



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

BOARD MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 22, 2021

Call to Order – Kay Olson, Chair, called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on December 22, 2021 at 9:15 a.m. on Zoom and in the Board Room.

Adjourn to Closed Session – Randy Wiitala made a motion to adjourn into closed session for the Medical Staff Credentials Committee Report. The motion was seconded by Steve Nielsen and the motion carried with all ayes.

Closed Session Summary - The Medical Staff Credentials Committee Report from December 15, 2021 was reviewed.

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

Roll Call

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

Members Absent:

Others Present: Kimber Wraalstad; Paul Goettl; Greg Ruberg; David Mills (p) and Kate Surbaugh (p)

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic members of the Board (Steve Nielsen, Kay Olson, Mary Sanders and Randy Wiitala); Kimber Wraalstad, Greg Ruberg, Dave Mills and Kate Surbaugh attended the meeting via Zoom technology with the ability to hear and see the other participants. Ms. Winchell-Dahl and Mr. Goettl attended the meeting in the Board Room of North Shore Health.

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

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes from November 18, 2021 – Mary Sanders made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 18, 2021 meeting as presented and the motion was seconded by Randy Wiitala. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates:

- a. **Clinic Board:** Kate Surbaugh joined the meeting and shared news about two programs being developed by Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) to assist with employee recruitment and development – Certified Medical Assistant and Pharmacy Technician. SMC is preparing for the expected Omicron surge. The SMC leadership team is refreshing all staff on current COVID-19 safety measures: screening, PPE, testing, etc. They are also reviewing contingency plans in readiness for a highly transmissible variant. If conditions warrant, SMC is prepared to

move more staff to work-from-home as well as increase the percentage of patients seen via telehealth. Plans for provider coverage are a top priority to ensure that SMC and NSH patients are cared for in the event that providers are quarantined due to illness. As we all know, remaining prepared yet flexible is the key to COVID-19 response. SMC is on track for full compliance with the CMS mandate according to the original published deadlines. The SMC staff vaccination rate is 98%. The SMC Board added language to SMC's vaccination policy stating that the policy will remain in effect regardless of CMS mandate status.

- b. County Board:** Commissioner Mills reported Cook County Commissioners finalized the 2022 County levy increase at 3.95%. The County has developed a County COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Policy that was reviewed at the Commissioners meeting. The policy will only be implemented if the OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard is upheld in federal court. Commissioner Mills commented the testing provision could cost over \$5,000 per week. The Cook County Commission did not submit comments to the U.S. Forest Service about the Lutsen Mountains expansion proposal.
- c. Board Members:** Ms. Olson noted that she spoke with a Cook County community member who had concerns about the Cook County Hospital District tax levy. While reviewing the conversation, it was reported that North Shore Health is in the process of updating our website including the Board Member webpage. The telephone numbers and emails of the Board Members will be included on the website.
- d. Correspondence:** None.

Board Presentation – The Power of Board Advocacy, a Video Presentation – Kari Thurlow, Senior Vice President of Advocacy for LeadingAge Minnesota

Kari Thurlow, Senior Vice President of Advocacy for LeadingAge Minnesota provided a recorded video presentation discussing the Power of Board Advocacy. Three areas were highlighted: Minnesota Public Policy Landscape related to Senior Care, the role of Board Members in advocacy and steps to support specific organization's public policy priorities and mission. Ms. Thurlow noted Minnesota has a crisis in caregiving. There is an unprecedented- record-level workforce shortage in nursing homes and assisted living facilities across the state. Currently there are 23,000 open positions, representing 20% of the caregiving workforce and 70% of nursing homes are limiting admissions. This crisis is systemic and growing. Ms. Thurlow discussed the role public policy has to address this crisis. LeadingAge Minnesota is calling on Legislators to create a more responsive and better funded system of reimbursement that will allow organizations to pay caregivers the wages they deserve. The types of advocacy and the role of trustees were reviewed. It was noted that when an individual cares about an issue, they have a responsibility to be an advocate.

Financial Reports:

November 2021 Financial Report: Mr. Goettl presented the November 2021 financial statements. Patient days in the Acute Hospital were 5 days or 13.5% more than budget with inpatient revenue for the month being \$18K more than budget. Swing Bed days were 18 less than budget with revenue \$41K less than budget. Care Center days were 17 more than budget and revenue was \$21K less than budget. Outpatient revenue of \$1,191K is \$154K or 15% more than budget. Net Operating Revenue of \$1,501K is 8.0% less than budget. Deductions from Revenue are \$224K more than budget; as a percent of Gross Patient Revenue, Contractual Adjustments are 19.0% compared to a budget of 11.6%. Total Operating Expenses of \$1,672K are 3.0% less than budget. The Net Loss for the month of November 2021 of \$140K is \$188K more than budget. The year-to-date Loss from Operations is \$1,267K, which is \$369K better than budget. Gross Patient Revenue is \$1,755K higher than budget year-to-date. The year-to-date Net Gain is \$3,135K, \$4,224K more than the budgeted loss. Year-to-date FTEs are 103.4, 10.1 less than budget. Days' cash on hand increased to 290 days. North Shore Health has received \$327K from the American Rescue Plan for health care organizations serving rural providers. The current ratio is 3.73 and the YTD payer mix is slightly more

favorable with commercial being up 3.0% while Medicare is down 3.0%. Mr. Goettl briefly reviewed the financial forecast.

Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to accept the November 2021 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Randy Wiitala and the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- a) **Other:** None.

New Business:

a) **Budget Presentation:**

- **2022 Capital Budget:** Mr. Goettl presented the proposed 2022 capital budget of \$539,500. Mr. Goettl reviewed the process for the development of the budget and noted examples of equipment included in the budget are those needing replacement, those making tasks more efficient and those needed to meet regulatory requirements. Patty Winchell-Dahl moved the adoption of the 2022 Capital Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.
- **2022 Operating Budget:** The 2022 operating budget was reviewed. Mr. Goettl included a written summary of the proposed budget that was included with the Board materials. The 2022 volume and statics budget, preliminary FTE budget, patient revenue by department, consolidated operating budget and cash requirements were reviewed in detail. Mary Sanders moved the adoption of the 2022 Operating Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Kay Olson and the motion carried unanimously.

- b) **Other:** None.

Management Report: The Management Report for December 2021 included in the Board materials was reviewed.

As of December 16, 2021, there have been three hundred sixty-two (362) confirmed cases of COVID-19 affiliated with Cook County; this is an increase of 69 cases since the November Management Report. There have been more cases and hospitalizations than at any time during the pandemic. The ability to transfer patients to other health care facilities, with a variety of diagnoses, has been difficult. Many hours by many individuals have been spent on the phone repeatedly calling hospitals across, Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota in attempt to find an organization willing to accept a transfer. We were also saddened to report the first COVID-19 related death of a Cook County resident. North Shore Health is fully compliant with our employees, 100% have either been vaccinated or requested a medical or religious exemption. There were some individuals who worked very casually who chose to resign rather than respond to our questions about vaccination or exemption. The area where work continues is on a process for the "... individuals who provide care, treatment, or other services for the facility and/or its patients, under contract or other arrangement." The current focus is to develop a process to obtain vaccination and exemption information from the various companies who provide goods and services to North Shore Health. Late on Friday afternoon, November 12, CMS issued updated guidance regarding unlimited visitation in Nursing Homes. Informed consents were obtained from the residents/decision maker about the type of visitation the resident desires. Options regarding visits in their room or the multi-purpose room and with only vaccinated visitors. A visitor consent was also developed including information about spreading COVID-19 to vulnerable adults. The change to the visitation policy for the Care Center became effective on December 13. The Essential Caregiver program will continue but will only allow individuals who are vaccinated and these individuals will be able remove their PPE in the resident's room when the community transmission of COVID-19 lessens. Vaccination events in Cook County continue. The events are predominately for boosters but they are still seeing some first dose vaccination. Approximately 50% of children in the 5 – 11 age group have received one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

North Shore Health is working with Judy Erickson and Joe Birkholz from Conservation Strategies, Inc. to assist with the legislation increasing North Shore Health's hospital bed license from 16 to 25. The draft legislation was reviewed. The North Shore Health Physical Therapy Department will be hosting a Fall Prevention and Screening Day on Tuesday, January 11, 2022. This program will utilize the Force Platforms recently received with the support of a Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation Grant. The "Protecting Medicare and American Farmers from Sequester Cuts Act", was passed that will stop Medicare cuts to hospitals, physicians and other providers from going into effect early next year. Specifically, the legislation extends the moratorium on the 2% Medicare sequester cuts until April 1, 2022, and reduce the cuts from 2% to 1% from April 1 through June 30, 2022. Also included in the legislation was language that would stop the 4% statutory Pay-As-You-Go sequester from taking effect in early 2022. North Shore Health has received our property, inland marine, boiler & machinery, and auto insurance renewal for January 1, 2022, with Travelers Insurance Company. Travelers maintains their presence as being the dominating insurance company to insure hospitals and is also one of the very few insurance companies that will insure ambulance operations under their auto insurance program. The renewal rate is \$53,343 compared with the expiring premium of \$50,171, a 6% increase. The property premium increased 5%, the inland marine stayed flat, the boiler & machinery stayed close to flat, and auto increased 13%. According to our agent, Vaaler Insurance, the average increase being seen at renewal has been 12% or higher, so a 6% increase is excellent. The flu vaccine was delayed in being received but efforts are now underway to provide the flu vaccine. Bre King, Angie Works and Troy Batchelor have been going to departments to offer the flu vaccine. Currently 60% of employees have been vaccinated. Because of the delay some employees have received their vaccination at other locations. Troy will be connecting with each employee to offer the flu shot or document their vaccination at another location. The 2022 Minnesota Hospital Association Winter Trustee Conference is scheduled for January 6-7, 2022. Those Board Members interested in attending should contact Kimber by Thursday, December 30.

The 2022 Meeting Dates were finalized:

Thursday, January 20, 2022
Thursday, February 17, 2022
Thursday, March 24, 2022
Thursday, April 21, 2022
Thursday, May 19, 2022
Thursday, June 23, 2022
Thursday, July 21, 2022
Thursday, August 18, 2022
Thursday, September 15, 2022***
Thursday, October 20, 2022
Thursday, November 17, 2022
Thursday, December 22, 2022

***The September meeting date has changed to September 15, 2022 because the regular meeting date is at the same time as the scheduled Minnesota Hospital Association and LeadingAge Minnesota Annual Meetings.


Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Patty Winchell-Dahl and seconded by Randy Wiitala. The motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting will be held on January 20, 2022. Happy Holidays!

The regular meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.



Chair



Clerk