

RiverStone Health
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2024

John Dorr, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

- Members Present:** John Dorr; Carol Beam; Brent Cromley; Michael Dennis via phone; Anne Giuliano; Jim Harris; Don Jones; Bea Ann Melichar; Lionel Tapia; Steve Wahrlich; K.C. Williams
- Members Absent:** Spencer Anderson; Debbie Davis; Casey Wheeler
- Staff Present:** Kandra Diefenderfer, Senior Director, Homecare and Hospice; Jon Forte, President & CEO / Health Officer; Jeff Hert, Vice - President Human Resources; 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; Pat Zellar, Communications Coordinator
- 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 February 22, 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 proceeded to the next agenda item.

APPROVAL

January 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes: Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **MINUTES** (copy on file) of the January 25, 2024 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the February 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 25, 2024, 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 February 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- January 31 marked the end of the 10-month Medicaid redetermination process that began last April in Montana. Jon shared a story from a member of RiverStone Health’s Care Management team regarding a patient who was experiencing financial difficulties attributed to an unexpected expiration of benefits from the Medicaid administered Medicare Savings Program (MSP), intended to help low-income seniors cover their Medicare Part B premium. Our care management team assisted this patient and many others in similar circumstances through the redetermination process.
- The RiverStone Health Foundation’s Annual HELP Fund Campaign generated a total of \$48,795.71. Funding was allocated to several RiverStone Health programs and services including hospice, healthcare for the homeless, public health, CHC, MFMR, dental and pharmacy, with the largest shares being allocated to Greatest Need \$20,486, the KidConnect program - focused on providing one-stop, trauma-informed, comprehensive children’s health services for youth and families \$11,591, and the employee emergency fund \$5,634.54. A total of 167 (43%) employees made gifts this year with an average gift of \$296.
- Funding for the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program (THCGME), Community Health Centers, and the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), is set to expire on March 8, 2024. Last December, the House of Representatives passed the *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act*, with broad bipartisan support, to extend funding at current levels. Presently, there is a Senate Bill (S. 2840) *Primary Care and Health Workforce Act*, which would make a historic investment, exceeding current funding levels for Community Health Centers, the NHSC and the THCGME program. Your support is needed to help advocate for continuous additional funding to sustain Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education. You can act here: <https://hcadvocate.quorum.us/campaign/55930/>
- Dr. Chris Baumert highlighted the importance of Medicare’s Annual Wellness Visits (AWV) in the Adult Resource Alliance of Yellowstone County’s latest issue of *Prime Connections*. In the article, Dr. Baumert noted that the AWV, intended to get people thinking about prevention and their health years into the future, takes about 20 minutes and focuses on four M’s: Medication, Mobility, Mentation, and What Matters Most to You.
- RiverStone Health Dental Clinic staff members visited classrooms at Orchard Elementary School to talk about dental health. RiverStone Health is providing dental kits for all 280 Orchard School students to take home as part of National Children's Dental Health month.

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

- COVID-19 hospital admissions have decreased slightly at both Billings hospitals. 75 cases were reported during the first week of February.
- After months of steady increase in influenza cases this flu season, the number of cases began to trend downward at the end of January and has continued. While total cases have decreased, hospitalizations have increased from two cases in week five, to six cases in week six. An increase of 200% in hospitalizations.

- A nationwide outbreak of Listeria has been linked to several dairy products made by a California based food supplier. There have been no confirmed cases reported in Montana as of February 16th, 2024. Nationwide there have been 26 confirmed cases, including 23 hospitalizations, and 2 deaths.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT

Dr. Megan Littlefield provided highlights, of the Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the February 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- We continue to have multiple faculty positions posted. Physician recruitment: Targeting outreach efforts to physicians in Midwest and Mountain states. Outreach has included postcard campaigns, emails, Linked-in and Facebook.
- Joel Ross, MD, MFMR Class of 2025 signed a contract to start in Fall of 2025. Interviewing another resident from the same class.
- Sports Medicine Physician- Offer out to Dr. Matt Giordanengo, a previous core faculty member
- All Physician Assistant (PA) and Nurse Practitioner (NP) positions have been filled.
- Continuing to brainstorm ideas to develop an APP residency. Next steps include identifying funding sources to help offset administrative costs for set up and operation of the program.
- MFMR Interview season is now completed. Approximately 130 candidates were interviewed. The rank list has been completed and will be submitted this week. Match day is March 15th.
- New intern, Bradley Cox, DO, transferred from a surgical residency program to join the MFMR.
- The MFMR Board Strategic Meeting was held on February 15. Participants focused on prioritizing areas that need attention for the next year.
- We are in the process of developing a business plan to create a medical clinic for the Child
- Advocacy Center (CAC). Identifying providers to staff the clinic, researching equipment needed, reviewing what the structure will look like, and projecting the cost to set up and run this clinic.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Finance Committee Chair Jim Harris provided a brief overview of the financial statements and answered Board member questions. Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the February 15, 2024 Finance Committee meeting notes and the December 2023 financial statements (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the February 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

MOTION

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY 15, 2024, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES AS PRESENTED

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED

Jim informed the Board of the finance committee’s considerable discussion over the last few months pertaining to the viability of the RiverStone Health Hospice Home (RSHH).

Jim explained that the RSHH has sustained considerable operating losses over the last several years, largely attributable to a sustained downward trend in average daily census, among other financial factors, that have negatively impacted the financial health of the operation. Jim added that after careful review of the financial information and patient census data dating back to FY12, the committee discussed options including the prospect of permanently closing the RSHH. Committee members concluded that permanent closure would serve the best interests of the organization and then voted unanimously in favor of recommending Board approval to permanently close the RSHH effective June 30, 2024.

Board members engaged in lengthy discussion on the matter before Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the finance committee’s recommendation to permanently close the RiverStone Health Hospice Home (RSHH) effective June 30, 2024.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE PERMANENT CLOSURE OF THE RIVERSTONE HEALTH HOSPICE HOME (RSHH) EFFECTIVE JUNE 30, 2024

SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the February 6, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the February 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2024 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairperson Bea Ann Melichar provided an overview of Committee activity and asked Barbara Schneeman to provide information on the resolution in support of Montana Medicaid Expansion that the Committee is recommending for Board of Health approval.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve a resolution supporting continuation of Montana Medicaid expansion (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the February 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CONTINUATION OF MONTANA MEDICAID EXPANSION (COPY ON FILE), AS PRESENTED

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the February 6, 2024 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting that were previously distributed in the February 22, 2024 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 FEBRUARY 6, 2024 PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 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 January 25, 2024 meeting that were previously distributed in the February 22, 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 JANUARY 25, 2024 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

OLD BUSINESS

There was no discussion of old business.

NEW BUSINESS

March 2024 Board of Health Meeting Date: Jon Forte asked Board members to consider rescheduling the March 2024 meeting date in light of a scheduling conflict on his calendar related to

travel over the upcoming Easter holiday. Jon asked Board members to consider either March 27, or March 21 as an alternate date for the meeting.

Chairperson Dorr asked the Board to consider their preference for scheduling the March 2024 Board of Health meeting on Thursday, March 21, or Wednesday, March 27. After brief discussion, Board members agreed to reschedule the March 2024 Board of Health meeting on Thursday, March 21, 2024.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE RESCHEDULING THE MARCH 28, 2024 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING TO THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024 AS PROPOSED

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next scheduled meeting will be Thursday, March 21, 2024 beginning at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The February 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 8:46 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

James D. Harris
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2023\minutes\2.22.24