



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES FOR JUNE 29, 2023

Call to Order – Kay Olson called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on June 29, 2023 at 9:05 a.m. in the Board Room and via Zoom.

Adjourn to Closed Session – Steve Frykman made a motion to adjourn into closed session pursuant to Minn. Stat. §144.581, subd. 5 which permits closure to discuss marketing activity and contracts related to the Hospital's competitive position with other health care providers that offer similar services; and Closed Session pursuant to Minn. Stat. §145.64 subd. 1(d) to discuss decisions, recommendations, deliberations or documentation of a Review Organization. Randy Wiitala seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session Summary - The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from May 17, 2023; Medical Staff Report from May 17, 2023; and Credentials Committee Report from June 21, 2023 were discussed.

Reconvene - The North Shore Health Board reconvened in regular session at 9:31 a.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Steve Frykman, Kay Olson, Mary Sanders, Randy Wiitala and Patty Winchell-Dahl (via zoom)

Members Absent:

Others Present: Kimber Wraalstad; Lori Ericson, Doug Montgomery; Greg Ruberg; Kurt Farchmin, MD (p); David Mills; Karla Pankow (p); Doug Sanders (p)

Welcome: Lori Ericson was welcomed to North Shore Health in her new role as the Chief Financial Officer.

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

Public Comments: Ms. Winchell-Dahl asked about the process for Lab orders.

Approval of Minutes for May 18, 2023 – Randy Wiitala made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 18, 2023 meeting as presented and the motion was seconded by Steve Frykman. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates:

- a. **Clinic Board:** Dr. Kurt Farchmin reviewed the email from Kate Surbaugh regarding the activities at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC). SMC held their Annual Board meeting. SMC completed their construction project that created offices for providers and patient access staff. SMC Outreach staff met with leaders in the LGBTQIA+ community to hear feedback. Dr. Farchmin also shared that Dr. Alexys Hillman will be joining SMC in August.
- b. **County Board:** Commissioner Mills shared that the Capital Improvement Plan continues to be a topic of discussion with concerns about the amount of space needed. The Commissioners have toured the Court areas and discussed the future needs of that area. He noted that Judge Cuzzo is stepping down in October. Cook County has requested \$8.7M of bonding through the State of Minnesota for the Capital Improvement projects. The construction on 5th Avenue West is progressing. Commissioner Mills has been hearing positive comments about the childcare subsidy. Childcare availability and costs continues to be an issue and topic of discussion. Commissioner Mills attended an Energy Transition Summit focused around coal communities; Taconite Harbor is considered a coal community. The EDA is beginning to have discussions with Minnesota Power and Cleveland Cliffs about options for the Taconite Harbor area. The impact to property taxes was briefly discussed. The HRA projects were reviewed; the project behind Birch Grove is proceeding, as is Switchback Flats in Grand Marais.
- c. **Board Members:** None.

Board Presentation – NSH EMS Update – Karla Pankow, NRP, CCP-C, EMS Director

Karla Pankow shared an update about the North Shore Health Ambulance. Ms. Pankow joined North Shore Health as a Paramedic in April 2022 and became the Ambulance Director in December 2023. The comparison of ambulance statistics between the first six months of 2022 and 2023 were shared:

January to June 2022

- 1.34 calls per day/168 calls for service
- 60 transfers
- Transfers: 27 BLS / 33 ALS
- 65% billable calls for service
- 35% non-billable calls for service
- 76% of billable calls actually billed

January to June 2023

- 1.53 calls per day/223 calls for service
- 65 transfers
- Transfers: 19 BLS / 46 ALS
- 68% billable calls for service
- 32% non-billable calls for service
- 100% of billable calls actually billed

Ms. Pankow shared a few accomplishments that have occurred during that six months:

- ✓ Overhauled trucks, cabinets, bags/organized, streamlined, and focused on consistency across the fleet.
- ✓ Assessed areas for cost-savings / medication changes.
- ✓ Added ALS medications that impact patient outcomes.
- ✓ Implemented in-house training program for EMTs to expand scope of practice by starting IVs and IOs.
- ✓ Partnered with lab and the ED for IV starts and lab draws in the ED/EMS.
- ✓ Partnered with infection control to become fit-testers and fit-test hospital staff.
- ✓ Led hands-on skills training for EMT students.
- ✓ Revamped charting software/platform, updated modems/data collection capabilities for cardiac monitors.

- ✓ Assessed and corrected gaps in EMS billing / Certified Ambulance Coder / Certified Ambulance Documentation Specialist.
- ✓ Hired two additional paramedics / 70% of the month is covered with ALS level of care (doesn't include ALS-RN)
- ✓ Increased charges a minimum of \$30,000 due to ALS level care.
- ✓ Two EMTs that are paramedic students, graduating this summer / one EMT starting medic school in August.
- ✓ Streamlined communications / better utilization of IAR / expanded capabilities of Aladtec platform.
- ✓ Monthly educational meetings / monthly case review meetings with Dr. Terrill.
- ✓ Revised ALS/BLS EMS Protocols / last update 2015.
- ✓ Updated EMS summer uniforms / consistency across crew.

Ms. Pankow also shared information about the great work being done by her and the ambulance crew, making a difference in the lives of patients. The Members of the Board enthusiastically thanked Ms. Pankow for sharing her information and pictures.

Financial Reports: Mr. Montgomery presented the May 2023 financial statements. The Statement of Net Position was reviewed together with Capital Assets, Accumulated Depreciation and Lease Obligations. Leases were previously considered operating leases are now classified as Lease Obligations on the Statements of Net Position. This classification impacts the Days of Cash on Hand and Debt Service Coverage. Mr. Montgomery noted the impact to the Statement of Revenues and Expenses due to this change, as there is a shift from lease and rentals to depreciation and interest expense. This month also includes the audit adjustment made as a result of the PERA Pension related entries. Gross Patient Service Revenue for the month of \$2.0M is 19.9% more than budget. Inpatient, Swing Bed and Outpatient revenue is more than budget; with Outpatient revenue of \$1.5M is \$332K or 28.1% more than budget. Total Operating Revenue for the month of \$1.7M is 21.66% more than budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$1.9M are 3.78% more than budget. The Net Loss from Operations for May 2023 of \$149K is \$67K less than budget. The financial impact of the transition to a different hospitalists model as a result of Sawtooth Mountain Clinic decision regarding inpatient coverage has not yet been incorporated in the forecast. Mr. Montgomery is currently estimating an increase of costs resulting in an additional Loss from Operations of approximately \$500,000. Once the analysis is completed, it will be incorporated into the financial forecast. Mary Sanders made a motion to accept the May 2023 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Steve Frykman and the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- a) **Other: Massage Chair** – The Massage Chair has been received but has not been installed because the room is not ready.
- Call to Artist** – With the end of the declared Public Health Emergency and the public can easily enter the building, North Shore Health hopes to have another Call to Artists for a public art display in the future.

New Business:

- a) **Affirmative Action Plan:** The current Job Group Availability/ Utilization/ Underutilization Analysis and the updated Affirmative Action Report were reviewed. Steve Frykman made a motion to accept the Affirmative Action Plan for North Shore Health. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.

b) Other: None

Management Report:

The Management Report for June 2023 included in the Board materials was reviewed.

While the Public Health Emergency (PHE) formally ended on May 11, 2023, work continues at North Shore Health to address COVID-19. Cases of COVID-19 continue to be identified in the area so North Shore Health continues to refine our policies to meet the expectations of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and provide good care for our patients and residents. Effective May 17 at 0600, the routine use of masks in the Hospital and Care Center was no longer required. Even though the mask mandate has been lifted, North Shore Health is still required to track and monitor COVID-19 trends in the community as well as grouping with other respiratory illnesses such as Flu A, B and RSV. Troy Batchelor, Hospital Director of Nursing and Jason Yuhas, Infection Control Coordinator, completed a risk assessment and are creating a matrix that determines the thresholds of respiratory illnesses in the Hospital, Care Center and community to reinstitute temporary mask use for respiratory illnesses. North Shore Health was proud to share that that we had **Zero** Resident COVID-19 cases during the Pandemic. This is a testament to the hard work done by the employees at North Shore Health and the wonderful support of the residents' families and the entire community.

The preparation for the transition to the new Hospitalists model is proceeding. Agreements have been finalized with Horizon Virtual and Wapiti Medical Group (Emergency Department Physicians) for admissions, rounding and discharges of observation patients, inpatients and swing bed patients. The equipment has been received that will enable the virtual visits and the system connectivity has been tested. Education for the Nursing Staff was provided and Dr. Severnak from Horizon Virtual served as the Hospitalist the evening of June 27 and June 28 to test the system before the official "go live" date of July 1. Dr. Ameen Taleb will serve as the Interim Emergency Department Medical Director beginning July 1 and was at North Shore Health on June 28. A special thank you was given to Dr. Kurt Farchmin. He has done an outstanding job in working to prepare North Shore Health, Horizon Virtual and the Emergency Department Physicians for the Hospitalist transition. He created a series of videos about the use and intricacies of the electronic medical record and trialed various changes to the medical record, assisted with policy development and workflow processes.

North Shore Health received our General/Professional Liability and Cyber Insurance renewal options, both of which are effective July 1, 2023. The General/Professional Liability and Umbrella expiring premium was \$24,190 and the renewal is \$25,685, an increase of \$1,495 or 6.2%. A quote was also received from Copic but was more than renewal with Coverys. It is anticipated that next renewal year, the premium will increase substantially with Coverys because of a change in their pricing model for umbrella coverage. The Cyber insurance is with CFC Underwriters, a Lloyds of London Syndicate and is renewing with an annual premium of \$19,243. This is an increase of \$2,673.89 or 16% from the current premium of \$16,568.83, compared to the increase of 59% in 2022.

North Shore Health recruited and made an offer to a Medical Technologist from the Philippines subject to receiving an H-1B visa. We are pleased to report that the H-1B visa was approved by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for Karen Limos and we expect she will be at North Shore Health by the end of July.

North Shore Home Care had their standard Federal survey and State licensing survey during the week of May 15, 2023. No deficiencies were identified during the survey. Congratulations to Traci Allen and all the Home Care employees! An on-site review was also conducted on the Nursing Assistant training program. During the survey, it was determined that North Shore Health meets all the requirements for the training program. Thank you to Jon Moe for his work on the Nursing Assistant training program.

North Shore Health has been identified as one of the Top 20 critical access hospitals in America in the patient satisfaction area based on the Chartis Rural Hospital Performance INDEX™ compiled by The Chartis Center for Rural Health. The award is presented by the National Rural Health Association.

The legislative summary from both the Minnesota Hospital Association and LeadingAge Minnesota were reviewed in detail and impact to North Shore Health was discussed.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Randy Wiitala and seconded by Steve Frykman. The motion carried unanimously. The next regular meeting will be held on Thursday, July 20, 2023.

The regular meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m. Following the adjournment, a tour of the Serenity Garden was provided.



Chair



Clerk