighted the department's community outreach and support activities to date in 2025, which included:

- Fall Prevention Day at the Community Center
- Pelvic Floor Lecture Series at CCHE
- Pelvic Floor In-Service at Bone Builders
- "Get Up Off the Floor" presentation at The HUB with Bone Builders
- School Physical Activity and Cognitive Performance Teacher In-Service
- Cook County Courthouse/Administration Ergonomics In-Service
- Sports coverage at ISD 166
- NSH Employee Health and Benefits Day participation
- Staff Ergonomics/Safety Housekeeping training

In recognition of National Physical Therapy Month in October, Mr. O'Neil encouraged everyone to thank Physical Therapists, past and present, for their dedication and service to patients and the community. The Board thanked Mr. O'Neil for his presentation and his leadership in expanding the Rehabilitation Department's programs and services.

Financial Reports: Nicole Siegner, Chief Financial Officer, presented the September 2025 financial statements. There was an Income from Operations for the month of September of \$228K, compared to the budgeted Income from Operations of \$38K. The Statement of Net Position, Statement of Revenues and Expenses and Changes in Net Position were reviewed. Gross Patient Service Revenue of \$2.881M for the month of September was 8.0% higher than budget. Revenues from Inpatient and Outpatient were above budget for the month with Swing Bed, Home Care and Care Center being below budget. Contractual Adjustments and Other Deductions were \$493K compared to the budget of \$434K, a 14% variance. Total Operating Revenue for the month was \$2.395M, 7.0% variance from budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$2.167M were 1% less than budget. The days cash on hand, debt service coverage ratio, current ratio and payer mix were also reviewed. Ms. Siegner spoke about payment of debt that occurred this month. This was done using grant funds provided in 2022 by the State of Minnesota to Nursing Homes for specific use including debt repayment.

Steve Frykman made a motion to accept the September 2025 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Sam Usem and the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- a) **2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan Update:** The Scorecard for the Strategic Priorities #1 Patient and Resident Experience: Quality and Safety was reviewed. The areas with actions and accomplishments were reviewed. It was reminded that the goal of selecting an Electronic Health Record upgrade is on hold until the server migration is complete in December so that area is without action. The status of the bi-directional interface and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic's new EMR implementation was briefly discussed.
- b) **Strategic Planning Meeting Update:** Mr. Wiitala welcomed Steve Underdahl, who will be serving as the facilitator for the upcoming strategic planning retreat. Mr. Underdahl has been meeting Board Members and other staff to gain insight into the priorities and opportunities facing North Shore Health. He will summarize this information to provide a starting point for discussions during the retreat. The strategic planning retreat will be held on Monday, November 17, 2025, at the Community Center. It will begin at 8:30 a.m. and last the entire day. More details will be forthcoming.
- c) **Sawtooth Mountain Collaboration Committee:** Mr. Wiitala shared that he has been in contact with Suzanne Davies, Board Chair for Sawtooth Mountain Clinic about resuming the meetings between the two Boards. There will be more to come on this topic. Dr. Schmidt commented that this a good opportunity for collaboration between the two Boards.

New Business:

- a) **None.**

Management Report:

The Management Report for October 2025 included in the Board materials was reviewed. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) posted the State Plan Amendment (SPA) related to North Shore Health's swing bed legislation on October 3, 2025, for public comment. The comment period will close on November 2, 2025. North Shore Health has submitted its public comment, and Senator Hauschild has also agreed to provide one. Following the close of the comment period, the SPA will be submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for review. The swing bed legislation is scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2026, or upon federal approval, whichever occurs later. CMS review of SPAs typically takes approximately three months; however, this may be delayed due to the ongoing federal government shutdown. Following the submission of the Plan of Correction (POC) for the four federal deficiencies, three state deficiencies, and five Life Safety Code deficiencies identified during the July 2025 Care Center survey, the Post Certification Revisits (PCR) have occurred. As previously reported, the Fire Marshal returned on September 15, 2025, to conduct the onsite PCR and verified that all Life Safety Code corrections were complete. In lieu of an onsite visit, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) conducted a desk audit for the PCR, confirming compliance. North Shore Health has achieved substantial compliance and has been recertified for participation in the Medicare and Medicaid programs by CMS. North Shore Health also received the letter of findings from the Critical Access

Hospital (CAH) survey completed on September 11, 2025. MDH reported no deficiencies, confirming full compliance with all federal participation requirements for both the Critical Access Hospital and Swing Bed programs. On October 16, 2025, the Radiology Department underwent a comprehensive onsite inspection, the first in over 15 years. While official results have not yet been received, the inspector commented that the survey was "excellent." The Board extended its appreciation and congratulations to Brian Hady and the Radiology Team for their outstanding work. North Shore Health also successfully completed its annual Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA) inspection conducted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), meeting all quality standards for mammography. Special thanks were extended to Caroline Hanford and Brian Hady for ensuring continued excellence in compliance and patient safety. North Shore Health continues to offer influenza vaccinations to all employees at no charge. As of October 16, a total of 42 employees have received their flu shots, and vaccinations will continue to be offered periodically. Care Center residents received their influenza vaccinations this week, with only two residents declining. The 2026 renewal rates for the Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance plans reflected a 14% increase. Comparative quotes were also received from Medica. After review, the Employee Insurance Committee voted to remain with Blue Cross Blue Shield for 2026. An Employee Benefits Fair is scheduled for November 5, 2025, providing staff the opportunity to meet with representatives from benefit providers. In conjunction with the Benefits Fair, an Employee Health Fair will also be offered. The Headwaters High Value Network Annual Meeting was held October 20–21, 2025, with Dr. Todd Severnak and Kimber Wraalstad attending on behalf of North Shore Health. Ms. Wraalstad reviewed the topics discussed at the meeting. It was also noted that representatives from Headwaters recently met in Washington, D.C., with officials from the Department of Health and Human Services regarding the Rural Health Transformation Program. Planning for the Pain Management Program continues to progress. Initial clinic dates are tentatively scheduled for December 2025, with procedure dates to begin in January 2026.

Adjourn:

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

The next regular meeting will be held on November 20, 2025 at the Ferry Terminal Building, 402 Upper Road, in Grand Portage, MN.

The regular meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.


Chair


Clerk