



Morongo Basin Health Care District  
Community Health Center

## GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

**MINUTES of Thursday, November 9, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**

*This meeting convened on the District's campus at 6530 La Contenta Road, Yucca Valley, suite 400. The meeting was also accessible by Microsoft Teams remote platform.*

**Mission Statement:** *To improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.*

**Vision Statement:** *A healthy Morongo Basin.*

**Core Values:** *Commitment, Collaboration, Accountability, Dignity, Integrity*

### PRESENT:

- Cody Briggs (*present*)
- Patricia "Pat" Cooper (*present*)
- Bryan Goldfarb (*remote*)
- Nicola Keller (*present*)
- Jennifer Rendon (*present*)
- Cecelia St. Clair (*present*)
- Heidi Stiemsma (*present*)
- Jackie Todd (*present*)
- Jack Williams not (*present*)

### STAFF:

- Cindy Schmall, CEO
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Joe Rutton, Chief Community Programs Officer
- Tina Huff, Chief Clinical Operations Officer
- Tom Mannix, HR Director
- Beverly Krushat, Executive Assistant
- Janeen Duff, Program Development Liaison
- Kathy Alkire, Community Outreach/Patient Education

### GUESTS:

- Jodie Wingo, President and CEO, Community Health Association Inland Southern Region (CHAISR)
- Sindy Sanchez, Senior Director Policy and Government Affairs, CHAIRS

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Nicola Keller at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Karen Graley, board clerk, conducted roll call and declared a quorum.

### OBSERVANCES:

Heidi Stiemsma led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance  
Cody Briggs read the mission and vision statements.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were presented.

### APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA:

- **Motion 23-61:** Motion by Heidi Stiemsma to approve the meeting Agenda as presented; motion seconded by Cody Briggs; the motion passed by unanimous vote.

### APPROVAL OF CHC CONSENT AGENDA:

**Motion 23-62:** Motion by Jennifer Rendon, second by Jackie Todd, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; the motion passed by unanimous vote. There was no discussion.

- Minutes of the Governing Board regular business meeting dated October 12, 2023

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Cindy Schmall introduced the guests. Jodie Wingo, President and CEO of Community Health Association Inland Southern Region (CHAISR). Ms. Wingo explained CHAISR is the local area consortium and represents health centers with policy, quality improvement, workforce technical assistance, advocacy, and educational support; government grants pass through their organization to health centers. She acknowledged Cindy Schmall as a CHAISR board member. Sendy Sanchez, Senior Director Policy, and Government Affairs, presented federal issues and updates.

**FEDERAL FUNDING:** The federal end-of-fiscal-year was September; a budget was not passed during session, so a short-term budget measure was passed to keep the government open for a few more weeks. With the transition of Speaker of the House, no business was conducted. Representative Mike Johnson was elected as Speaker and the House and tried to pass 12 funding bills needed to keep the government operational past November 17. It is not likely the group of bills, which included funding for community health centers, will pass.

- STATE SB-779: Primary Care Clinic Data Modernization Act extends the reporting requirements to intermittent clinics. Health centers are already required to report the required information to several government entities, making this duplicative reporting for health centers. CHAISR has spoken with the senator who presented the bill. Now that he understands it is duplicative, a “clean up” bill will be presented next year. This bill was signed by Governor.
- STATE AB-1612: Clinic Licensure OSHPD 3 removes regulatory barriers for health center looking to expand and provide more patient care. Vetoed by Governor.
- STATE AB-85: Social Determinants of Health – Screening and Outreach. Allows health centers to be reimbursed for same day health screenings at health centers. Vetoed by Governor.
- STATE SB-525: Minimum Wage for Healthcare Workers amendments provide for a slower phase-in schedule to allow health centers more time to adjust to the increased compensation. The tiered schedule is: \$21 in June 2024; \$22 in June 2026; and \$25 in June 2027. More information about implementation is expected in January.

CHAISR is currently working on policy prioritization. They are meeting with elected officials to brainstorm ideas and provide education on some health center hardships and how legislation can help. CHAISR is looking at health access, behavioral health, emergency and climate change resiliency, funding, regulatory affairs, and issues that relate to health centers. We are still looking at social determinants of health and how to integrate them; voter and civic engagement; and continue to look at workforce as a priority for this next year. They are also focused on budget advocacy as the Governor will present his budget on January 1.

Ms. Sanchez spoke to Advocacy Days, April 16, where CHAISR members visit Sacramento to speak with legislatures on behalf of policy impacting health centers. She invited board members and staff to join her in Sacramento for this event.

Ms. Schmall and board members thanked Ms. Sanchez for her presentation.

Cody Briggs asked about the 340B issue: Cindy explained that the pharmaceutical companies have found a loophole in the HRSA governing documents. 340B is a HRSA grant awarded to health centers that helps to reimburse for patient medications. The pharmaceutical companies are now restricting facilities to one pharmacy. It restricts patient access to medicine. The conflict went to court and the judge ruled on the side of the pharmaceutical companies. The pharmaceuticals are standing firm in their restriction to one pharmacy per health center. Historically, multiple local pharmacies participated in the program so patients both in Yucca Valley and 29 Palms were able to access their medications at

pharmacies in their neighborhood. Now, we are required to pick one pharmacy in the Morongo Basin for all CHC patients to use.

**REPORTS**

QUALITY REPORT: PATIENT SATISFACTION

Joe Ruddon, Chief Community Programs Officer, presented patient satisfaction statistics for third quarter surveys (July-September). In October the Press Ganey patient satisfaction information was presented to staff. Resources are provided by Press Ganey to improve survey scores; managers are engaged in moving our scores.

Survey participants are randomly selected by Press Ganey. Patients have the option to receive the survey via text, phone call or email. For third quarter, 3,086 surveys were sent, 255 were returned. Only “very good” or “always” in any question is scored.

<i>Department</i>	<i>Quarter 3</i>	<i>Quarter 2</i>	<i>Percentile Rank</i>
Medical Services	79.89%	76.33%	31% <i>(we scored better than 31% of those in our peer group)</i>
Dental Services	73.79%	78.19%	43%
Behavioral Health	79.66%	75.76%	50%

FINANCE REPORT – *Debbie Anderson, CFO*

The clinic financial report for the month September shows income of \$6,819 and year to date a loss of \$(72,502).

The clinics continue to do better than budgeted, but this is mostly due to staffing shortages, since wages, salaries, benefits and supplies are based on staffing levels. Hiring qualified staff has shown to be challenging in this workforce environment.

- Patient services revenue (net) is below budget due to one dental provider budgeted but not on board and is only recently seeing patients.
- 340B variance is due to ongoing changes by the drug manufacturer’s distribution of 340B drugs.
- Capitation fees variance is due to more patients on the capitation roster than budgeted.
- Quality variance is due to ongoing efforts to bolster quality.
- Salaries & fringe variance is due to less FTE’s working than budgeted, mostly due to the dental provider who just started and medical assistant shortages.
- Medical supplies are under budget due to budgeted providers not starting right away and because the vaccinations expense is typically incurred in the fall.
- Variances not discussed under Table 1 include the grants variance, which is due to lack of personnel affecting HIV grant income, and the purchased services variance, which is due to less legal fees, consulting & lab fees incurred.

**Motion 23-63:** Motion by Pat Cooper to accept the financial report; second by Bryan Goldfarb; motion passed by unanimous vote.

STAFF REPORT – *Tina Huff, Chief Clinical Operations Officer*

Ms. Huff referred the board to her written report in the agenda packet. She spoke to the decrease in patient volumes due to provider vacations, a new patient care checklist implemented for medical assistants to capture data for IEHP measures and to improve patient care; and a newly created position for a pediatric Care Coordinator to mirror the discharge process used in the adult department.

Cecelia St. Clair asked if the CHC sends reminders to pediatric patients. Ms. Huff stated that reminders are sent but there has been no improvement in the no-show rate. There was discussion about how to incentivize patients to make their scheduled appointments.

CEO REPORT – *Cindy Schmall, CEO*

Ms. Schmall referred the board to her written report in the agenda packet. She spoke to the financial impact of SB-525. Staff implemented an interim raise for employees currently compensated at minimum wage, increasing reimbursement to \$17/hour. This was done in anticipation of the required increase to \$21 in 2024. SB-525 also mandates that annual incremental raises will be 3.5%. Historically the District has administered a 3% merit increase. Cody Briggs asked if there are other areas in the compensation that we could tighten to mitigate cost. Cindy Schmall stated that when you begin reducing employee benefits we become uncompetitive and that increases difficulty in recruiting staff. Another approach to offset the imposed wage increase is to raise service reimbursement in other areas, such as the IEHP quality equity measurement program (P4P)p.

The City of 29 Palms approved the Split Rock plan and issued a grading permit.

**BOARD CALENDAR:**

Calendars were reviewed. Board member invited to the District holiday luncheon on December 14.

**MEETING ADJOURNED TO CLOSED SESSION adjourned at 7:16**

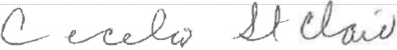
The board met in closed session pursuant to section 54957 of the Government Code: conference involving personnel – Employee Performance Evaluation for CEO. The two CHC board members who sat on the evaluation committee, Nicola Keller and Cecelia St. Clair, gave report to the full board of the committee’s findings for the annual CEO performance evaluation. The board reconvened to open session at 7:25 p.m.

**Motion 23-64:** Motion by Pat Cooper to ratify the recommendation of the CEO Performance Evaluation Committee for the CEO annual performance review; motion seconded by Jennifer Rendon; motion passed by unanimous vote.

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Karen Graley, Board Clerk*

  
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Cecelia St. Clair, Secretary