

**RiverStone Health
Board of Health Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2025**

Jim Harris, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

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

Members Absent: Steve Wahrlich; Casey Wheeler; Derek Yeager

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: Stewart Kirkpatrick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck; Jeana Lervick, legal counsel – Crowley Fleck

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Harris called the March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:00 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

APPROVAL FEBRUARY 27, 2025 BOH MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to approve the minutes (copy on file) of the February 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2025, BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED

CEO / HEALTH OFFICER REPORT

Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO “H.E.L.P” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Last week, a group of RiverStone Health staff members traveled to Helena to participate in an advocacy event at the Capitol sponsored by the Montana Primary Care Association (MPCA). They met with members of the local delegation and Lt. Governor Juras to advocate for community health centers (CHC's) and communicate the significant role they play in expanding access to care and improving the health and well-being of underserved populations.
- RiverStone Health's Volunteer Appreciation Lunch is scheduled for Tuesday, April 22, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM at The Northern Hotel in Downtown Billings. The event will recognize our volunteers and offer an opportunity to gather with fellow volunteers and staff for lunch and entertainment. Invitations have been mailed.
- Dr. Dorothy Sizemore, Montana Family Medicine Residency faculty and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, was named one of the region's 40 Under 40 honorees.
- HB 853, a bill proposing adjustments to licensed establishment fees across Montana, will be heard in the House Business and Labor Committee on Monday at 8:00 AM. The bill addresses an outdated fee structure, last updated in 2009, which currently places 75% of the funding burden on local property taxes. The proposed changes aim to support more consistent inspections of pools, hotels, restaurants, and similar facilities.
- RiverStone Health staff member, Nicole “Nikki” Lund, Child Advocacy Center Coordinator, received the Garrett Children's Champion Award from the Children's Alliance of Montana. The award recognizes her outstanding work on behalf of victims of child maltreatment across the state.
- The RiverStone Health Community Health Center connected nearly 700 new patients to care in 2024, resulting in a unique patient population of 14,400 patients with over 70,500 visits, an increase from 13,711 patients and just over 65,000 visits in 2023. This expanded growth underscores the ongoing need for accessible and affordable health care in our community.
- RiverStone Health is exploring partnership opportunities, through its Healthcare for the Homeless Program, with the Montana Rescue Mission and the Downtown Business Alliance to expand healthcare services for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- A new position, Behavioral Health Systems Improvement Specialist, has been posted. This role will serve as the Crisis Diversion Coalition Coordinator to support collaboration across the behavioral health continuum—from prevention through crisis response.
- The annual Shriners Children's Screening Clinic will take place on Saturday, April 5th, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the RiverStone Health clinic. The event will provide screenings for physical, neurological, and developmental disabilities, at no cost to patients.
- RiverStone Health's new Mobile Health Unit is scheduled to arrive in April 2025. The new unit will provide medical, dental, and behavioral health services to local and rural schools across Yellowstone County.

- The Montana Family Medicine Residency (MFMR) incoming Class of 2028 will join RiverStone Health in late June to begin orientation.
- Applications remain open for the 2025 Behavioral Health “Heads Up” Camp and the AHEC Med Start Camp, both designed for high school students exploring careers in health care. Applications are due by April 11, 2025, and can be submitted online.
- Results of the Employee Engagement Survey indicated that of the 36 items measured, 80% received highly favorable responses. Notably, 95% of staff reported feeling proud to work at RiverStone Health, understood their job expectations, and recognized how their work contributes to the organization’s mission.
- RiverStone Health’s Live Well Center is now open at no cost for employees. The gym has all the basic equipment needed to start or continue your fitness journey.
- Efforts are underway to increase public access to food safety inspection reports. A survey is available at www.riverstonehealth.org/foodsafety to gather input on preferred methods of sharing this information. Public feedback is encouraged.
- Influenza activity appears to have peaked and is now trending downward. Of the different strains, influenza A has been the dominant strain this season.
- There has been a slight increase in COVID-19 cases reported statewide while local numbers have remained stable.
- Over 400 measles cases, including two deaths, have been reported across 18 states. Approximately 95% of these cases occurred in unvaccinated individuals. The MMR vaccine remains the most effective protection against measles, with a 97% efficacy rate. A detailed discussion on measles preparedness is scheduled later in the meeting.

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 March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Recruiting and staffing update:
 - An offer has been extended to a faculty physician and is pending.
 - Two current faculty members are expected to depart this summer: Dr. Fonken has submitted his resignation, and a second resignation is anticipated but not yet formalized.
- Continued efforts are underway to recruit Advanced Practice Providers (APPs). We have an upcoming meeting scheduled to discuss the APP training program.
- The Montana Family Medicine Residency (MFMR) program secured all nine incoming residents through the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP) after not matching in the first round. A national decline in Family Medicine match rates and the limitations of virtual interviews likely impacted the outcome. A post-match survey has been initiated to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement for next year’s recruitment cycle.
- The growing need for pediatric mental health services in our area has prompted expansion opportunities for our mobile health unit and our School Based Health Centers (SBHC’s).

- In response to a prior request from the Board, resources to support conversations with vaccine-hesitant individuals have been included in the meeting packet. These materials feature a public-facing handout from the World Health Organization (WHO), along with additional reputable resources.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Finance Committee Chair Spencer Anderson provided a brief overview of the March 20, 2025 finance committee meeting and the January 2025 financial statements.

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the March 20, 2025 finance committee meeting notes, and the January 2025 financial statements (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

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

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED

Spencer provided additional insight into the Finance Committee's discussion on RiverStone Health's financial outlook and cash position, noting an improvement in cash balances and an increase in days cash on hand, from 33 days at the end of FY24 to approximately 45 days as of January 2025, with further gains anticipated. The Committee attributed these improvements to strong fiscal management and recent staff restructuring. However, they cautioned that continued growth may not be sustainable due to potential adverse changes in funding sources, including Medicaid and federal grants. Following further discussion, the Committee agreed to set a goal of increasing days cash on hand by 20 additional days over the next two fiscal years, by June 2028, to support the organization's long-term financial stability.

Jim requested a motion from the Board to approve fiscal management's best efforts to increase days cash on hand by 20 days over the next two fiscal years.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE PLANNING OVER THE NEXT TWO FISCAL YEARS (BY JUNE 2028) TO ADD 20 DAYS CASH ON HAND TO THE BALANCE SHEET

SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

Before providing a brief overview of the March 4 meeting, Committee chair, Lionel Tapia noted corrections to the meeting notes, including a change to the “Call to Order” section to remove the incorrectly spelled “John Door” and add Lionel Tapia, and under the “Committee Members Present” section, remove Jim Harris and add Michael Dennis.

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the March 4, 2025 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE MARCH 4, 2025 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIONS:

- 1. UNDER THE “CALL TO ORDER” SECTION - REMOVE THE INCORRECTLY SPELLED “JOHN DOOR” AND ADD LIONEL TAPIA,**
- 2. UNDER THE “COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT” SECTION, REMOVE JIM HARRIS AND ADD MICHAEL DENNIS**

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee chair, Brent Cromley provided an overview of the March 4, 2025 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting, and Jon Forte provided legislative updates.

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the March 4, 2025 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting that were previously distributed in the March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson Harris provided an overview of the February 27, 2025 meeting before requesting a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the February 27, 2025 Executive Committee meeting that were previously distributed in the March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting packet.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE FEBRUARY 27, 2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED

OLD BUSINESS

No old business discussed

NEW BUSINESS

Set a public hearing for local Rule #5 variance request:

Jon Forte requested the Board set a public hearing to hear a variance request pertaining to local Rule #5 – Body Art, on April 24, 2025, beginning at 7:00 A.M.

Chairperson Harris requested a motion to set a public hearing at the next Board of Health meeting on April 24, 2025, beginning at 7:00 AM to hear a variance request pertaining to local Rule #5 – Body Art.

M O T I O N

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

VOTED: TO APPROVE SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING TO HEAR A VARIANCE REQUEST PERTAINING TO LOCAL RULE #5 – BODY ART, ON APRIL 24, 2025 BEGINNING AT 7:00 AM

Measles education and preparation:

Dr. Megan Littlefield, Chief Medical Officer, and Jon Forte, President & CEO / Yellowstone County Health Officer, provided education and an update on community preparedness efforts related to potential measles outbreaks in our community. Jon noted that preparedness efforts are focused on re-educating both the public and healthcare providers in response to the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases. We have developed public education materials, including vaccine and symptom FAQs, in collaboration with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), for distribution to schools, hospitals, the Yellowstone Medical Alignment Group (YMAG), and the public. Dr. Littlefield noted that tabletop exercises have been conducted to test response plans and identify areas for improvement and follow-up. She added that coordination efforts are ongoing to ensure readiness for rapid testing, communication, isolation protocols, and vaccination deployment should a measles outbreak occur in our community.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting of the Board of Health is scheduled for Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The March 27, 2025 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 8:39 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Spencer Anderson
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2025\minutes\03.27.25 BOH Minutes