

RiverStone Health
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2025

Jim Harris Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

Members Present: Spencer Anderson; Carol Beam; Brent Cromley; Debbie Davis; Michael Dennis; John Dorr; Jim Harris; Erin Lambert; Mark Morse; Lionel Tapia; Steve Wahrlich

Members Absent: Casey Wheeler; Derek Yeager

Staff Present: Jon Forte, President & CEO / Health Officer; Kimberly Hanser - Hospice Program Manager; Bob Janicek, Chief Integration Officer; Megan Littlefield, Chief Medical Officer; Carrie Ludwig, Executive Assistant; Eric Owen – Chief Operating Officer; Casey Page, Director - Communications & Marketing; Rachelle Prevost, Homecare Clinical Manager; Anna Warburton, Hospice Clinical Manager; Shanna Zier, Chief Financial Officer

Guests Present: Jeana Lervick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck; Chris Waters – Yellowstone County Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Harris called the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:04 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL

October 23, 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 December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 23, 2025 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED.

CEO / HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

Jon Forte discussed highlights and provided updates on items discussed in the December 2025 CEO “H.E.L.P” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Jon provided an update on the progress made towards the organization’s acquisition of the colonial property. He noted ongoing media coverage and discussed coordinated relocation efforts for its residents through the Yellowstone Continuum of Care (COC). Once vacated, the property will be secured and prepped for demolition.
- A recent anaphylaxis incident at a local school highlighted gaps in readily available emergency medical supplies in our schools. RiverStone Health is working with Yellowstone County school districts to provide items on the emergency medical preparedness ‘Must Haves’ list to ensure all schools countywide have access to EpiPens, AEDs, Narcan, and Stop-the-Bleed kits for use in emergency medical situations.
- Concerns related to SNAP and WIC funding during the recent government shut down prompted our community partner Billings Clinic to assist with food, diaper, and baby formula donations to support RiverStone Health clients during this time. SNAP benefits were reinstated as of November 15, and no current funding disruptions have been reported.
- RiverStone Health’s Kid Connect program received \$24,181 as the beneficiary of Cushing Terrell’s Golf Classic tournament held last summer. These funds will support ongoing services for children and families in Yellowstone County, connecting them to essential care and resources.
- RiverStone Health’s search for a Chief People Officer (CPO) has been narrowed to a candidate finalist. An offer has been extended, and the organization awaits a response.
- RiverStone Health has improved access to care with technology enhancements supporting online scheduling. Online scheduling is now live on the patient portal and the RiverStonehealth.org website for our main clinic’s same day care appointments and online scheduling has been successfully launched for immunizations, our rural clinics, and other services. A two-way chatbot has been added to the website to improve appointment scheduling and patient communication.
- Last month, Jon and Melissa Henderson, RiverStone Health Public Health Director, traveled to Helena to testify before the Interim Economic Affairs Committee on emerging intoxicating substances, including kratom. Jon reported that, effective December 8, 2025, RiverStone Health will begin notifying licensed food establishments that it will begin enforcing the longstanding Montana Food Code prohibition on the sale of kratom-containing food and beverages. Additionally, Jon will testify at the Montana Board of Pharmacy meeting on December 5, 2025 in support of scheduling kratom and its synthetic variants as Schedule I substances.
- Employee turnover for November 2025 decreased to approximately 0.8%, down from a high of 2.36% in July 2025. Year-to-date turnover was reported at approximately 14%, and well below the 18-20 % national healthcare average.

- RiverStone Health’s Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) team was officially launched in November 2025. The LOSS team provides timely outreach and support to families and individuals impacted by suicide, to reduce the risk of further harm.
- Jon announced his appointment to the Board of Directors of the Association of Montana Public Health Officials (AMPHO), providing state-level representation for the organization.
- Jon reminded Board members of the Holiday Care Program’s gift-wrapping event on December 12, 2025 and the upcoming Annual Joint Boards Dinner scheduled for January 20, 2026.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT

Dr. Megan Littlefield provided updates on activity in the CHC and the December 2025 Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Staffing challenges, particularly medical assistants, continue to impact patient encounter volume, although progress is being made to increase clinic capacity and improve access.
- Provider recruitment remains active, with the organization currently having more providers available than can be fully supported due to support staff shortages. Efforts are underway to address these gaps, with the expectation of increasing provider availability and patient access by the end of the month.
- Dr. Littlefield noted that RiverStone Health continues to operate the longest-standing family medicine residency program in Montana, with approximately 60% of graduates remaining in Montana or rural areas.
- Recruitment is underway for a new rural track. Two residents will join the Montana Family Residency in Billings the first year and then Miles City for their second and third years.
- Efforts are underway to expand the onboarding and supervision of behavioral health providers completing required post-graduate supervised hours. Increasing the number of candidates will help strengthen the behavioral health workforce pipeline and improve long-term provider availability.
- Plans are progressing to formalize the development of a structured residency program for physician assistants and nurse practitioners. The program will initially accept two new graduates annually, requiring a one-year commitment, and may pursue accreditation in the future to strengthen training and retention.
- Due to limited and costly local training options, RiverStone Health is exploring the development of an internal medical assistant training program. The goal is to stabilize the workforce through hands-on training paired with certification, for long-term potential to support workforce development beyond the organization.
- Work continues on quality improvement initiatives and value-based contracts, with a focus on improving population health outcomes and optimizing coding and documentation to support revenue capture.

- The Yellowstone Valley Child Advocacy Center (CAC) at RiverStone Health, the only accredited Child Advocacy Center serving Eastern Montana, anticipates receiving an additional \$10,000 from state settlement funds related to the Johnson & Johnson case.
- Dr. Littlefield discussed challenges related to burnout and limited specialized providers in child abuse evaluation. Efforts are underway to explore more sustainable, statewide approaches to training, support, and prevention, potentially supported by future funding opportunities.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Spencer Anderson and Shanna Zier provided an overview of the November 20, 2025 Joint Finance Committee meeting (CHC Board and BOH Finance Committees) and Board of Health Finance Committee meetings. She also discussed highlights of the FY25 Draft Audit and the September 2025 RSH, YHP, and combined RSH and YHP, financial statements (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

Chairperson Harris requested motions to accept the meeting notes of the November 20, 2025 Joint Finance (CHC Board and BOH Finance Committees) and Board of Health Finance Committee meetings finance committee meeting (copies on file) and the September 2025 RSH financial statements, (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 20, 2025, JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 20, 2025, BOARD OF HEALTH FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2025 RSH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2025 YHP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2025 COMBINED RSH & YHP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED.

SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair, Lionel Tapia, provided an overview of the November 4, 2025 and December 2, 2025 Safety and Quality committee meetings.

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the meeting notes of the November 4, 2025 and December 2, 2025 Safety and Quality committee meetings (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE NOVEMBER 4, 2025 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2025 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Chair, Brent Cromley, and Jon Forte provided an overview and updates on the November 4, 2025 and December 2, 2025 Public Health Policy Development Committee meetings.

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the meeting notes of the November 4, 2025 and December 2, 2025 Public Health Policy Development Committee meetings (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE NOVEMBER 4, 2025 PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2025 PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the October 23, 2025 meeting notes (copy on file) that were previously distributed in the December 4, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE OCTOBER 23, 2025 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept Governance Committee nomination recommendations, for Spencer Anderson, Michael Dennis, and Jim Harris, for reappointment to the Board of Health for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2026.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE NOMINATION RECOMMENDATIONS, SPENCER ANDERSON, MICHAEL DENNIS, AND JIM HARRIS, FOR REAPPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH FOR A THREE-YEAR TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026

Chairperson Harris informed the Board of the Governance Committee's proposed slate of officers noting that no new nominations were made for chair, vice chair, or secretary; the Governance Committee recommended retaining the current officers including Jim Harris as **Chair**, Steve Wahrlich as **Vice-Chair**, and Spencer Anderson as **Secretary-Treasurer** for election to the Board of Health for a one-year term beginning January 1, 2026

Chairperson Harris called for nominations from the floor and upon hearing none, requested a motion to accept the Governance Committee’s proposed slate of officers as presented, for election to the Board of Health for a one-year term beginning January 1, 2026.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE’S PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS AS PRESENTED, INCLUDING JIM HARRIS AS CHAIR, STEVE WAHRLICH AS VICE-CHAIR, AND SPENCER ANDERSON AS SECRETARY-TREASURER, FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH FOR A ONE YEAR TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026

OLD BUSINESS

No old business discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

2025 Homecare and Hospice Annual Review Overview: Anna Warburton – Hospice Clinical Program Manager, Rachelle Prevost – Homecare Clinical Program Manager, provided an overview of the 2025 Home Health and Hospice Annual Review.

Rachelle discussed the Home Health portion of the annual review noting that it reflects a year of transition and rebuilding following leadership and staffing challenges. She added that since early 2025, staffing has stabilized with the addition of one full-time physical therapist and three full-time nurses. Additionally, Trilogy quality assurance has been engaged to help strengthen documentation, quality, and reimbursement. The Home Health program is now focused on increasing referrals through improved hospital and community outreach, along with continued staff development to enhance scheduling, customer service, and program growth.

Anna Warburton discussed the Hospice portion of the annual review and highlighted its continued growth and strong quality performance over the past year. She reported that the average daily census increased from 49 to 56 patients, including individuals transitioned from hospice homes into community-based care. She noted that patient satisfaction remains high, with the program consistently achieving a five-star rating and on track to maintain that rating with the next CMS publication which is anticipated in August or November 2026.

Anna reported that the program has expanded its focus on grief support to better meet post-COVID community needs, including revitalizing the Bravehearts program and providing facilitator training in partnership with Tamarack Grief Resource Center. She noted that updated contracts with local nursing facilities and hospitals have allowed the team to continue providing all levels of hospice care, including continuous nursing support. Additionally, Anna described how hospice donation funds were used to ensure safe, dignified end-of-life care for patients without housing, caregivers, or financial resources. Anna added that through partnerships with nursing facilities, several patients were placed in appropriate settings where room, board, medication management, and clinical care could be provided during their final days.

The Board received clarification on the scope and purpose of home health vs. home care services. Rachelle explained that home health differs from home care in that it provides short-term, skilled clinical services delivered by licensed professionals, including nurses and therapists, rather than the non-medical caregiving support offered by home care. Board members expressed appreciation for the clear explanation of the distinction between home health and home care services.

The Board thanked the Home Health and Hospice team for their continued dedication and progress during a period of transition. The 2025 Homecare and Hospice Annual Review was received and approved as presented.

Marketing & Communications FY26 Q1-Q2 Report: Casey Page, Communications & Marketing Director presented the Marketing & Communications FY26 Q1-Q2 report to the Board, highlighting key activities and outcomes since the start of the fiscal year in July 2025. Casey noted a significant budget increase with the bulk of the funds allocated to advertising focused primarily on revenue-generating service lines, including the community health center, hospice, Wellness on Wheels (WOW) and the pharmacy. She explained that paid social media and Google display campaigns targeted key demographics, with messaging emphasizing RiverStone Health's expertise, inclusivity, and community-focused care. She noted that these campaigns consistently achieved click-through rates above the national average and contributed to increased engagement and conversions, including appointment requests and website activity. Messaging also highlighted rural clinic access, telehealth services, and online scheduling, helping to expand reach and convenience for patients.

Casey shared that hospice marketing focused on caregivers and family members, with ads highlighting compassionate support. Print advertising leveraged partnerships to maximize visibility, while community outreach, including fall prevention classes and the WOW bus program, strengthened engagement with local and rural populations. Pharmacy marketing emphasized convenience and personalized care, with plans to expand specialty services. Social media engagement, earned media, and website activity continued to grow, while Google reviews were actively monitored to recognize staff and address concerns.

Overall, Casey's presentation demonstrated how marketing efforts are effectively increasing visibility, patient engagement, and community awareness across service lines.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The December 4, 2025 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\2025\minutes\12.04.25 BOH Minutes