

RiverStone Health
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2023

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; Lionel Tapia; Steve Wahrlich – Via phone; Casey Wheeler

Members Absent: Carol Beam; Bea Ann Melichar; K.C. Williams

Staff Present: Kandra Diefenderfer, Senior Director, Homecare and Hospice; John Felton, Yellowstone County Health Officer; Jon Forte, President & CEO; Megan Littlefield, Chief Medical Officer; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; 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; Rhianna Tretin, AHEC Program Director; Shanna Zier, Interim 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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dorr called the October 26, 2023 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 proceeded to the next agenda item.

APPROVAL

September 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes: Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **MINUTES** (copy on file) of the September 28, 2023 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED

CEO REPORT

Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO “HELP” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

- As Montana’s Medicaid redetermination process continues, RiverStone Health is beginning to see the negative impacts of a significant decrease in the number of Medicaid covered patient visits in the CHC. As of September 2023, 1,785 RiverStone Health patients have lost Medicaid coverage.
- Open enrollment through the Health Insurance Marketplace (www.healthcare.gov) begins on November 1, 2023. Open enrollment runs through Jan. 15, however, for coverage to begin on January 1, 2024, individuals must enroll by Dec. 15, 2023. Information regarding coverage options and local enrollment assistance is available through the Cover Montana website – covermt.org.
- On October 11, 2023, RiverStone Health hosted a Women’s Health Fair in the main clinic. The event featured interactive exhibits, health information, cancer screening, help with insurance and much more.
- The Montana Family Medicine Residency Program will begin interviewing candidates at the end of October for the class of family medicine residents who will start July 1, 2024.
- The RiverStone Health Clinic is currently recruiting active and enrolled patients for our first Patient Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC will be comprised of a diverse group of individuals who will provide personal insight and valuable feedback, from their perspective, on the patient care experience. Feedback will be used to help improve patient-centered care and meet the healthcare needs of our patients. We hope to hold a first meeting of the PAC by the end of this year.
- RiverStone Health is partnering with Rimrock Foundation on application of a grant to attend the National Council for Mental Wellbeing’s Behavioral Health Training Institute (BHITI) to enhance mental health and substance use treatment in Yellowstone County. If awarded, individuals from Rimrock and RiverStone Health will attend the National Conference on Mental Wellbeing and participate in an 8-month training program with up to 22 public health and behavioral health officials from across the nation. Training is focused on cultivating mental health resiliency and supporting crisis leadership, especially amid public health emergencies, promoting health equity, addressing health disparities, and integrating the social determinants of health, building and/or enhancing trauma- and resilience-focused mental health and substance use supports, addressing and integrating mental wellness in public health settings, and implementing evidence-based/informed behavioral health interventions.
- The new COVID-19 vaccines are now available at RiverStone Health in addition to Influenza and RSV vaccines are also available.
- RiverStone Health has engaged with Crisis Prevention International (CPI) to certify five staff members as CPI Trainers. RiverStone Health’s certified CPI trainers will assist in training all employees in the management and prevention of disruptive behavior.

HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

John Felton provided updates and noted highlights of the Health Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Yellowstone County is experiencing an uptick in reported cases of COVID-19. Hospitalization rates remain manageable with most inpatient admissions discharged within a few days compared to extended hospital stays during the beginning of the pandemic.
- Montana has confirmed its first few influenza cases. Montana DPHHS issued a health alert network message about a novel influenza virus case in which a resident was infected with a strain that is usually limited to swine. The patient, not a Yellowstone County resident, was not hospitalized and has fully recovered. Even with evidence suggesting animal-to-human transmission, the likelihood of human-to-human transmission is very low unless the virus mutates in a way that changes its transmission characteristics and capabilities.

John discussed the succession of a new health officer upon his retirement on December 29, 2023. John provided information regarding the requirements of a person appointed as health officer, as defined by Montana Code Annotated MCA 50-2-116 (a). John noted that the process begins with the Board of Health's recommendation for the new health officer to the local governing authority (as required under HB121), which will then meet, consider the recommendation, and act on it. If the local governing authority approves the recommendation, then RiverStone Health will notify the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' Public Health and Safety Division Administrator of the decision. If the local governing authority rejects the recommendation, then the process will start over, beginning with the Board of Health recommending another person to serve as the local public health officer.

After brief discussion, the Board of Health agreed to include an agenda item as part of the December 2023 BOH meeting agenda to recommend the appointment of a new health officer for Yellowstone County upon John's retirement. A meeting of the local governing authority (as required under HB121) will be scheduled after the December Board of Health meeting to request approval of the Board's recommendation.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT

Megan Littlefield provided an update of activity in the CHC and the October 2023 Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Focus on IT optimization including an ECW upgrade on October 1 to better support our work and working with a consultant to optimize and maximize daily use of the EMR.
- Working to improve integration of services across the organization, including engaging OB patients with our clinical services and connecting them to WIC and FHS services seamlessly.
- Rebranding pediatric services –We offer a variety of unique clinical programs and wrap-around programs to support children in our community. RiverStone Health "KidConnect" brochures have been created that include a lot of the services the CHC provides. Communications is working to facilitate targeted outreach to child-friendly events.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the October 18, 2023 finance committee meeting notes, and the August 2023 financial statements (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

Finance Committee Chair Jim Harris provided a brief overview of the financial statements and answered Board member questions.

M O T I O N

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 18, 2023 FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED**

M O T I O N

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

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

SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the October 3, 2023 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE OCTOBER 3, 2023
SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the October 3 2023 public health policy development committee meeting (copy on file) that were previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 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 3, 2023 PUBLIC
HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING AS
PRESENTED**

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Dorr provided an overview of Committee activity and requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the September 28, 2023 meeting that were previously distributed in the October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

OLD BUSINESS

Determine December 2023 BOH meeting date: Due to scheduling conflicts with the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, the November and December Board of Health meetings are combined into one meeting that is typically held the first or second week of December. Chairperson Dorr asked the Board to consider their preference for scheduling the December 2023 Board of Health meeting on Thursday, December 7, or Thursday, December 14. After brief discussion, Board members agreed to schedule the December 2023 Board of Health meeting on Thursday, December 7, 2023.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE SCHEDULING THE DECEMBER 2023 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 AS PROPOSED

NEW BUSINESS

Area Health Education Center (AHEC) overview: Rhianna Tretin, Director of Eastern Montana AHEC, provided an overview (presentation available on file) of the Area Health Education Center located at RiverStone Health. Rhianna discussed the broad scope of the AHEC program, its mission statement: to enhance access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals through community and academic educational partnerships, and the different ways AHEC works to improve healthcare educational pipelines especially in rural and underserved populations, to connect students to healthcare careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, December 7, 2023 beginning at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The October 26, 2023 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 9:07 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

James D. Harris
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2023\minutes\10.26.23