



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

BOARD MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

**Call to Order** – Kay Olson, Chair, called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on September 15, 2022 at 9:15 a.m. on Zoom and in the Board Room.

**Adjourn to Closed Session** – Mary Sanders made a motion to adjourn into closed session for the Quality Improvement and Medical Staff report. Steve Nielsen seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**Closed Session Summary** - The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from August 17, 2022 and the August 17, 2022 Medical Staff Report 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; Greg Ruberg; David Mills; Kurt Farchmin, MD (p); Jon Moe (p); Brook Lessard (p); Kalli Hawkins

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic members of the Board (Kay Olson, Steve Nielsen, Mary Sanders and Randy Wiitala); Dr. Farchmin, Greg Ruberg, Jon Moe attended the meeting via Zoom technology with the ability to hear and see the other participants. Patty Winchell-Dahl, Kimber Wraalstad, Paul Goettl, Brook Lessard and Kalli Hawkins attended the meeting at North Shore Health.

**Approval of Agenda:** Mary Sanders made a motion to accept the meeting agenda as presented and it was seconded by Steve Nielsen. The motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments:** Patty Winchell-Dahl shared conversations she has had with community members regarding the possible closing of the Care Center. The discussion during the August Board meeting about the employee recruitment efforts and concerns that if those efforts are not successful has generated discussion in the community. The ability to continue to provide services, particularly in the Care Center and Ambulance will be impacted without the recruitment of employees. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Steve Nielsen directing Administration to develop a communication plan whose purpose is to provide correct information in the community about the Care Center issue including talking points for the Board members to use. The motion was seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl and carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes from August 18, 2022** – Steve Nielsen made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 18, 2022 meeting as presented and the motion was seconded by Mary Sanders. The motion carried unanimously.

## Updates:

- a. **Clinic Board:** Kate Surbaugh was out of town and unable to attend the meeting. She provided a written report that was shared. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) won three awards from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) during the National Association of Community Health Centers annual meeting: COVID-19 Public Health Champion, Health Center Quality Leader – Bronze and Patient-centered Medical Home. The Patient-centered Medical Home is a designation based on quality of care coordination. The Bronze Quality Leader award recognizes that SMC is in the top 30% of clinics nationally for clinical quality metrics. The COVID-19 award was only granted to the top 10% of the 1,370 clinics in the nation. The bivalent Covid-19 boosters have arrived as are the flu vaccines. SMC and Cook County PHS are working together on a variety of events large and small to get the community up-to-date with vaccinations. The SMC pharmacy is still planning to expand hours in the fall, but they need one more Pharmacy Tech to ensure adequate staffing.
- b. **County Board:** Commissioner Mills shared that the Cook County preliminary levy increase has been set for 5.5%. The County is proceeding with a Salary/Benefit Comp study and hope to have complete by the end of the year. Funds from the Public Health and Human Service reserve, \$360,000, are being directed for use as a child care subsidy. Plans for road maintenance were briefly reviewed. Commissioner Mills highlighted his priorities for upcoming years including housing, childcare and senior care.
- c. **Board Members:** Steve Nielsen discussed the social media page that is commenting about the North Shore Health Ambulance Services, the EMS Director and NSH Administrator.
- d. **Correspondence:** None.

## Board Presentation – North Shore Health Educational Programs – Jon Moe, Education Coordinator

Jon Moe, Education Coordinator, joined the meeting to share information regarding the North Shore Health education programs, in addition to routine staff development. He focused on the programs that are currently being offered, those programs in development, proposed programs and community outreach. The Nursing Assistant education, On-Track Program, provides hybrid education with education modules provided on-line and skills provided by Mr. Moe and others at North Shore Health. The timeline for completion from beginning to end is one month. North Shore Health is also part of a pilot project for Nurse Aide Testing. Now students can complete their certification exam at North Shore Health rather than travel to one of the Minnesota College campuses. Facility testing actually brings Minnesota in line with other States. Mr. Moe reported that one student has taken the test, who passed, and another individual is scheduled to take the test. The programs currently in development include Home Health Aide and Feeding Assistant Programs. These programs do not require regulatory approval. Mr. Moe is also in the final states of developing courses for Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), initial and recertification education. The application has been submitted to the Emergency Services Regulatory Board and Mr. Moe is waiting to be contacted about scheduling the site visit. The Board Members thanked Mr. Moe for his efforts in assisting North Shore Health to address the workforce shortage.

**Financial Reports:** Paul Goettl presented the August 2022 financial statements. Patient days in the Acute Hospital were 3 days or 13% less than budget with inpatient revenue for the month being \$14K less than budget. Swing Bed days were 6 less than budget with revenue \$28K less than budget. Care Center days were 108 less than budget and revenue \$62K more than budget. Care Center revenue was above budget this month because the Minnesota Department of Human Services finally released the 2022 rates and accounts back through January were adjusted. The pause on admissions due to staffing continues at the Care Center with the current census being 28 residents

with nine open beds. Care Center resident days and revenue will continue to be below budget and this assumption has been incorporated into the forecast. Outpatient revenue of \$1.7M was \$246K more than budget. The volumes in the Emergency Department, Radiology, and Lab were above budget while Rehab, Home Care and Ambulance volumes were less than budget. Gross Patient Revenue was \$293K more than budget. Deductions from Revenue of \$512K were 51% over budget; the settlement template was used to determine this calculation. Net Operating Revenue of \$1.8M was 7.0% more than budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$1.7M were at budget. The Net Gain from Operations for the month of August 2022 of \$165K was \$170K more than budget. Year-to-Date Gross Patient Revenue of \$14.9M was \$257K greater budget with Deductions from Revenue Year-to-Date being \$54K or 3% less than budget. Year-to-Date Operating Expenses continue to be at budget with the Net Loss from Operations Year-to-Date being \$790K, \$283K or 26% less than budget. The Year-to-Date Net Loss of \$154K was \$255K less than budgeted. FTEs were 96.3 and days' cash on hand was 302 days. The current ratio was 4.49 compared to our benchmark of 2.5. Mary Sanders made a motion to accept the July 2022 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Old Business:**

- a) **2023 Levy Request:** Mr. Goettl presented the 2022 forecast and reviewed a 2023 pre-budget estimate. It is projected that revenue will remain stable while contractual adjustments will increase, particularly with the 2.0% sequestration reactivated. Operating expenses are expected to increase in the areas of salaries, employee benefits, professional fees and supplies. Without the levy included in the calculations, the net loss is projected to be \$3.0M. An estimated 2023 cash flow statement based on the 2023 pre-budget was also reviewed. Options such as not funding depreciation and significantly reducing capital expenditures were discussed as alternatives rather than increasing the 2023 levy. While this is a short-term option, Mr. Nielsen pointed out this would negatively impact North Shore Health's future. After a lengthy discussion regarding the 2023 levy, Steve Nielsen made a motion to set the levy at \$1,500,000, a \$200,000 increase from 2022. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.
- b) **Other:** None.

#### **New Business:**

- a) **Unbudgeted Capital Request – Liquid Oxygen Dewars:** Ms. Wraalstad presented information regarding the request to purchase a Liquid Oxygen Dewars system at the cost of \$19,253.00. American Rescue Plan – Rural grant funds will be used for this purchase. Steve Nielsen made a motion to approve the purchase of the Liquid Oxygen Dewars system as recommended. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.
- b) **Unbudgeted Capital Request – Nurse Call System Upgrade:** Information regarding the request to upgrade the Nurse Call System at a cost of \$185,265.58 was presented by Ms. Wraalstad. American Rescue Plan – Rural grant funds will also be used for this purchase. Brook Lessard, Maintenance Director joined the meeting to review the need for the upgrade and discuss the features of the new system. Mary Sanders made a motion to approve the upgrade of the Nurse Call System as recommended and the motion was seconded by Steve Nielsen. The motion carried unanimously.
- c) **Other:** None.

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

As of September 9, 2022, there have been one thousand three hundred thirty six (1,336) confirmed cases of COVID-19 affiliated with Cook County; including self-reported positive antigen tests and Lab

PCR reported tests. The CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker transmission rate has remained in the high (red) or substantial (orange) transmission category. With the continued high/substantial transmission rate, required routine testing continues on a twice a week basis for those employees/ Essential Caregivers who are not vaccinated or "up-to-date" with their COVID-19 vaccination. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recently provided a webinar to Hospitals reinforcing that the use of masks and screening of visitors, patients and employees is expected in these facilities. MDH said hospitals would be subject to a survey with deficiencies and penalties if they do not comply. Screening is done at North Shore Health because we are a health care facility, not just because the Care Center is attached. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that all people ages 12 and older receive a bivalent booster at least two months past their last booster or their initial vaccination series. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic has preordered the Pfizer bivalent vaccine and is waiting for guidance.

During the last eight months, North Shore Health has experienced an acute workforce shortage. While this is not unique to Cook County, it is requiring that all of our employees work differently; less co-workers, more hours, greater responsibility, etc. To recognize the effort of all our employees, North Shore Health will be providing a \$3.00 per worked hour recognition payment for the next six months. Beginning with the August 28, 2022 pay period and going through February 25, 2023, all employees will receive an additional \$3.00 for every hour worked. The additional payment will be included with the regular paycheck and will be seen on a separate line named RECOGPAY. This additional payment is being given in recognition of the care, support and dedication each member of the North Shore Health team has given to our patients, residents, community members and each other. The Medical Director Agreements between the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic and North Shore Health have been updated. With Dr. Milan Schmidt's retirement, Dr. Kurt Farchmin has assumed the responsibility as the Medical Director for the Emergency Department, Hospital and Care Center. Dr. Paul Terrill continues as the Ambulance Medical Director. Troy Batchelor, Hospital Director of Nursing, has announced his resignation from North Shore Health effective October 28, 2022. Troy has served as the Director of Nursing for the Hospital since September 13, 2021. He is returning to UHealth at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus to serve as a Registered Nurse First Assistant in the Operating Room. This will allow his wife, Linda, the opportunity to be closer to medical care in Denver. We wish Troy and his family well as they relocate back to Denver.

**Adjourn:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Patty Winchell-Dahl and seconded by Steve Nielsen. The motion carried unanimously. The regular meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on October 20, 2022.

  
Chair

  
Clerk