

RiverStone Health
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2024

John Dorr, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

Members Present: John Dorr; Spencer Anderson; Brent Cromley; Debbie Davis; Michael Dennis; Anne Giuliano; Jim Harris; Don Jones; Bea Ann Melichar; Lionel Tapia

Members Absent: Carol Beam; Anne Giuliano; Steve Wahrlich; Casey Wheeler

Staff Present: Jon Forte, President & CEO / Health Officer; Jeff Hert, Vice - President Human Resources; Bob Janicek, Chief Information Officer; Megan Littlefield, Chief Medical Officer; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; Eric Owen, Vice-President of Public Health, and Clinical Services; Shanna Zier, Chief Financial Officer

Guests Present: Jeana Lervick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck; Derek Yeager – Yellowstone County DES Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dorr called the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:00 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Dorr invited members of the public to address the Board. Upon hearing no comment, Chairperson Dorr asked Derek Yeager, Yellowstone County’s new DES Director, to introduce himself to the Board. Board members congratulated Derek on his new role and welcomed him to the Board of Health meeting.

APPROVAL

September 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes: Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **MINUTES** (copy on file) of the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2024, BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED

CEO / HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO “HELP” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- The *Billings Gazette* featured Dr. Shae Saunders in an article in their Wednesday, October 16, 2024 edition highlighting the importance of safe firearm storage. Firearms, particularly unsecured guns, were the leading cause of death in children across 25 states according to data published in the September 2024 issue of *JAMA Pediatrics*. RiverStone Health is offering free gun locks, available to anyone, to promote firearm safety and education in our community.
- RiverStone Health’s new School Based Health Center (SBHC) at Billings Senior High School is on track to open November 3, 2024. The new SBHC was made possible through grant funding received from the Montana Healthcare Foundation.
- The sublease for the space housing RiverStone Health's Joliet clinic is ending. A new temporary location has been secured, and the clinic will relocate from the Joliet Community Center to the temporary site on Highway 212. Minor renovations will be completed before equipment is moved and the clinic opens at its new location. The search for a permanent site to build a new clinic remains ongoing.
- Outreach efforts to Medicaid patients who have lost coverage are ongoing. The number of attributed Medicaid patients has fluctuated, with a decrease of 69 identified between August and September, compared to a previously reported larger figure. This information was updated when an error in data reported by Montana DPHHS was identified.
- Jon Forte moderated a fireside chat with Rep. Ed Buttrey (R-Great Falls), the original sponsor of Senate Bill 405 - The Montana Health and Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) Act, a Medicaid expansion program that provides low-cost health insurance for people who cannot get coverage through regular Medicaid or private insurance. The conversation was a fantastic opportunity to share the benefits of Medicaid expansion including \$28 Million in state budget savings, and a nearly 60% decrease in uncompensated care costs for Montana hospitals.
- RiverStone Health is actively engaged with several community partners and the Montana Primary Care Association (MPCA) to explore funding opportunities to help create an Advanced Practice Provider (APP) residency program for nurse practitioners and physician assistants.
- The Rocky Mountain Oral Health Network (RoMoNoH) project, aimed at implementing integrated oral health into medical clinics, concluded on August 30, 2024. RiverStone Health participated in the 4-year grant-funded project where 54% of children aged 0-40 months received preventive oral health services as part of their medical visits. Additionally, all medical staff received training in fluoride application and oral health best practices.
- Aggression against healthcare workers remains a significant concern. To address this issue, 99% of RiverStone Health staff have completed de-escalation training through a program created by the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI).
- RiverStone Health delivered a presentation to the Breakfast Exchange Club of Billings on Friday, October 18, 2024, to provide an overview of our KidConnect Program and its services within our clinic, public health, and family health departments. After the presentation we invited the club to

consider donating to the RiverStone Health Foundation in support of these vital programs which aim to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of youth in our community.

- RiverStone Health is an active partner in the Substance Abuse Connect Coalition and Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone County. We are working to improve outreach and educate the community about the 988 and 211 hotline numbers that are available 24/7 free of charge for anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide, mental health crisis, or in need of social support services.
- Wal-Mart and Blue Cross Blue Shield hosted Baby Days events from September 25 to 30, 2024, at locations in Laurel, West Billings, and Billings Heights. RiverStone Health staff were on-site to provide educational and clinical support. Additionally, we were able to enroll over 70 individuals in Medicaid.
- RiverStone Health will receive over \$250,000 in donated supplies from Wal-Mart, including baby shampoo and body wash, lotion, and prenatal vitamins. While many of these supplies will be kept for distribution to our own patients and clients, surplus supplies will be shared with local community partners, shelters, OB-GYN offices, and our partner Community Health Centers across the state.
- The Healthy By Design Coalition, hosted at RiverStone Health in partnership with our two local hospitals, is continuing its collective impact educational series on November 7, from 8:30 am – 10 am at the United Way of Yellowstone County. The program seeks to build stronger coalitions and mutually beneficial programs.
- A new transportation service is available for all RiverStone Health patients over the age of 65. The Montana Area II Agency on Aging and GoGoGrandparent are teaming up to provide free rides and deliveries to older adults in Fergus and Yellowstone Counties. The program allows for one-way rides up to 60 miles per ride, free grocery deliveries, and free pharmacy deliveries. Interested seniors should call 1-855-755-1777 for more information.
- On October 22, RiverStone Health offered free blood lead testing. Lead exposure is a significant health risk that can negatively affect childhood development.

Jon provided a report on Health Officer-related activity in Yellowstone County:

- Cases of influenza reported in Yellowstone County remain low. Reports from the CDC expect a similar or lower peak number of combined hospitalizations from COVID-19, influenza, and RSV compared to last year.
- The number of COVID-19 cases in Yellowstone County continues to decrease. So far in 2024, there have been 14,500 confirmed cases, with 950 hospitalizations, and 58 reported deaths.
- Several cases of pertussis (whooping cough) have been reported in Yellowstone County. A total of 45 pertussis cases have been reported in Montana in 2024, with 28 of those cases occurring since September 1, 2024.
- Yellowstone County has reported 13 cases of E. coli, five of which are linked to a national outbreak associated with a specific menu item from a well-known fast-food restaurant chain.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT

Megan Littlefield provided updates on activity in the CHC and the Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Recruiting efforts are underway for the Montana Family Medicine Residency (MFMR) Class of 2028. 130 interviews have been scheduled beginning in November.
- Working to increase medical encounters in the clinic; we continue to see the number of visits trending upward.
- We continue to struggle with ongoing staffing issues and provider coverage.
- Working to decrease patient no-show rates and fill provider schedules to capacity.
- We are in the process of developing a medical clinic for the Child Advocacy Center and have already identified several providers. However, we still need to recruit 1-2 more. Our reaccreditation review was marked as "pending" due to the lack of a clear pathway for forensic medical evaluation, which has been unresolved since July 2023.
- We are engaging in discussions about the need for a dedicated center for child abuse prevention and exploring how to effectively coordinate a team of providers who are already working in this field.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Finance Committee Chair Jim Harris provided an overview of the October 17, 2024 finance committee meeting, and the August 2024 financial statements. (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the September 19, 2024 finance committee meeting notes and the July 2024 financial statements.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 17, 2024, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED

SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Lionel Tapia, Committee Chair, provided an overview of Committee activity and the October 1, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the October 1, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE OCTOBER 1, 2024 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

There was no meeting held during the month of October. The Committee generally meets on the first Tuesday of the month, however the next meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, November 12, 2024 due to a conflict with Election Day falling on the first Tuesday of November.

Eric Owen and Jon Forte provided information and answered Board member questions on legislative priorities included in the 2025 Public Policy Agenda, which was previously approved by the Board of Health at its May 23, 2024 meeting. Legislative priority topics discussed included public health infrastructure funding, promoting vaccines, and sustainable CHC funding.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Dorr provided an overview of Committee activity and requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the September 26, 2024 meeting that were previously distributed in the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Dorr provided an overview of Committee activity, and the September 26, 2024 meeting. Chairperson Dorr briefly discussed the Board and Board member assessment tools that were distributed to Board members (copies on file) for completion and encouraged Board members who had not yet completed them to do so.

Chairperson Dorr and requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the September 26, 2024 meeting that were previously distributed in the October 24, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2024 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

OLD BUSINESS

No old business discussed

NEW BUSINESS

No new business discussed

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:41 A.M. Chairperson Dorr announced that the Board would go into executive session to discuss personnel matters for which the individual's right to privacy supersedes the public's right to know. All staff and guests were excused from the executive session.

Chairperson Dorr ended the executive session at 8:58 AM and the Board returned to regular session.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Health will be held on Thursday, December 5, 2024, starting at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The October 24, 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\2024\minutes\10.24.24 BOH Minutes