



Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba  
**Morongo Basin Healthcare District**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
April 2, 2026 at 6:15 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 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, Equity.*

Board of Directors:

- Director Cooper
- Director Evans
- Director Markle-Greenhouse
- Director Stiemsma
- Jacqueline Todd

Administrative Staff:

- CEO Cindy Schmall
- Tricia Gehrlein, Chief Administrative Officer (*remote*)
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Beverly Krushat, Office Services Manager
- Janeen Duff, Quality Director
- Dianna Anderson, Community Programs Manager

Guests

- Linda Evans, Chief Strategy Officer, Desert Care Network (*remote*)
- Shawn Johnson, CPA, Owner, DZA Accountants (*remote*)
- Marc Greenhouse, CHC board member
- Vikas Sharma, community member

**CALL TO ORDER**

Director Greenhouse called the meeting to order at 6:15 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 a roll call and declared a quorum.

**OBSERVANCE**

Director Todd read the mission and vision statements. Director Cooper led the assembly in the pledge of allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None presented.

**APPROVAL OF THE MEETING AGENDA**

- **Motion 26-23:** Director Stiemsma motioned to approve the meeting agenda; second by Director Todd, motion passed by unanimous vote.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

- **Motion 26-24:** Director Evans motioned to approve the minutes of March 5, 2026, second by Director Stiemsma. Motion passed by unanimous vote.



## **PRESENTATION**

### **CHANGES TO THE CHC QUALITY PROGRAM** – *Tricia Gehrlein, Chief Administrative Officer*

Ms. Gehrlein explained the recent changes to the quality program and department. “Building on what we’ve done in the past, these recent changes will bring improvements to our process, such as leveraging the electronic health record to explore how well our clinic systems work. These changes will use data as intelligence and not just information collected.” In 2025, Root Cause Analysis was introduced, incorporating data driven measurements into the quality improvement projects but it did not provide the story behind the data. “We didn’t know if we had a process-problem or a people-problem. This approach helps us ask better questions to determine what is going on.” She provided an example of how the new approach improved measurement scores for Ischemic Vascular Disease from 49% to 82%.

The new approach uses DMAIC (define, measure, analyze, improve, control). Using this new approach of using data to inform the process directs the creation and implementation of lasting system changes. The DMAIC methodology provides a more robust preparation of measurement and analysis before any change or improvement is considered. Process control is required as a built-in final step resulting in lasting change.

The Directors praised Ms. Gehrlein for implementing the changes and were excited about the outcome from meaningful data collection and analysis. CEO Schmall noted that over the last year department staff focused on drilling down into the data. “We have made so many changes and improvements to the things that we’re doing that now I’m so excited. It is a step forward for the organization.”

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT** – *Shawn Johnson, CPA, Owner and Tyler Anderson, CPA, Senior Accountant, DZA Accountants*

Mr. Johnson presented the annual financial audit for 2024-25 at the March board meeting. The Directors chose to defer accepting the report to the April meeting for additional time to review the printed report. Mr. Johnson joined this meeting to answer questions. There were no questions from the Directors. Each of them expressed their appreciation for his report last month.

- **Motion 26-25** Motion by Director Evans, second by Director Stiemsma, to accept the auditor’s 2024-25 financial audit as presented. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **OUTREACH & TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM UPDATE** – *Dianna Anderson, Community Programs Manager*

Ms. Anderson referred the Directors to her written report in the agenda packet and fielded questions.

- **WELLNESS WHEELS:** the client list was updated and stands at 624 active riders. 40 new riders were added this past quarter and a similar community response is expected for second quarter. Ms. Schmall noted that last year she reduced transport outside the Basin from five days to two days because ReachOut was able to handle the demand. But ReachOut recently communicated they are currently unable to keep up with the demand. Wellness Wheels is now expanding the program back to five days a week. Director Evans said she appreciates the numbers report because this program for transport to higher levels



of care is a social determinant of health that directly impacts community access to health services. “I know Director Greenhouse and I have supported this transportation program even if it is a cost to the District in wages, vehicle maintenance and insurances. It satisfies a definite need in the community.”

- **OUTREACH:** The written report lists community activities where the outreach department represented District services. Ms. Anderson noted that the outreach focus is expanding its community health education schedule. A new Community Health Worker (CHW), with great experience in community education has been added to the team. Cindy Schmall noted that the two original CHW staff are providing face-to-face patient-based assistance in the health center. They will still assist Dianna as needed for community outreach events.
- **DIAPER PROGRAM:** Ms. Anderson called out the diaper program data for March. Through our pediatric department, we distributed 3,500 diapers or 140 packages and 127 units of wipes. We served 50 families and 70 children for the month of March alone.

Director Greenhouse asked about the community shower program for homeless residents. Ms. Anderson stated it is a monthly program and has been mostly sited in the City of 29 Palms. This organization provides laundry services in collaboration with local businesses. Director Greenhouse spoke of another company that provides similar availability but specializes in providing laundry services. Director Greenhouse thanked Ms. Anderson for her report.

**GRANTS UPDATE** – *Tricia Gehrlein, Chief Administrative Officer*

Ms. Gehrlein referred the Directors to the written summary in the agenda packet. She reviewed the list of grants.

- **HRSA grant.** She that the HRSA website stated they were moving to a four-year cycle and that those in our timeframe for renewal would be extended by a year. We received official notice that the grant term is now through January 31, 2028. HRSA is simply extending the grant for another year at the same funding level. This will help with long-term planning.
- The **HIV grant** is no longer a grant. In August 2025 HRSA announced that they were giving us funding and rolled it into our base HRSA grant. They want us to continue the work of the original HIV grant but without the reporting requirements. We are unsure that we will receive that funding again because of changes in funding for federal programs.
- **Medi-Cal enrollment.** We have a continuing partnership with Community Health Association Inland Southern Region (CHAISR) for promoting the Covered California program. For every person we enroll and is accepted into the Covered California program, we receive a reimbursement of \$50 per patient to help offset our time to help them enroll in the program. Ms. Gehrlein expects continued funding of the CHAISR grant. Also, two weeks ago we received notification from CHAISR that we were chosen to be a sub-awardee for Kaiser funding to help our patients stay on Medi-Cal and to support the work that Dianna Anderson and her outreach team, and Jill Goodwin and her team are doing in the health centers to help people maintain their benefits. That award was about \$40,000 to offset costs. Timeframe is March through December 2026. Funding is strictly to help us pay for staff to keep people enrolled in Medi-cal.



- ReachOut Agreement: We have an ongoing agreement with ReachOut where they refer patients with substance abuse disorders to our behavioral health program for medically assisted treatment.
- Transportation grants: We have two transportation grants. The 5310 grant is in partnership with ReachOut for the transport of patients to a higher level of care outside the Morongo Basin. Our transportation team coordinates schedules with ReachOut staff. The second grant is for vehicle maintenance and fuel through a Caltrans grant. Also, our local transit district provides us with bus passes for patient use. Our CHW patient-based staff encourage patients to use these transportation options so their personal money can be redirected to food purchases.

CEO Schmall addressed the difficulty in securing grant funding, noting that most grants require the recipient to be a non-profit (501c3) organization. The District is a government agency, not a 501c3. This bias makes the District ineligible for many grants. Staff continue to pursue and do their due diligence to find grant funding for District programs. Our foundation is a 501c3 foundation, but it was set up as a pass-through entity. It was structured to receive donations from the community on behalf of the District but does not employ staff to manage distribution of monies, nor does it have a community board; our foundation's board is the District's elected board members. This reduces the District's eligibility for some grant monies.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT - *Cindy Schmall, CEO*

CEO Cindy Schmall reviewed the written report as prepared by CFO Debbie Anderson.

Consolidated financials for the month of February 2026 show income of \$584,353 and year to date income of \$3,165,404. Non-clinic financials for February show income of \$554,522 and a year-to-date income of \$2,563,619. The health center financials for the month of February show income of \$29,831 and year to date income of \$601,785.

Patient visits in February were down compared to other months in the fiscal year, but were still more than budgeted visits (2,903 actual vs 2,737 budget). This has contributed to the health centers being over budget by 862 visits to date, which is reflected in the financial statement's patient services revenue. Capitation revenue seems to have finally leveled out from IEHP. Previous to this year, we were continually receiving increased capitation amounts, which has added more variables to trying to estimate the year end payback to Medi-Cal. Now that this has leveled out, we are hoping we can fine tune our estimates for the paybacks owed that come about from the Medi-Cal payment reconciliation process. Health center operating expenses continue to be within 1%-2% of budget, excluding allocations.

Ms. Schmall noted the disparity in patient visits between this year and last year, stating that last year we had six providers and this year we have four providers, which impacts the volume of visits. We have new providers onboarding and are expecting patient volume to increase.

- **Motion 26-26**: Director Stiemsma motioned to accept the financial report as presented, second by Director Evans; motion passed by unanimous vote.

#### CEO STAFF REPORT

Ms. Schmall referred the Directors to her written report in the agenda packet.

She announced we have begun the recertification process to ensure we remain a certified district with ACHD. Their board is changing the requirements for recertification, but we are grandfathered in the process.



We received the Letter of Welcome from the California State Controller's office regarding the transition to CUPCCAA for public works. Our attorney has confirmed that we are now listed and may proceed to use the CUPCCAA rules. You may recall this board completed the resolution and ordinance a couple of months ago for district staff to projects completed without the need for a formal bidding process. This simplifies our workflow and speeds up staff ability to get things done.

All the annual insurance renewals for provider liability, Directors and Officers, Cyber Security, Ransomware, property, workers compensation and automobiles have been submitted and we await the certificates.

Two of three lease agreements for La Contenta tenants have been renewed. We anticipate taking back that third suite May 1, 2026.

We have renewed the dental services lease for an additional two years to give us time to complete some construction on our owned properties. The landlord has been very fair to us and is aware that we will likely not renew after this. The Directors requested a letter of appreciation to send to the landlord.

The budget process has begun. Debbie, Tricia and I are planning to present to you in May a preliminary budget for your review.

Transportation has purchased a new van with lift and now has two new drivers to ensure we can meet clients' needs.

Ms. Schmall announced that Lorraine Kirkpatrick NP, and Daniela Attia LCSW have started orientation. Our search for an additional provider is still on-going to help us meet the needs of patients. Dr. Kim will be back full-time in April and is doing well.

Kelly Hedges Wehner and his team participated in an IEHP audit of patients screened for lead testing; we scored 95%.

Facilities department is working on plumbing at the Yucca Valley health center. Old cast iron pipes are creating chronic problems and will require replacement. It will be a costly project, about \$70,000, and will require tearing up the floor to replace the pipes.

#### **CALENDAR REVIEW AND COORDINATION**

Calendars for April, May and June were reviewed.

- CEO ad hoc committee will convene April 7.
- May 2 is the Yucca Valley Community Health and Resource Fair, 10a-2p.

#### **DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

- DIRECTOR COOPER: "Great reports tonight. Thank you."
- DIRECTOR EVANS: "Thank you. I already made my comments throughout the meeting."
- DIRECTOR STIEMSMA: She mentioned the April lecture series on allergies as being timely for Spring. She thanked Cindy Schmall and Tricia Gehrlein for everything they have done to improve the quality program. "I think people, when they see things from the outside, don't realize how much work, time and resources are required to keep the quality program effective. I know from the places I have worked that the organizations that have dedicated resources to



quality are just better organizations. So, I commend you for establishing resources for the program, and with Tricia leading it, I feel very confident that there's going to be continued success.”

- DIRECTOR TODD: She thanked staff for their reports.
- DIRECTOR GREENHOUSE: “Linda Evans, thank you for being with us tonight. Tricia, thanks for your input. Thank you to our CEO for her great leadership. And she thanked other staff who were present.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Stiemsma', written over a horizontal line.

Heidi Stiemsma, Secretary of the Board

*Board meeting minutes recorded by K. Graley, Board Clerk.*