

**RiverStone Health**  
**Board of Health Meeting Minutes**  
**September 26, 2024**

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John Dorr, Chairperson of the Board, Presiding

**Members Present:** John Dorr; Spencer Anderson; Carol Beam; Brent Cromley; Debbie Davis; Michael Dennis; Anne Giuliano; Jim Harris; Don Jones; Bea Ann Melichar; Lionel Tapia - remote; Steve Wahrlich - remote

**Members Absent:** Casey Wheeler

**Staff Present:** Jon Forte, President & CEO / Health Officer; Melissa Henderson, Senior Director of Health Promotion and Environmental Health Services; Jeff Hert, Vice -President Human Resources; Bob Janicek, Chief Information Officer; Megan Irion, Executive Director – RiverStone Health Foundation; 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

**CALL TO ORDER**

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Chairperson Dorr called the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting to order at 7:01 AM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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Chairperson Dorr invited members of the public to address the Board. Upon hearing no comment, Chairperson Dorr proceeded to the next item on the agenda.

**APPROVAL**

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**August 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes:** Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **MINUTES** (copy on file) of the August 22, 2024 Board of Health meeting that were previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

**MOTION**

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

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 22, 2024, BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

**September 26, 2024 Consent Agenda:** Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the **CONSENT AGENDA** (copy on file) of the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting that was previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

**M O T I O N**

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

**VOTED: TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA OF THE SEPTEMBER 26, 2024 BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AS PRESENTED**

**CEO / HEALTH OFFICER REPORT**

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Jon Forte provided updates and discussed highlights of the CEO “HELP” report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- During a press conference held at RiverStone Health on September 25, 2024, Attorney General Austin Knudsen announced that the Montana Department of Justice will be providing an additional \$3.5 million in funding for Montana Children’s Advocacy Centers (CACs). The additional funds will help communities across the state improve their response and care for child survivors of sexual abuse and other crimes. The funding comes from proceeds of a landmark national civil settlement with the Johnson and Johnson Company to resolve allegations the company knowingly sold baby powder tainted with carcinogenic asbestos. Riverstone Health, which houses the Yellowstone Valley CAC, one of nine accredited Children's Advocacy Centers in Montana, received the first distribution of \$10,000 from the attorney general during the press conference. Remaining funds will be managed and distributed by a working group established by the Department of Justice to provide continual support to Montana CACs over the next several years.
- The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) conducted a triennial operational site visit (OSV) September 10-12, 2024 to assess RiverStone Health CHC program compliance with federal program grant conditions, standards, and requirements. The OSV went very well with no findings of non-compliance identified by the site visit team. Additionally, site visitors noted several best practices implemented by the CHC program including a ‘pristine’ credentialing and privileging process, and a commitment to quality improvement.
- On Monday, September 9, 2024, the RiverStone Health Foundation officially unveiled the Robin and John Felton community garden on the RiverStone Health campus. Our organization is grateful for Robin and John's many years of dedication and service to the mission and culture of RiverStone Health, which is embodied in the beauty and nourishment provided by the garden.
- We continue to provide outreach and re-enrollment assistance to those who have lost coverage through the Medicaid unwinding process. The number of attributed Medicaid patients has fluctuated as redeterminations continue.
- The 2024 Business of Healthcare Summit is scheduled October 7-9 at the Northern Hotel. The event will provide continuing education opportunities for behavioral health professionals on day one, with day two and three focused on the economic impact of behavioral health and Medicaid reauthorization. Jon Forte will moderate a fireside chat with Representative Ed Buttrey (R-Great

Falls), the sponsor of Senate Bill 405 – The Montana Health and Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) Act, during the three-day event.

- CEOs of the Alliance, Clint Seger (Billings Clinic), Lee Boyles (Intermountain Health, and Jonathan Forte (RiverStone Health), met on Friday, September 6, 2024 to discuss and prioritize key issues impacting the health and wellbeing of our community. Initially, the group plans to focus on addressing behavioral health needs and the crisis continuum of care. The Alliance will meet on a quarterly basis to continue conversations and work to address the issues.
- On Sunday, September 8, RiverStone Health participated in the 2024 International Opioid Awareness Day Remembrance at Rose Park. This annual event helps to shed light on the impact of drug use and drug-related fatalities in our community. RiverStone Health was on hand to distribute free Narcan and provide education on carrying and properly administering the medication to reverse a narcotic overdose in an emergency.
- Billings Clinic Physical Therapy is expanding and will be ending our sub-lease for the space that houses RiverStone Health's Joliet clinic. Last week the RiverStone Health Clinic Board voted to explore lease options for a new, temporary space for the Joliet clinic. We are in the process of searching for alternative locations to continue providing service in the Joliet area.
- On September 10, 2024, the Air Quality Index (AQI) reached an unhealthy level due to wildfire smoke in the area. An unhealthy AQI level indicates that certain members of the public are at risk for experiencing adverse health effects. In response we activated our air quality monitoring plan to notify schools and childcare facilities and provide safety guidance. After the AQI level subsided, a hot wash exercise was held to identify areas of improvement and learn how we can be better prepared to share notifications and updates more efficiently in the future.

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

- Yellowstone County's recent cryptosporidiosis (crypto) outbreak has subsided with the end of summer and subsequent closure of local public swimming pools. Case counts were much higher than usual with 45 confirmed and 63 probable cases reported during the outbreak. Local public swimming pools / recreational water sites across the city of Billings have been identified as the source of the outbreak with one popular location identified as the source in most of the cases.
- Over the summer COVID-19 cases spiked nationally, which led to a brief spike locally. The number of cases in Yellowstone County remains low, with an average of 60 cases per week.
- The 2024-2025 Flu Season is off to a slower-than-usual start in Montana. MT DPHHS will begin reporting weekly influenza cases on Friday, October 11, 2024.

## **CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT**

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Megan Littlefield provided updates on activity in the CHC and the Chief Medical Officer Report (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

- Provider recruitment is ongoing: Ava Swayze, MD who was working with us as a locum has joined our faculty as of 10/7.
- With the addition of Dr. Swayze to our faculty, we will discontinue using locums to staff our hospital services. We will cover the shortage with our existing inpatient coverage.

- Kaci Doak the main PA at the Worden Clinic has resigned effective October 4, 2024. The position has been posted.
- Changes in Advanced Practice Provider (APP) staffing include:
  - Katie Keith, NP, who has been working at the main clinic, will move to the Senior High SBHC at .5 FTE, in October.
  - Kaci Jansma, PA, who staffs the Joliet and Bridger clinic, will move to part time, requiring a provider from the main clinic to cover this time. As a result, we have posted another APP position.
- We are expanding School Based Health Care (SBHC) services to Senior High and Career Center this year. The goal is to open the Senior High SBHC by the end of October, or early November, depending on space, equipment, and staffing. Katie Keith NP will be the main medical provider, and we are recruiting for a behavioral health provider, nurse, and MA/Admin support.
- Vicki Sulser, RN, Program Manager for School Based Health Centers (SBHC), retired September 16, 2024, after almost 15 years of service to RiverStone Health. Vicki began as a nurse at the Montana Women’s Prison clinic and then later worked with the Satellite Clinics and SBHCs.
- We are in the process of developing a medical clinic for the Child Advocacy Center. We have identified providers but still need to recruit 1-2 more. We have identified equipment, and are working to create policies, consents, and processes.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Finance Committee Chair Jim Harris provided an overview of the September 19, 2024 finance committee meeting notes, and the July 2024 financial statements. (copies on file) that were previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

Shanna Zier noted that there was a typo in the September 19, 2024 finance committee meeting notes on page 1, first bullet point under the heading **July 24 RSH Financials**, that read: *Cash totaled approximately \$8.6 million, increase of \$634 million at the end of June*, that should have read: *Cash totaled approximately \$8.6 million, increase of **\$634 thousand** at the end of June*. Jim answered Board members questions before 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 (Anderson), and unanimously carried, it was**

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 19, 2024, FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES WITH A CORRECTION ON PAGE 1, FIRST BULLET POINT, UNDER THE HEADING JULY 24 RSH FINANCIALS, TO READ: *Cash totaled approximately \$8.6 million, increase of **\$634 thousand** at the end of June.***

**M O T I O N**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE JULY 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED**

**SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE**

Lionel Tapia, Committee Chair, provided an overview of Committee activity and the September 3, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the September 3, 2024 Safety and Quality committee meeting that were previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

**M O T I O N**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE MEETING NOTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2024 SAFETY AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

**PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Bea Ann Melichar, Committee Chair, provided an overview of Committee activity and highlights of the September 3, 2024 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting.

Melissa Henderson discussed key informational points on several priorities included in the 2025 Public Policy Agenda that was previously approved by the Board of Health at its May 23, 2024 meeting. Topics discussed included Secure Firearm Storage, Suicide Prevention, Synthetic Designer Drugs, and Licensed Establishment Fee Changes. Melissa provided fact sheets (copies on file) and information for each topic and answered Board member questions.

Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the September 3, 2024 Public Health Policy Development Committee meeting (copy on file) that were previously distributed in the September 26, 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 3, 2024 PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AS PRESENTED**

## **GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

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Chairperson Dorr provided an overview of Committee activity including the Board and Board member assessment tools that were distributed to Board members (copies on file) for review. Chairperson Dorr briefly discussed the assessments and noted that Board members will be receiving links to access and complete electronic versions of the Board of Health Assessment of Operations and Board Member Self-Assessment tools.

Chairperson Dorr and requested a motion to accept the meeting notes (copy on file) of the August 22, 2024 meeting that were previously distributed in the September 26, 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 AUGUST 22, 2024 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

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No old business discussed

## **NEW BUSINESS**

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**Approval of Emergency CEO Succession Policy:** Chairperson Dorr requested a motion to approve the Emergency CEO Succession Policy (copy on file) that was previously distributed in the September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting packet.

### **MOTION**

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

**VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE EMERGENCY CEO SUCCESSION POLICY AS PRESENTED**

**School Based Health Centers Overview Presentation:** Eric Owen provided a presentation (copy on file) regarding School Based Health Centers (SBHC) and how they impact student success.

Eric discussed how SBHCs are part of the solution to kindergarten readiness, third grade reading proficiency and lower high school dropout rates. The impacts SBHCs have on student health include increased access to care and decreased health disparities, increased use of primary care and preventive services for overall better care coordination, a reduction in inappropriate emergency room use and hospitalizations, providers work with teachers and parents to address behavioral issues that impede learning and lead to discipline, often for non-violent actions, and they help keep kids healthy so they can focus on learning. The impacts SBHCs have on education include increased school engagement, safety and respect, improved academics (GPA, test scores), increased teacher retention, decreased absenteeism and tardiness, increased graduation rates, SBHCs work with schools to develop equitable and socially just disciplinary practices.

Eric defined school-based health centers as a shared commitment between a school, community and health care organization established to support students' health, well-being, and academic success by providing preventative, early intervention, and treatment services where students are in school. Services can include medical, dental, and/or behavioral health that is flexible to meet the needs of each individual school. Services can be provided on the school campus, through telehealth or on a mobile unit on the school campus. Schools and health care providers determine who the SBHC will serve. SBHCs can provide services to students, families, staff, and/or community – depending on needs of individual schools.

### **MEETING SCHEDULE**

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The next scheduled meeting of the Board of Health will be on Thursday, October 24, 2024, beginning at 7:00 AM in the first-floor conference rooms of the Lil Anderson Center.

### **MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

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The September 26, 2024 Board of Health meeting was adjourned at 9:03 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

James D. Harris  
Secretary/Treasurer, Board of Health

Jonathan Forte  
President & CEO

cc: Leadership Team, County Commissioners, hd\BOH\2024\minutes\9.26.24 BOH Minutes