



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT

BOARD MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

Call to Order – Kay Olson called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on September 23, 2021 at 9:16 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, Medical Staff, Credentials Committee Reports and Litigation update. The motion was seconded by Steve Nielsen and the motion carried with all ayes.

Closed Session Summary - The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from August 18, 2021; the August 18, 2021 Medical Staff Report; the September 15, 2021 Credentials Committee information; and a litigation update were reviewed.

Reconvene - The North Shore Health Board reconvened in regular session at 9:30 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 (p); Kate Surbaugh (p); David Mills (p); Jennifer Backstrom (p) and Doug Sanders (p)

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

Approval of Agenda: Ms. Wraalstad asked to provide an update on the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation application during the Management Report. Steve Nielsen made a motion to accept the meeting agenda with the addition; it was seconded by Mary Sanders. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes from August 19, 2021 – Mary Sanders made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2021 meeting as presented and the motion was seconded by Steve Nielsen. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates:

- a. **Clinic Board:** Kate Surbaugh joined the meeting and shared an update about the influenza vaccination clinic. A drive-up vaccination event is occurring today (September 23) and seems to be successful with many participants lining the street. As more vaccine is received, additional drive-up events will be scheduled. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic has ordered the high dose quadrivalent vaccine but it will not be available at the drive-up events. Information will be distributed about the various influenza vaccination events as they are scheduled. Ms. Surbaugh also commented that Sawtooth Mountain Clinic continues to address COVID-19 and they are prepared to expand the respiratory clinic and TeleHealth services if needed.
- b. **County Board:** Commissioner Mills reported the preliminary 2022 levy increase has been set for 4.5%. The Cook County Board of Commissioners adopted the proposal to establish a Housing Redevelopment Authority (HRA). Applications are now being accepted for HRA Board Members. Representatives from the Community of Warroad visited Cook County to tour the YMCA and speak with Leaders as they are in the planning phase for a project in their community. The cell tower up the Gunflint Trail is now "live"; this is providing cell coverage in more areas of Cook County.
- c. **Board Members:** Mr. Nielsen shared his recent health care experience. Because of an unfortunate accident, Mr. Nielsen has experienced care from the Ambulance services, Emergency Department, Swing Bed services and most of the ancillary services including Physical Therapy at North Shore Health. The employees of North Shore Health provided excellent care during this time and he is proud of the care and services being providing by everyone at North Shore Health.
- d. **Correspondence:** None.

Board Presentation – COVID-19 Testing – Jennifer Backstrom, MLS (ASCP)^{cm}

Ms. Backstrom shared information about the COVID-19 molecular tests provided by North Shore Health. The in-house tests are completed on the Abbott ID NOW COVID-19 test platform using NAAT methodology and the Cepheid GenXpert COVID-19 test platform using the RT-PCR methodology. The Abbott ID Now is used for symptomatic outpatients and patients prior to their colonoscopy procedure. The Cepheid is used for all ER-Hospital-Care Center testing; asymptomatic Health Care Workers (NSH/SMC) exposures; and symptomatic patients from Grand Portage Health Services. Ms. Backstrom shared concerns with supply chain issues and allocations for testing reagents. As a result of concerns with supply chain and the desire to protect our ability to maintain access for clinical testing, asymptomatic outpatients (those being tested for pre-procedure and exposures); LTC routine employee testing; and travel testing are now being sent to a Reference Lab for processing. Test counts for 2021 and also June, July and August test volumes between 2020 and 2021 were shared. In August 2020, North Shore Health COVID-19 test volume was 550 tests compared to slightly less than 400 in 2020. The majority of the tests completed in August 2021 (over 500) were completed in-house. This was prior to transitioning the travel testing to the Reference Lab. Ms. Backstrom also shared that this Fall/Winter the Lab hoped to bring the Biofire Respiratory Pathogens Panel on-line and update the Cepheid to the new 4-plex Panel. It was noted that there would likely be continued supply chain issues with allocations for testing reagents while also experiencing increased demand for more testing. In the midst of the myriad of issues regarding testing, there will also be continued staffing challenges for the Lab.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a vaccine mandate for workers in most health care settings that receive Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement. It is anticipated CMS will issue rules in October to implement the vaccination mandate. Concerns with the ability to transfer patients to a higher level of care are increasing. While NSH has not had hospitalized COVID-19 patients, the situation around the rest of Minnesota impacts us and our patients. The COVID Response group from Wilderness Health has been meeting and it was noted the situation concerning bed availability is likely to continue through the end of the year. St. Luke's is ramping up their consultative responses to assist regional facilities with care for patients when transfer is delayed.

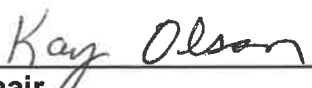
North Shore Health submitted an application to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) requesting a public interest review of our proposal to increase our licensed Critical Access Hospital bed capacity from 16 beds to 25 beds. No comments or questions have yet been received from MDH. The work is complete on the renovation of the Former Masonic Temple into employee sleep quarters, also known as the "Lodge". Mr. Goettl provided a virtual tour of the new space. Dustin Lucarelli, MD, General Surgeon affiliated with St. Luke's will establish a monthly Outreach Clinic in Grand Marais. Patients can be seen for consultations, pre and post-operative visits, and minor surgical procedures. Dr. Lucarelli's first Outreach Clinic day will be on Friday, October 8, 2021, and patients wanting an appointment will call St. Luke's Surgical Associates office in Duluth and request to be seen in Grand Marais. The Garden Party recognizing and thanking the donors and volunteers of the Serenity Garden was held on Saturday, September 11, 2021. Approximately 50 guests were welcomed to the Garden Party. The 2021 Annual Program Review/Strategic Planning meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 5 and Wednesday, October 6. As we have done for the last 18 months, we are going to pivot; the meeting will be held virtually using Zoom technology. Mary Somnis, former EDA Director, has agreed to serve as our facilitator.

Next Meeting:

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Steve Nielsen and seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl. The motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting will be held on October 21, 2021.

The regular meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.



Chair



Clerk

Financial Reports: Mr. Goettl presented the August 2021 financial statements. Patient days in the Acute Hospital were 8 days or 40.0% more than budget with inpatient revenue for the month being \$26K more than budget. Swing Bed days were 20 less than budget with revenue \$8K less than budget. Care Center days were 13 more than budget and revenue \$3K less than budget. Outpatient revenue of \$1,501K is \$137K or 8% less than budget. Net Operating Revenue of \$1,648K is 12% less than budget. Deductions from Revenue are \$93K more than budget; as a percent of Gross Patient Revenue, Contractual Adjustments are 18.5% compared to a budget of 12.7%. Total Operating Expenses of \$1,842K are 0.3% less than budget. The Net Loss for the month of August 2021 of \$134K is \$216K less than budget. The year-to-date Loss from Operations is \$911K, which is \$774K better than budget. Gross Patient Revenue is \$1,419K higher than budget year-to-date. The year-to-date Net Loss is \$457K, \$821K less than the budgeted loss. Year-to-date FTEs are 104.4, 9.1 less than budget. Days' cash on hand dropped to 234 days; the advanced payment of \$3.5M received from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in September 2020 was returned in August 2021. Mr. Goettl reviewed the 2021 forecast. The forecast this month used eight months of actual numbers and four months of budgeted numbers. Gross patient revenue has been forecasted to be 6% greater than budget with total operating expenses forecasted to remain the same as budget. It was again reminded that no COVID-19 adjustments have been made to the forecast. Steve Nielsen made a motion to accept the August 2021 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- a) Other: None.

New Business:

- a) Other: None.

Management Report:

Ms. Wraalstad recently received notice that the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation has funded North Shore Health's grant application for funds to purchase Force platforms for Physical Therapy. Patrick O'Neil, DPT, developed the concept and wrote the grant application. It is anticipated the grant notice and obligations will be received shortly. Request to purchase the Force platforms will be brought to the October 2021 Board meeting.

The Management Report for September 2021 included in the Board materials was reviewed. With the increase of COVID-19 cases in Cook County and the addition of wildfire activity in both Cook and Lake Counties, the Incident Command Team has been scaled up to the previous level. Kate Surbaugh is attending on behalf of Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) with Grace Grinager and Mike Keyport participating on behalf of Cook County. Due to the increased positivity rate, the screening table was relocated back to the Front Entrance and is staffed by the Department Leaders from 0800 to 2000. Consideration is being given to closing the doors between NSH and SMC. The SMC screener will screen the individual in the same manner as NSH and then allow access between the buildings. Thanks to SMC, NSH now has J & J vaccine to give to patients discharging from the Hospital and Emergency Department. At least three patients have received their COVID-19 vaccination during their emergency visit. Planning discussions for the administration of booster doses have started with Cook County Public Health, Grand Portage Health Services, SMC and NSH. The community transmission level reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) must now be used to determine the frequency of testing. There are now four categories regarding routine testing based upon community transmission: high, substantial, moderate and low. High and substantial transmission requires twice weekly testing. Moderate transmission requires weekly testing and low transmission does not require any testing. Cook County currently has high community transmission and it is anticipated that we will be on the twice weekly testing schedule for the foreseeable future. The White House and