



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT
BOARD MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 24, 2024

Call to Order – Kay Olson called the meeting of the Cook County Hospital District Board of Directors to order on October 24, 2024 at 9:03 a.m. at Lutsen Town Hall in Lutsen, Minnesota.

Recess to Closed Session – Patty Winchell-Dahl made a motion to recess into closed session permitted pursuant to Minn. Stat. §145.64 subd. 1(d) to discuss decisions, recommendations, deliberations or documentation of a Review Organization; pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, subd. 2 to discuss not public medical data. Randy Wiitala seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session Summary – The Quality Improvement/Peer Review Report from September 18, 2024, the Medical Staff Report from September 18, 2024 and the October 16, 2024 Credentials Committee Report were discussed.

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

Roll Call

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

Members Absent: Steve Frykman

Others Present: Kimber Wraalstad, Troy Batchelor, Michele Silence, Nicole Siegner, Jason Yuhas, Greg Ruberg, Todd Ford, Doug Sanders, Milan Schmidt and Sam Usem

Public Comments: None.

Approval of Minutes for September 11, 2024 and September 26, 2024 – Mary Sanders made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 11, 2024 and September 26, 2024 meetings as presented and the motion was seconded by Randy Wiitala. The motion carried unanimously.

Updates:

Clinic Board: Unable to attend the meeting, Kate Surbaugh shared a written summary of activities at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC). Sawtooth Mountain Clinic shared they recently received a grant award from HRSA to support expansion of behavioral health services. The Clinic is also providing influenza and COVID vaccination events both at the Clinic and around the County.

Board Presentation – HCAHPS Presentation – Jason Yuhas, Infection Control/Quality Improvement Coordinator

Jason Yuhas, Infection Control/Quality Improvement Coordinator, shared information regarding Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) program. HCAHPS is the first national, standardized, publically reported survey of patient's perspectives of hospital care. It is a standardized survey of 29 questions mailed to hospital patients to assess and their care and hospital stay. North Shore Health sends surveys to all Inpatients, Observation patients and Swing Bed patients while other hospitals tend to send HCAHPS surveys to only a portion of their patients (mailed or digital). HCAHPS data at North Shore Health is compiled internally by Kathy Bernier, Heidi Fagerman and Jason Yuhas rather than a third party service. This survey data is a key quality indicator to North Shore Health's receiving the national "20 Top Critical Access Hospitals in Patient Satisfaction". Mr. Yuhas shared the detailed responses that have been received for the survey questions from 2021 through September 2024 with comparisons to the national and state averages.

Financial Reports: Nicole Siegner, interim Chief Financial Officer, presented the September 2024 financial statements. There was a Loss from Operations for the month of -\$193K, compared to the budgeted Income from Operations of \$317K. The Statement of Net Position, Statement of Revenues and Expenses and Changes in Net Position were reviewed. Gross Patient Service Revenue of \$2.288M for the month of September was 19% less than budget. Revenues from all areas, (Inpatient, Outpatient Swing Bed, Care Center and Home Care) were below budget for the month. Contractual Adjustments and Other Deductions were \$391K compared to the budget of \$459K. Total Operating Revenue for the month was \$1.900M, 20.0% less than budget. Total Operating Expenses of \$2.093M were 2.0% more than budget. The days cash on hand, debt service coverage ratio, current ratio and payer mix were reviewed by Ms. Siegner. Randy Wiitala made a motion to accept the September 2024 financial statements. The motion was seconded by Patty Winchell-Dahl and the motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

- a) **Stroudwater Strategic Financial Operational Assessment Review:** Kimber Wraalstad shared the eleven priority areas identified during the Action Planning meeting with the North Shore Health Team and Eric Shell from Stroudwater:
- Improved alignment with Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC)
 - Increase swing bed census
 - Increase hospital admissions from the ED
 - Increase census and case mix in care center
 - Expand patient satisfaction surveys to other areas (ED, etc.) and promote quality scores in the community
 - Care center bed conversion/Visiting Nurse Service payment

- Develop pricing strategy and CDM review
- Evaluate recruiting and retention opportunities, to include housing
- Expand rehab services
- Evaluate telehealth opportunities for specialties
- Implement best practice management accounting

The action steps and target dates were reviewed in detail. The Board Members agreed with the identification of the priority items.

b) Other: None.

New Business:

a) Board Policies: The revised Conflicts of Interest Policy – Board of Directors, Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Statement and Board Member Confidentiality Agreement were reviewed. A motion to adopt the revisions to the Conflicts of Interest Policy – Board of Directors, Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Statement and Board Member Confidentiality Agreement was made by Patty Winchell-Dahl. The motion was seconded by Mary Sanders and the motion carried unanimously.

b) Other: None.

Management Report:

The Management Report for October 2024 included in the Board materials was reviewed. The certification survey for the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) and Swing Bed services at North Shore Health occurred during the week of October 14, 2024. The last Hospital survey was completed in December 2016. A Statement of Deficiencies from this survey is expected sometime in the next three weeks. A Plan of Correction will then be developed and submitted. North Shore Health also received a Life Safety Code (LSC) Comparative Survey from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on Tuesday, September 17, 2024. As a result of that survey, four Life Safety code tags were received. While the Fire Marshal was on-site for the CAH survey, he corrected the Life Safety Code tags he identified during his August survey and the tags cited during the CMS comparative survey. North Shore Health also had an on-site visit of the Nurse Aide Training Program and the on-site testing program on August 20, 2024. There were no deficiencies noted at that time and both programs are approved until the next on-site survey is completed. Sharon Berglund, Department Manager for Rehabilitation Services, has retired from North Shore Health effective September 30, 2024. Sharon had been with North Shore Health since April 16, 1984, she had over 40 years of service with North Shore Health! While we thank Sharon for her service and wish her well, we are excited to share the selection of Patrick O’Neil, DPT, as the new Rehabilitation Director for North Shore Health. Patrick has been a Physical Therapist at North Shore Health since February 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Patrick led the implementation of Telehealth for rehabilitation services; a program that continues today. Patrick also wrote the successful grant application to the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation for the acquisition of the Force Platform equipment to assist with balance analysis. North Shore Health Radiology will be transitioning to a new PACS (picture archiving and communication system) at the end of 2024 and beginning of 2025. Our long time PACS through Consulting Radiologists, Ltd. (CRL) suffered a data breach in February 2024. After a brief attempt to reestablish their services, CRL decided to close this aspect of their business necessitating the search for a new PACS. After researching several companies, we made the decision to go with Konica Minolta Symmetry PACS. We will be


transitioning to the new system now through the beginning of the year with the goal of going live with the new system in January 2025. The Laboratory at North Shore Health has completed several months of installation and result comparisons work for the new Ortho Clinical Vitros 5600 (Vitros) analyzer and went "live" on October 1, 2024. The Vitros is an integrated system that replaces two older smaller chemistry analyzers. LeadingAge MN has joined with 20 other affiliated organizations, together representing hundreds of not-for-profit aging services providers across the country, in a lawsuit to overturn the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) staffing mandate. The suit seeks a preliminary injunction in an effort to overturn the mandate. LeadingAge MN acknowledges that pursuing legal action against this mandate is a significant and rare action and was assessed with the utmost care and consideration. North Shore Health received the opportunity to participate in the Summer Health Care Internship Program (SHCIP) sponsored by the Minnesota Hospital Association and Minnesota Department of Health. We are excited to share that we had two CHCIP interns - Bear Foster and Ben Obinger. Bear is a High School student who hopes to become a Registered Nurse. Ben is enrolled at the University of Minnesota Duluth and hopes to become a Physician. It is influenza vaccination time again! North Shore Health will continue to make flu shots available to all our employees at no charge. As of October 16, 2024, 37 employees have received their influenza vaccination and 15 employees have received their COVID vaccination. Care Center residents are scheduled to receive their influenza vaccination the week of October 21. The key stakeholder and focus group interviews with representatives from Rural Health Innovations (RHI) as part of the Health Care Needs Assessment sponsored by North Shore Health and Sawtooth Mountain Clinic have been completed. Rhonda Barcus and Precious Fritz served as the facilitators from RHI. They stated that over the four different locations combined, 50 people participated in the focus groups. This is the largest number they have had participate in any of the focus groups they have conducted. In addition, they have completed eight key informant interviews. Both Rhonda and Precious commented that the participants were engaged and generally came with an attitude of problem solving and collaboration. It is their intention to have the report completed by the end of the year. They will then meet with both Sawtooth Mountain Clinic and North Shore Health to translate the needs assessment findings into action steps.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Patty Winchell-Dahl and seconded by Randy Wiitala.

The next regular meeting will be held on November 21, 2024 in the Board Room at North Shore Health.

The regular meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.



Chair



Clerk