

RiverStone Health
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2026

Jim Harris Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

Members Present: Spencer Anderson; Brent Cromley; Debbie Davis (virtual); Michael Dennis; John Dorr; Jim Harris; Erin Lambert; Lionel Tapia (virtual)

Members Absent: Carol Beam; Mark Morse; Steve Wahrlich; Casey Wheeler; Derek Yeager

Staff Present: Jon Forte, President & CEO / Health Officer; Bob Janicek, Chief Integration Officer; Megan Littlefield, Chief Medical Officer; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; Eric Owen – Chief Operating Officer; Shanna Zier, Chief Financial Officer

Guests Present: Stewart Kirkpatrick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck; Jeana Lervick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Harris called the January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:03 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Harris opened the floor for public comment. Hearing none, he proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

APPROVAL

December 4, 2025 BOH Meeting Minutes: Chairperson Harris requested a motion to approve the minutes (copy on file) of the October 23, 2025 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

Upon a motion duly made (Dennis), seconded (Dorr), and unanimously carried, it was

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2025 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED.

January 20, 2026 Joint Boards Meeting: Chairperson Harris requested a motion to approve the minutes (copy on file) of the January 20, 2026 Joint Boards Meeting that were previously distributed in the January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

Upon a motion duly made (Dorr), seconded (Dennis), and unanimously carried, it was

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2026 JOINT BOARDS MEETING AS PRESENTED.

CEO / HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

Jon Forte discussed highlights and provided updates on items discussed in the January 2026 CEO “H.E.L.P” (Health, Education, Leadership, Protection) report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Montana DPHHS recently announced its successful approval of application for funding through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP). \$233 million will be distributed to stabilize and modernize rural health care delivery throughout Montana. RiverStone Health will monitor opportunities to access these funds as the State works to develop its RHTP fund distribution plan.
- RiverStone Health’s Healthcare for the Homeless (HCH) clinic will open a new clinic at the Montana Rescue Mission in early February. The HCH clinic will operate five days per week, expanding access to care for unhoused individuals.
- The annual Point-in-Time Count to assess the local unhoused population is scheduled for next Thursday.
- We have received notification from Flying Horse Communications, the organization’s contracted marketing firm, that they will be closing permanently. We are working to ensure we receive all design, marketing, video, and audio materials the agency created for us since our relationship began in 2007.
- The search for a new Communications and Marketing Director is underway; we are completing second round interviews this week and early next week and hope to have the role filled soon.
- Jon reported that as of January 1, 2026, RiverStone Health began enforcing the longstanding Montana Food Code prohibition on the sale of kratom-containing food and beverages in licensed food establishments.
- Jon announced that value-based care efforts in the clinic are expected to generate an estimated \$200,000 incentive payment through Medicare’s Shared Savings Program (MSSP). The MSSP focuses on preventive care, better care coordination, and managing chronic illnesses to reduce unnecessary costs.
- RiverStone Health’s search for a Chief People Officer (CPO) continues with two candidates scheduled for in-person interviews in the next week. We hope to select a candidate and make an offer as soon as possible.

- Technology enhancements supporting online scheduling have proven to be successful. Online scheduling will be expanded this year to include more services as we continue to improve access to care for our patients.
- On January 5, a fiber optic cable failure by the organization's primary internet and phone provider disrupted services. Computer systems transitioned smoothly to backups, but phone systems were down for about 24 hours until staff deployed alternate devices and restored full service the next day, resulting in minimal impact to access to care.
- The organization is transitioning from contracted security services to an in-house model, with John Jones assuming the role of Campus Navigator and Security/Safety Manager. This change is intended to enhance oversight, service quality, and overall campus safety, with planned physical safety improvements, including the elimination of the Colonial Building.
- Progress toward acquiring the Colonial property is ongoing, with plans to proceed in early February once the property is secured and the purchase agreement is finalized.
- Beginning in February, Jon will assume Vice Chair roles for both the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Legislative Committee and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education Committee.
- Recognizing the strong connection between early literacy and long-term community health and safety outcomes, RiverStone Health will serve as the lead sponsoring agency for United We Read over the next three years, supporting childhood literacy in local schools. Board members are invited to volunteer on March 6, 2026, to read to students in area schools.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT

Dr. Megan Littlefield provided a verbal report on activity in the CHC.

- Provider recruitment is ongoing with one nurse practitioner hired this month while another resigned. Recruitment continues for two mid-level provider vacancies.
- Montana Family Medicine Residency (MFMR) interviews concluded with over 100 candidates interviewed for local and rural track positions. Rank lists will be submitted soon, with match results anticipated in March.
- Medical assistant staffing has improved but remains short staffed by approximately five positions; internal training programs for MAs, dental assistants, and public health roles are being developed to strengthen the workforce pipeline.
- Recruitment is underway for a new one-year Advanced Practice Provider (APP) residency program. The structured residency program for physician assistants and nurse practitioners will include continuity clinic work, specialty rotations, inpatient experience, and didactic training. Two new graduates will be accepted annually.
- The spirometry clinic has reopened, improving patient access to pulmonary function testing previously referred to the hospital.

- A new automated scheduling system (“Lightning Bolt”) for providers and clinic staff is being implemented to streamline clinic operations.
- Dr. Littlefield addressed recent national immunization guideline changes, expressing concern about the process and noting the organization will continue to follow American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations while supporting informed patient decision-making.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Spencer Anderson and Shanna Zier provided an overview of the January 22, 2026 finance committee narrative, the October 2025 RiverStone Health financial statements and the November 2025 RiverStone Health financial statements (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting packet.

Chairperson Harris requested motions to accept the January 22, 2026 finance committee narrative, and the October 2025 RiverStone Health financial statements and November 2025 RiverStone Health financial statements.

MOTION

Upon a motion duly made (Anderson), seconded (Cromley), and unanimously carried, it was

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 22, 2026 FINANCE COMMITTEE NARRATIVE, THE OCTOBER 2025 RSH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND THE NOVEMBER 2025 RSH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, AS PRESENTED.

SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

No report. There was no Safety and Quality Committee meeting held during the month of January 2026.

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

There was no Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting held during the month of January 2026.

Jon Forte provided information related to a federal consolidated appropriations bill for FY26 released by the U.S. House that proposes \$116.6 billion in funding for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The measure extends funding for key public health programs and reflects bipartisan rejection of proposed cuts and restructuring of public health agencies. If enacted, HHS would be required to consult with congressional committees before terminating grants and to provide advance notice of changes to federal payment systems. The proposal includes level funding for the CDC and SAMHSA, increased funding for HRSA, potential increases for teaching health centers, and a significant mandatory funding increase for community health centers, the largest in more than a decade, while discretionary funding would continue. Jon reported that RiverStone Health will continue advocacy efforts in support of the bill and coordination with the congressional delegation. Jon noted that the proposed funding applies prospectively and does not restore previously cancelled grants.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the December 4, 2025 meeting notes (copy on file) that were previously distributed in the January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

Upon a motion duly made (Dorr), seconded (Anderson), and unanimously carried, it was

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE DECEMBER 4, 2025 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

Jon noted that senior leadership will conduct an internal strategic planning and goal-setting session with cross-department directors in early March, after which input will be solicited from Board members to help guide organizational priorities. Future planning discussions will involve both the Clinic Board and the Board of Health to align clinical and systemwide strategies.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Kratom Compliance Enforcement: Melissa Henderson, Senior Director - Community Health and Safety Division – PHS, provided an update on enforcement of laws prohibiting the sale of kratom products in licensed retail food establishments.

Melissa reported that over the past year RiverStone Health's Public Health Services staff conducted extensive community outreach focused on education, coordination with legal counsel and state partners, and preparation for enforcement. She noted that some businesses voluntarily removed products during this period. Courtesy letters were sent in late December informing establishments that enforcement would begin January 1 and that kratom products and related promotions must be removed.

Inspections now cite all applicable food code violations, and noncompliant establishments follow a progressive enforcement process that may include reinspection, fines, injunction through the county attorney, and potential license cancellation by the state. Enforcement action is currently underway for one establishment, with legal proceedings expected to take several months. Enforcement applies to licensed food establishments, while regulatory authority over other retail settings remains unclear and may involve additional state agencies. Melissa emphasized that the goal is compliance rather than business closure, noting positive community feedback, with other health departments viewing the effort as a potential statewide model.

Melissa noted reports of a significant increase in patients presenting with kratom dependence, particularly among young individuals, underscoring concerns about addiction risks, health effects, amid limited research data. She added that Public Health, clinical, and regulatory teams are collaborating to monitor impacts, improve documentation, and increase community awareness of the dangers associated with kratom dependence.

2026 Board of Health Meeting Schedule: Chairperson Harris requested a motion to approve the proposed 2026 Board of Health meeting calendar (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

Upon a motion duly made (Dorr), seconded (Dennis), and unanimously carried, it was

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED 2026 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING CALENDAR AS PRESENTED

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The January 22, 2026 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 9:03 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Spencer Anderson
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2026\minutes\1.22.26 BOH Minutes