



Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba  
**Morongo Basin Healthcare District**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 2, 2023 at 6:55 p.m.**

*Convened on the La Contenta campus; the public was invited to attend the meeting on campus or via Microsoft Teams, an electronic, remote-site platform.*

- **Mission Statement:** *To improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.*
- **Vision:** *A healthy Morongo Basin.*
- **Core Values:** *Commitment, Collaboration, Accountability, Dignity, Integrity.*

Board of Directors:

- Director Cooper
- Director Evans
- Director Markle-Greenhouse
- Director Savitt
- Director Stiemsma

Administrative Staff:

- Cindy Schmall, CEO (*remote*)
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Joe Ruddon, Director Business Development
- Kathy Alkire, Wellness Nurse (*remote*)
- Tele Thornett, Administrative Assistant

Guests:

- Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Market, Tenet (*remote*)
- Vikas Sharma, Community member
- Prem Salhotra, M.D.
- Jene Estrada, Hi-Desert Star

**CALL TO ORDER**

Director Greenhouse called the meeting to order at 6:55 p.m. The meeting was convened on the La Contenta campus and by electronic platform using Microsoft Teams.

**ROLL CALL**

Karen Graley, Board Clerk, conducted roll call and declared a quorum.

**OBSERVANCES**

Director Cooper read the mission, vision, and core value statements.  
Director Savitt led the assembly in the pledge to the American flag.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were presented.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA**

**Motion 23-14:** Director Stiemsma motioned to approve the meeting agenda as presented; motion was seconded by Director Savitt the motion passed by unanimous vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion 23-15:** Director Evans motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; motion was seconded by Director Savitt; motion passed by unanimous vote.

- Minutes: Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors, February 2, 2023.
- Minutes: Public Hearing of the Board of Directors, February 2, 2023.

**PRESENTATION**

RECOGNITION OF PREM SALHOTRA, M.D.

Director Greenhouse welcomed Dr. Salhotra. Director Evans spoke to her personal history as a nurse and her appreciation of him and his professionalism over the years. Director Greenhouse



presented the Board's proclamation of recognition to Prem Salhotra, M.D. Director Greenhouse then presented a certificate of recognition from County Supervisor Dawn Rowe on behalf of the County Board of Supervisors.

Dr. Salhotra expressed how honored he was to accept this recognition. He thanked the board for allowing him to serve the community through the health center. He praised clinic staff for their commitment and professionalism. He affirmed the mission of the health center in caring for the underserved populations in our community, especially during the COVID pandemic, calling front-line staff courageous. "We have come a long way from those early days," he said, "where people were denied access to healthcare because of their insurance status. The health center was the only clinics open in the high and low desert to care for patients during the pandemic. We had no bad outcomes from COVID patients. It's all because of the employees. Today's growth came because of staff and the excellent care they give to the community. They deserve a great deal of credit." He thanked the board on behalf of his patients, saying, "I am honored."

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### APPROVE POLICIES

Cindy Schmall presented three human resource policies for approval.

➤ HR-202 Recycling

Ms. Schmall noted that the state passed AB 341 Mandatory Commercial Recycling. HR-202 is the District's response to the mandate. It presents an internal program to separate recyclable products from general trash. The collection of monies for recycling will be directed to employee events and recognition.

➤ HR-247 Leave of Absence for Other Than FMLA/CFRA/PDL

➤ HR-250 Leave of Absence for FMLA/CFRA/PDL

Leave of Absence policies were distributed as a handout. Changes in California law has prompted separating the existing policy into two policies, addressing significant categories more comprehensively. Ms. Schmall itemized the specific changes, i.e. bereavement leave which is dictated by the new law. There was discussion about extending the bereavement time from three months to six months. agree to add language to allow more time.

- **Motion 23-13:** Director Evans motioned to approve policies HR-202, HR-247 and HR-250 with bereavement leave extended to six months, second by Director Savitt; motion passed by unanimous vote.

## **PRESENTATION**

DESERT CARE NETWORK UPDATE – *Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Market, Tenet*

Ms. Evans thanked the board for the opportunity to provide an update about Hi-Desert Medical Center (HDMC), the Continuing Care Center (CCC) and Desert Care Network.

### COVID-19 Update:

- HDMC acute hospital has zero COVID-19 patients and no persons under investigation (PUI). CCC also has zero COVID-19 positive residents.
- DRMC currently has 8 positive COVID-19 patients and no PUI.
- JFK currently has 2 positive COVID-19 patients and 1 PUI patient.
- Personal Protective Equipment remains in adequate supply at all facilities with proactive efforts to secure items in advance of a potential surge this fall.



Blood Drive:

- HDMC continues to hold blood drives with LifeStream. The need for blood remains critical.

Capital Project Update:

- Hospital roofing project is complete.
- New nurse call light system replacement in the acute hospital is scheduled for Q3-4 2023.
- Acute hospital emergency generator project is in process. Anticipated completion is Q3 2024. The generator will not be delivered until April 2024.
- Continuation of the sewer line is projected to restart tentatively in June 2023.
- CCC Generator replacement initial steps to begin within next 60 days with estimated completion of the project Spring 2025

Trauma Update:

- Trauma activations= 20
- Codes= none
- Alerts= 20
- 60% traffic collisions; no geriatric falls; no GSW; 10% adult fall; 6% other
- 65% discharged; 15% admitted; 20% transferred (DRMC); no expired

Board members congratulated Desert Regional for attaining their new trauma designation, and thanked Linda Evans for the report.

**REPORTS**

OUTREACH AND MARKETING REPORT – Joe Ruddon, Director Business Development

Mr. Ruddon referred the Directors to his written report in the agenda packet. He highlighted two items: 1) the outreach team is now at the 29 Palms Farmer's Market and plans to alternate outreach teams between HIV and COVID teams; and 2) Flying Doctors event is this Saturday. He recognized Marge Doyle RN and Jack Cruikshank, MD for their presentation to HDMC medical staff on the HIV update.

FINANCIAL REPORT – Debbie Anderson, CFO

Ms. Anderson reported that the consolidated financials for the month of January show income of \$296,761 and year to date income of \$1,424,684. The non-clinic financials for the month of January show income of \$266,464 and year to date income of \$798,117. The clinic financials for the month of January show income of \$30,297 and year to date income of \$626,568.

January was a busy month for finance, as there were several external reports to be submitted, including the annual UDS financial reporting for HRSA. The single audit was also concluding; it took longer than usual to finish due to the new Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 87 pronouncement that is being implemented for June 30, 2022. This has required us to recognize leases greater than one year in our statement of net position. Previously, an operating lease (a lease whereby you acquire and/or grant an asset for some period of time, but don't purchase/sell the asset, such as renting space in a building) wasn't placed on the balance sheet; now it will be. Thus, an analysis of all the leases of the District (including the CHC leases) performed in order to meet this new standard.

The investment income had another favorable month, which accounted for the vast majority of the positive change in net income for the non-clinic financials. The clinics also came in with a small positive change in net income. Revenue continues the past month's trends of being over in patient services revenue, capitation, and quality. The largest variance in expense continues to be salaries.



Ms. Anderson stated that the health center Sliding Fee Program is being evaluated and adjustments to create a comprehensive process so the organization is compliant with HRSA requirements. Finance is adding three additional employees to staff to manage the process and gather accurate patient data.

- **Motion 23-17:** Director Cooper motioned to accept the financial reports as presented, second by Director Stiemsma; motion passed by unanimous vote.

**STAFF REPORT – Cindy Schmall, CEO**

Ms. Schmall referred to her written report in the agenda packet. She also noted in her report:

- Attempts to hire a new HR director have been unsuccessful. Ms. Schmall is overseeing the department with two employees who have stepped into the gap and are sharing the HR processes under her direction.
- The Split Rock project is moving forward slowly. The architect advised they have the building specifications completed to submit the drawings to the planning department for issuing permits.
- The annual Uniform Data Set was submitted to HRSA two days early.
- The patient self-scheduling module recently launched for adult medicine, pediatric medicine and COVID patients. Two patients have used it as of today.
- We are exploring enrolling in the Medi-Cal program Every Woman Counts for mammography and cervical cancer screenings. Estimated cost to CHC last year was approximately \$30,000 for lab tests and mammography screenings.

**CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION**

- March 4 is the Flying Doctors event at Copper Mountain College, primarily focused on dental and visual services. The District is a sponsor of the event and will have outreach services and the mobile medical unit on site for medical services.
- March 25 is a scheduled board retreat to discuss outcomes of the board self-assessment survey.

**DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

DIRECTOR COOPER: “The redistricting process is very interesting.”

DIRECTOR EVANS: She thanked Dr. Salhotra and staff for their work in the health center.

DIRECTOR SAVITT: “This was an excellent meeting tonight.”

DIRECTOR STIEMSMA: “Very pleased we were able to honor Dr. Salhotra. It’s encouraging that we can promote our employees into new positions and that we are growing the organization internally.”

DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: Thanked everyone for attending.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

  
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Heidi Stiemsma, Secretary