

**RiverStone Health**  
**Board of Health Meeting Minutes**  
**January 25, 2024**

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John Dorr, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

**Members Present:** John Dorr - via phone; Spencer Anderson; Carol Beam; Brent Cromley; Debbie Davis; Michael Dennis; Anne Giuliano; Jim Harris; Don Jones; Bea Ann Melichar; Lionel Tapia-via phone; Casey Wheeler

**Members Absent:** Steve Wahrlich; K.C. Williams

**Staff Present:** Kandra Diefenderfer, Senior Director, Homecare and Hospice; Jon Forte, President & CEO; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; Amy Moser Senior Director of Compliance and Risk Management; Eric Owen, Vice-President of Public Health and Clinical Services; Barbara Schneeman, Vice President, Communication & Public Affairs / Public Information Officer / RiverStone Health Foundation Executive Director; Shanna Zier, Chief Financial Officer

**Guests Present:** Stewart Kirkpatrick, Legal Counsel – Crowley Fleck; Jeana Lervick, Legal Counsel – Crowley Fleck; Steve Williams, In-house Counsel - Yellowstone County Attorney's Office

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Dorr called the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:01 AM.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairperson Dorr invited members of the public to address the Board. Upon hearing no comment, Chairperson Dorr proceeded to the next agenda item.

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**APPROVAL**

**December 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes:** Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **MINUTES** (copy on file) of the December 7, 2023 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

**M O T I O N**

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

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 7, 2023, BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## CEO REPORT

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Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO “HELP” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- January 31 marks the end of the 10-month Medicaid redetermination process that began last April in Montana. Prior to the start of the redetermination process, Montana was home to 330,000 Medicaid enrollees. Latest numbers show over 100,000 Montanans have lost coverage. The State has also experienced an 18.5% drop in enrollment for children, the fourth highest in the nation. Jon noted that RiverStone Health continues to experience negative financial impacts from a significant decrease in the number of Medicaid covered patient visits in the CHC.
- RiverStone Health’s Care Management team has worked with 4000 RiverStone Health patients to help process redetermination paperwork, enroll in marketplace coverage, or another health insurance plan.
- On January 22, 2023, John Felton was awarded the 2023 CHAMPS (Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States) Stanley J. Brasher Legacy Award. The award was created to honor individuals who have dedicated their careers to solving the problems of health, poverty, and human rights and who have contributed toward the mission and recognition of community and migrant health centers in the Mountain / Plains States.
- RiverStone Health ended 2023 with a turnover rate of 12.88%, which was slightly lower than the 2022 turnover rate of 13.55%, and well below the industry average of 33.5%.
- Jon appointed Kelly Amidei, Director of Organization Innovation, and Amy Moser, Senior Director of Compliance and Risk Management as the new staff representatives for the joint boards Safety & Quality Committee. Kelly and Amy will take the lead to improve focus on safety and quality improvement initiatives.
- RiverStone Health, in partnership with Shriners Hospital will hold a free, Children’s Health Screening Clinic on Saturday, February 3 from 9am to 12pm. Call 406.259.4384 to schedule an appointment.
- The Montana Healthcare Foundation (MHF) has contacted RiverStone Health regarding a funding opportunity through its School-Based Health Initiative grant to support expanded school-based health services in Billings School District 2. School District 2 is very interested in expanding our partnership based on positive experience with our current school-based health centers.
- RiverStone Health’s community health centers in Billings, Worden, Joliet, and Bridger, saw an increase of nearly 6,000 medical encounters and 500 more behavioral health encounters in 2023 compared to 2022. The CHC also reached their goal of completing 20% of Medicare Annual Wellness Visits (AWVs) to reach the Medicare Shared Savings Plan goal for 2023.
- 140 candidates were interviewed during the Montana Family Medicine Residency’s (MFMR) Interview season. The MFMR gained an additional intern when a resident transferred from a surgical residency program to the MFMR, bringing the total number to nine for the first-year class that began in June 2023.

- RiverStone Health kicked-off the new year with a series of Resiliency Skills Trainings as part of our continued focus on workforce well-being and mindfulness. Sessions occur weekly in January and are staggered throughout the day to allow for participation across the organization.
- On January 16th, RiverStone Health partnered with the Mental Health Center, Billings Urban Indian and Wellness Center, Billings School District 2, Gratitude in Action, Substance Abuse Connect and several other community organizations, to educate The Billings City Council on the importance of public health in crime prevention.
- RiverStone Health has hired Sara Brockel as Grants Program Manager. Sarah is familiar with the healthcare environment and comes to us from the Billings Clinic Foundation where she served as a grant writer.
- Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (LFSRM) is starting a refugee resettlement program in Billings. RiverStone Health will partner with LFSRM to offer required medical services and ideally become the patient centered medical home for these families.
- The Montana Opioid Abatement Trust Fund has released a request for proposals. RiverStone Health is coordinating with a multitude of community partners to determine how we can all collaborate and ensure a robust continuum of services. Eric Owen is serving as the chair for the regional committee which will make final recommendations to the state advisory committee for funding.

Jon provided a brief report of health officer related activity in Yellowstone County:

- For the first week of January 2024, COVID-19 hospital admissions have decreased at both Billings hospitals, however the total number of infections increased from 131 to 164 cases.
- Influenza hospitalizations increased 82% in the new year, with a total of 31 reported. Of the positive samples tested in Montana, 496 (80.8%) were influenza A, and 118 (19.2%) were influenza B. Of the subtyped influenza A viruses, 35 were influenza A(H1N1), and 28 were influenza A(H3).
- Yellowstone County experienced a considerable uptick in chlamydia cases during the first week of January. Cases increased from 5 to 17, resulting in a 240% increase.

## **CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT**

Jon Forte provided highlights on behalf of Megan Littlefield, of the Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) was previously distributed in the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Dr. Littlefield is attending the National Conference for Child Maltreatment in San Diego this week. The conference is focused on supporting family development and prevention strategies to avoid child abuse and child maltreatment.
- Physician recruitment: Targeting outreach efforts to physicians in Midwest and Mountain states. Outreach has included postcard campaigns, emails, Linked-in and Facebook.
- We continue to have multiple faculty positions posted. Cynthia Brewer DO is starting this month on a PRN basis. Jim Guyer, MD and David Goodwin, MD will also be available on a PRN basis.

- Sharon Mulvehill MD will be retiring 2/28/24. Dr. Mulvehill will potentially consider PRN work at some point in the future.
- We are working on the development of an APP residency. Next steps include identifying funding sources to help offset administrative costs for set up and operation of the program.
- The MFMR Board Strategic Meeting will be held on February 15th.
- We have engaged with the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) for de-escalation training. Five staff members attended a train the trainer program. The team of five will be training our whole organization in de-escalation and prevention of disruptive behavior techniques with a 3-tiered training program which will be assigned based on job role. The plan is to have the whole organization trained by the fourth quarter of this year.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the December 28, 2023 joint finance committee meeting notes, the January 18, 2024 meeting notes and the November 2023 financial statements (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet. Finance Committee Chair Jim Harris provided a brief overview of the financial statements and answered Board member questions.

### **MOTION**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER 28, 2023, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED**

### **MOTION**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 18, 2024, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED**

### **MOTION**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED**

## **SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE**

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the January 9, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet. Anne Giuliano Chairperson of the Committee provided an overview of the meeting.

### **MOTION**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE JANUARY 9, 2024  
SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chairperson Dorr noted that there was no meeting held in January 2024 and asked Committee Chairperson Bea Ann Melchar and Barbara Schneeman for any updates or comments regarding the Committee's work. Barbara provided the following updates:

- We continue to monitor the legislative interim process.
- Billings hosted the House Bill 872 Behavioral Health for Future Generations Commission meeting in Billings, January 11 and 12. Kristen Bonner participated on a prevention panel to talk specifically about home visiting and the opportunity for prevention at the very earliest stage.
- The next meeting is going to be in Missoula on Tuesday, March 5. Barbara is working to get Megan Littlefield on a panel to talk about the integration between behavioral health and primary care, and the importance of the primary care physicians in terms of behavioral health from this standpoint.
- The Children and Families Health Services legislative interim committee met on January 18.

## **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Chairperson Dorr provided an overview of Committee activity and requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the December 7, 2023 meeting that were previously distributed in the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **MOTION**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE DECEMBER 7, 2023  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**2024 Strategic Plan Overview:** Jon Forte, CEO and President / Yellowstone County Health Officer provided an overview of RiverStone Health's 2024 Strategic Plan (presentation on file).

Jon discussed RiverStone Health's vision, *to enrich our community by intentionally identifying health, human service, or educational needs, and find ways to meet those needs*. Jon added that we achieve RiverStone Health's vision by following the guideline of our overall mission, *to Improve Life, Health and Safety*, that is built on four core pillars, H.E.L.P, an acronym for the four strategic priorities - *Health, Education, Leadership and Protection*, that support RiverStone Health's mission, vision, and values, to ensure RiverStone Health enriches our community by intentionally identifying health, human service, or educational needs, and find ways to meet those needs. We do all of this on a foundation of *Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* and our core organizational values of *Stewardship, Excellence, Respect, Vision, Integrity, Customer focus, and Evolving*. Jon added that the strategic plan will be shared with RiverStone Health's departments and programs to establish goals and objectives that can be measured.

**Medicaid Expansion Reauthorization Timeline:** Barbara Schneeman, Vice President, Communication & Public Affairs / Public Information Officer provided an overview of the Medicaid Expansion Reauthorization Timeline (presentation on file), a working plan to proactively support the reauthorization of Medicaid expansion in Montana.

Barbara discussed key dates of the timeline that outlines activity by quarter that was designed to advocate and achieve reauthorization of Medicaid expansion. Barbara noted that next steps include sending a Medicaid Expansion Resolution to the Public Health Policy Development Committee for recommendation of support by the Board of Health and CHC Board.

## **MEETING SCHEDULE**

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The next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, February 22, 2024 beginning at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

## **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

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The January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

James D. Harris  
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte  
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2023\minutes\1.25.24