



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

BOARD MINUTES FOR APRIL 21, 2022

**Call to Order** – Kay Olson, Chair, called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on April 21, 2022 at 9:15 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 and Credential Committee report. Randy Wiitala seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**Closed Session Summary** - The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from March 16, 2022, the March 16, 2022 Medical Staff Report, and the April 20, 2022 Credentials Committee recommendations were reviewed

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

**Roll Call**

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

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** Kimber Wraalstad; Paul Goettl; Milan Schmidt, MD (p); David Mills (p); Kate Surbaugh (p); Judy Erickson (p); Joe Birkholz (p)

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic members of the Board (Kay Olson, Steve Nielsen, Mary Sanders, Randy Wiitala and Patty Winchell-Dahl); Dr. Schmidt, Dave Mills, Kate Surbaugh, Judy Erickson and Joe Birkholz attended the meeting via Zoom technology with the ability to hear and see the other participants. Kimber Wraalstad and Paul Goettl attended the meeting at North Shore Health.

**Approval of Agenda:** Mary Sanders made a motion to accept the meeting agenda as presented; it was seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments:** None

**Approval of Minutes from March 24, 2022** – Mary Sanders made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 24, 2022 meeting as presented and the motion was seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl. The motion carried unanimously.

## Updates:

- a. **Clinic Board:** Kate Surbaugh shared a Sawtooth Mountain Clinic update. There continues to be activity related to COVID-19. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic and Cook County Public Health had just relocated the vaccination events from the Community Center back to the Clinic when the announcement of the second booster was made. So, the vaccination events are once again being held at the Community Center and Kate noted there is a high demand for the second booster vaccination and appointments are full into May. The Clinic is well stocked with N-95 masks, over the counter antigen tests and anti-viral medication (Paxolvid). The uninsured fund administered by Health Resources and Services Administration for COVID-19 testing and treatment no longer has funds and has stopped processing requests for payment. The Clinic, Public Health and North Shore Health are working together so that cost is not a barrier to testing or treatment. There are other programs available for the uninsured but now the messaging is more confusing. Lisa Zaller, CNP, has relocated to Duluth and worked her last day for Sawtooth Mountain Clinic. A new Nurse Practitioner is expected to begin in the middle of May. Dr. Schmidt's last day seeing patients will be on May 31 however, he will continue to assist with some administrative duties until Dr. Farchmin returns from his parental leave. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic now has a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner with prescriptive authority who is available via remote appointments with the support of a University of Minnesota Telehealth grant.
- b. **County Board:** Commissioner Mills spoke about two areas of focus for the County: housing and child care. Jason Hale has been hired as the new Executive Director of the Cook County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). The lack of available child care options and affordability continues to be discussed. Various changes in County personnel were discussed as well as restructuring in Public Health and Human Services and the Highway Department. A day-time crisis responder is being added to Public Health and Human Services with the two-year pilot program being funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funding. This mental health worker will work across human services, law enforcement and health care to provide coordinated behavioral health crisis response services, primarily during daytime hours. The funds will also support a contract with the Human Development Center to provide the required clinical supervision and oversight.
- c. **Board Members:** Kay Olson attended to the Minnesota Hospital Association Trustee Council and reviewed the reports shared by the various Council members. It was quite interesting to hear about the activities occurring at organizations throughout the State.
- d. **Correspondence:** None.

### **Board Presentation – Legislative Efforts at the Minnesota State Capitol – Judy Erickson and Joe Birkholz – Conservation Strategies**

Judy Erickson and Joe Birkholz provided a brief review of the legislative process in Minnesota using the bed moratorium language being requested by North Shore Health as an example. Legislation is drafted by the State's Revisor's Office. After being introduced in the House and/or Senate, the legislation is given a bill number and assigned to a Committee. Ms. Erickson reviewed the various hearing deadlines required for legislation. The legislation

supported by North Shore Health has met all the Committee hearing deadlines and is currently in the Senate Health and Human Services Omnibus bill and the House's Health and Human Services Omnibus bill. Once these bills are debated on and passed off the floor, a conference committee will be appointed to find a compromise between Senate and House versions of a bill. If a compromise is reached, that agreement must be passed by both the Senate and the House before it can be sent to the Governor. At that point, the Governor can either sign or veto the legislation. Mr. Birkholz noted the Minnesota legislative website (<https://www.leg.mn.gov>) is an excellent resource. The legislation supported by North Shore Health still has several milestones it must achieve before becoming a law.

**Financial Reports:** Paul Goettl presented the March 2022 financial statements. Patient days in the Acute Hospital were 3 days or 27.0% less than budget with inpatient revenue for the month being \$3K less than budget. Swing Bed days were 26 less than budget with revenue \$24K less than budget. Care Center days were 18 more than budget and revenue \$26K less than budget. The temporary pause on admissions due to staffing continues at the Care Center with the current census being 31 residents. Outpatient revenue of \$1,411K was \$202K or 17% more than budget. Observation, Lab and Radiology were above budget while CT, Rehab, Home Care and Ambulance were less than budget. Gross Patient Revenue was \$143K more than budget. Deductions from Revenue were \$15K less than budget; as a percent of Gross Patient Revenue, Contractual Adjustments were 9.3% compared to the budget of 10.1%. Net Operating Revenue of \$1,663K was 8.0% more than budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$1,697K were 4.0% less than budget. The Net Loss from Operations for the month of March 2022 of \$34K was \$200K less than budget. Year-to-Date Gross Patient Revenue of \$5,057K was \$72K or 1% above budget with Deductions from Revenue Year-to-Date being \$341K or 36% less than budget. Year-to-Date Operating Expense were \$50K below budget with the Net Loss from Operations Year-to-Date being \$545K, \$402K or 42% less than budget. The Year-to-Date Net Loss of \$387K was \$311K less than budgeted. FTEs are 96.8 and days' cash on hand was 295 days. The current ratio was 4.09 compared to our benchmark of 2.5.

Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to accept the March 2022 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Steve Nielsen and the motion carried unanimously.

**Old Business:**

- a) **Other:** None.

**New Business:**

- a) **Unbudgeted Capital Equipment – Air Scrubbers:** Ms. Wraalstad presented information regarding the request to purchase seven Scientific Air Management S400 Portable Air Disinfection Devices at the cost of \$36,750 plus shipping. These devices are much quieter than the current devices. While they are smaller, additional units can be placed strategically in the Care Center. Since they are much quieter than the existing devices it will also allow us to use them continually, even when the COVID-19 transmission decreases. Steve Nielsen made a motion to approve the purchase of the seven Air Disinfection Devices as recommended. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.
  
- b) **Minnesota Attorney General Agreement:** The Agreement with the Minnesota Attorney General regarding the collection of medical debt and patient billing was reviewed. This is an agreement between the Attorney General and every Hospital in

Minnesota. The current agreement is expiring at the end of June 2022, and Minnesota Attorney General, Keith Ellison, is proposing to renew the agreement for another five-year term. The history of the agreement and minor edits to the proposed agreement were reviewed. It was the unanimous consensus of the Board Members to accept the Minnesota Attorney General Agreement.

**c) 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

The policies were updated with the 2022 Federal Poverty Guidelines. Annual review and approval of these policies are required by the Board. Steve Nielsen made a motion to approve the policies as presented and the motion was seconded by Mary Sanders. Motion carried unanimously.

**d) Investment Policy:** Mr. Goettl reviewed the North Shore Health Investment Policy. No changes have been made to the policy during the last year. Steve Nielsen made a motion to accept the Investment Policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.

**e) Other:** None.

**Management Report:** The April Management Report for April included in the Board materials was reviewed.

As of April 14, 2022, there have been eight hundred forty-seven (847) confirmed cases of COVID-19 affiliated with Cook County. It has been decided to demobilize the COVID-19 Incident Command Team. If conditions dictate, the Incident Command Team could be reactivated. A weekly memo with COVID-19 updates will continue to be provided. When the CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker transmission rate maintains a two week sustained drop to moderate (yellow) and/or low (blue), Ms. Wraalstad reviewed several welcome changes that will occur at North Shore Health. However, if the CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker transmission rate increases for five days to substantial (orange) and/or high (red), all of the mentioned items will need to be immediately reinstated. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) continues to make Over the Counter (OTC) Antigen COVID-19 Tests and N-95 masks available at the North Shore Health screening table. The uninsured program with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for COVID-19 testing is out of funds. Collaboration with SMC and PHHS is ongoing so that lack of insurance is not a barrier to being tested for COVID-19. Employees who are not “up-to-date” with their COVID-19 vaccination, must participate in routine testing. On March 29, 2022, the FDA approved emergency use authorization for a second booster vaccination of both Pfizer and Moderna and then the CDC released their recommendation for additional COVID vaccine boosters. Cook County Public Health and Human Services (PHHS) has issued a media release regarding announcing the recommendation and the availability of the fourth dose. SMC and PHHS have also reopened the Community Center for mass vaccination at least through May depending on the demand.

The audit team from Clifton Larson Allen (CLA) is finalizing the virtual audit fieldwork for our 2021 Financial Audit. The Minnesota Hospital Association's 2022 Summer Trustee Conference will be held virtually July 14 and 15, 2022. Details regarding conference sessions, speakers, and registration will be shared in the coming weeks and forwarded to the Board Members. Sarah Groth has been promoted to the Housekeeping/Laundry Lead and Logan Schrock has been hired as the Material Management Coordinator. The Administrative Staff of North Shore Health have not had the opportunity to meet to develop priorities and goals for the Strategic Plan and hope to work on this in the near future. The Physical Therapy department is now offering pelvic floor and women's health physical therapy services. Our newest physical therapist, Kelsey Saladin, DPT, has been trained in Female Pelvic Floor examinations. These services include serving those with pelvic pain, groin pain, muscle and joint pain related to pregnancy or postpartum, bowel and bladder incontinence and other diagnoses. Patients with questions are encouraged to call the Physical Therapy Department for an appointment. In addition to the bill supported by North Shore Health, other health care legislation was reviewed. The Senate budget bill provides significant funding for the LeadingAge Minnesota/Long-Term Care Imperative workforce agenda. The Senate bill includes \$225 million in state funding over the next three years for nursing facility rate increases. Ms. Wraalstad also included the recently release Minnesota Department of Health report about Minnesota's Health Care Workforce.

**Adjourn:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Steve Nielsen and seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl. The motion carried unanimously. The regular meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on May 19, 2022.

  
Chair

  
Clerk