



Morongo Basin Health Care District  
Community Health Center

## GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

**MINUTES of Thursday, December 14, 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(*present*)
- Nicola Keller (*present*)
- Jennifer Rendon (*present*)
- Cecelia St. Clair (*not present*)
- Heidi Stiemsma (*present*)
- Jackie Todd (*not present*)
- Jack Williams not (*not present*)

### STAFF:

- Cindy Schmall, CEO
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Beverly Krushat, Executive Assistant
- Angie Villaluz, Senior Manager, Quality
- Jill Goodwin, Manager
- Janeen Duff, Program Development Liaison
- Kathy Alkire, Patient Educator (*remote*)

**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:

Cody Briggs led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance

Heidi Stiemsma read the mission and vision statements.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments were presented.

### APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA:

- **Motion 23-65:** Motion by Bryan Goldfarb to approve the meeting Agenda as presented; motion seconded by Heidi Stiemsma; the motion passed by unanimous vote.

### APPROVAL OF CHC CONSENT AGENDA:

**Motion 23-66:** Motion by Cody Briggs, second by Jennifer Rendon, 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 November 9, 2023.

### REPORTS

#### QUALITY REPORT: PATIENT GRIEVANCES AND SAFETY

Angie Villaluz, quality program senior manager, reported:

- 11 patient grievances were received between July to September, 2023. This is a decrease from the previous quarter. They were received through the formal IEHP reporting process. Categories included phone system, scheduling communication, provider communication,

insurance changes and the referral process. Full investigation and remediation have occurred, and resolution letters were sent to the patients.

- Life Safety rounds were completed in all ten District buildings. No issues were identified other than a flooring issue at the Yucca Valley health center. Cody Briggs asked for clarification of what is covered by “life and safety.” Cindy Schmall explained the review looks at safety issues such as up-to-date fire extinguishers, functioning light switches, exit maps clearly posted, and looking for damaged or broken items that require attention. She reported that the maintenance team has addressed the vinyl flooring issue in the Yucca Valley health center, and most recently replaced those vinyl pieces.
- Clinics: There were two reportable conditions/diseases reported per Public Health Guidelines. There was a power outage with no negative outcome. Two expired medications and nine expired vaccines were disposed.
- Peer Review: 75 adult medicine, 31 pediatric medicine, 30 dental and 15 chiropractic charts were reviewed. Reviewers met with each provider and discussed and educated them regarding found deficiencies.
- P4P Program (preventive care measures): At the end of quarter three the payment rate was \$3.63 per patient. This is the IEHP program to provide preventable care and avoid repeatedly treating the same health problems.

Ms. Villaluz then reviewed the UDS measures using a PowerPoint presentation.

Cindy Schmall pointed out that quarter three is significantly improved since first quarter. We haven't been able to meet childhood vaccination quotas because parents have been uncompliant in bringing their children in for the immunization. We have hired an LVN specifically to provide immunizations and to call and follow up with parents. Historically, residents of the Morongo Basin are resistant to vaccinations in all categories and the flu vaccine is no exception. Joe Ruddon runs local radio/social media / print ads encouraging flu shots.

CHC is close to the national average for immunizations but attaining that score has required significant effort.

Cervical cancer screening: we have had less availability for women's health appointments because of a provider shortage, which we believe impacted the lower compliance. We are actively recruiting providers.

Depression/remission score is low. This is a new measure. When the patient has a diagnosis of depression and received treatment, the provider must note in the system that the diagnosis has been resolved. Staff is reviewing internal processes to improve the score.

Nicola Keller said she was impressed with the score improvement for depression.

### FINANCE REPORT

Cindy Schmall gave the financial report in the absence of the CFO. The clinic financial report for the month of October shows a loss of income of \$(50,998) and year to date loss of \$(123,500).

Emerging trends show increased capitation fees, higher quality reimbursement due to ongoing efforts to improve scores, lower patient services revenue resulting in savings on salaries, benefits, physician fees and medical supplies. Staffing is still an issue and is reflected in the financials.

Patient services revenue is down since visits are down. Assumptions used to create the budget included consistent staffing of providers and support staff which has not been the case. Providers have taken FMLA and/or extended leaves of absence; new providers require time to learn systems and meet productivity standards; staff turnover and leaves of absence have impacted reduced patient volumes in

behavioral health, adult and dental departments. Additionally, there have been delays in onboarding the new dentist at the 29 Palms location. Also, not realized during the budget process was that virtual-only visits have been phased out as the pandemic is behind us. Telehealth visits are still allowed, but they involve video in order to be billable. Patients can no longer have their therapy session on the go and providers cannot just hang up and start their next phone call. This has resulted in higher no-show rates and reduced revenue. Overall, the clinics are losing money, but not as much as projected in this budget.

There was discussion about recruiting staff, the trend to accept the position, the cost of processing them through drug test and physical exam, and then not show up to the job.

**Motion 23-63:** Motion by Heidi Stiemsma to accept the financial report; second by Jennifer Rendon; motion passed by unanimous vote.

### STAFF REPORT

Jill Goodwin, clinic manager, provided Tina Huff's report. She referred the board to the written report in the agenda packet.

- The IEHP P4P program continues to increase the reimbursement rate. At the beginning of the year, reimbursement for quality measures was \$1.14/patient and is now at \$4.38/patient – we are currently working on pediatric measures.
- A Vaccines for Children (VFC) audit for both 29 Palms and Yucca Valley clinics was the first one in four years. Staff passed with ZERO deficiencies.
- A Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner was hired and will start January 15. She will see patients full time.
- The new Behavioral health manager starts next week.
- Dr. Paul, Medical Director, retired December 8. Dr. Jack Cruikshank will be the Interim Medical Director.
- A LVN was hired and does only pediatric patient vaccine visits. She has been instrumental in increasing flu vaccine compliance in the pediatric population during this flu season.
- Clinic staff participated in the town of Yucca Valley's Christmas Parade. The focus was of the float was the pediatrics department. Doctors Frascchetti and Shih, Tiffany Mduba, NP, and their families, as well as employees whose children are clinic pediatric patients joined us on the float.

### CEO REPORT

Ms. Schmall reported she had contracted COVID which interfered with providing a written report in the agenda packet. She updated the board that staff has interviewed a physician for a full-time position at 29Palms. The doctor won't be available until late summer as she still has to apply for a California license. The benefit of having more providers is we can care for a greater number of patients. We are working with a company to recruit providers. We are recruiting a child psychologist and have interviewed a physician with FQHC experience. We also have received applications for nurse practitioners that we are pursuing.

The marketing department has published an advertorial in a quarterly magazine. This first edition highlighted our pediatricians, doctors Frascchetti and Shih. The Spirit Magazine will be mailed to local residents.

The Request for Bids for the Split Rock grading are with the architect who has requested additional information from the bidders.

**BOARD CALENDAR:**

Calendars were reviewed. There was discussion around the February education event on the Brown Act. Staff will check with the attorney if board members can attend by remote into the session and if it can be recorded for those not able to attend.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

- HEIDI STIEMSMA: "I'm excited to see the progress on the quality measures."
- PAT COOPER: She promoted the hospital's Continuing Care Center "adopt a resident" for the holidays and encouraged participation.

**MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Karen Graley, Board Clerk*



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Nicola Keller, Chairperson