



RURAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMISSION

NEBRASKA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH
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MINUTES of the Rural Health Advisory Commission

Friday, November 22, 2019

Nebraska State Office Building
Lower Level Conference Room B
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, Nebraska

Members Present: April Dexter, N.P.; Marty Fattig; Michael Greene, M.D.; Cherlyn Hunt; Benjamin Iske, D.D.S. (arrived at 1:43 pm); Lynette Kramer, M.D.; Mark Pyle; Rebecca Schroeder, Ph.D.; Sandra Torres, M.D.; Roger Wells, PA-C; Linda Wittmuss for Sheri Dawson.

Members Not Present: Jessye Goertz; Sheri Dawson R.N.; Michael Sitorius, M.D.

Staff Present: Margaret Brockman; Tom Rauner; Deb Stoltenberg; Rachael Wolfe

1. **Call Meeting to Order; Open Meetings Act and Agenda Posted; Adopt Agenda; Approve Minutes of September 20, 2019, Meeting; Introduce Members and Guests**

Chairman Marty Fattig called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. with the following members present: April Dexter, N.P.; Marty Fattig; Michael Greene, M.D.; Cherlyn Hunt; Lynette Kramer, M.D.; Mark Pyle; Rebecca Schroeder, Ph.D.; Sandra Torres, M.D.; Roger Wells, PA-C.

Mr. Fattig announced that the Open Meetings Act and today's Agenda are posted by the door. Roger Wells moved to adopt the November 22, 2019 meeting agenda with no changes. Rebecca Schroeder seconded the motion. Motion carried. YES: Dexter; Fattig; Greene; Hunt; Kramer; Pyle; Schroeder; Torres; Wells. NO: None. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Goertz; Dawson; Iske; Sitorius.

Rebecca Schroeder moved to approve the September 20, 2019 Rural Health Advisory Commission meeting minutes. Roger Wells seconded the motion. Motion carried. YES: Dexter; Fattig; Greene; Hunt; Kramer; Pyle; Schroeder; Torres; Wells. NO: None. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Goertz; Dawson; Iske; Sitorius.

Members, staff, and guests introduced themselves. Chairman Marty Fattig welcomed the two new members, Dr. Sandra Torres, Family Practice Resident and Dr. Michael Allen Christopher Greene, Creighton University Representative.

2. Administrative Items

Nominate and Vote for Chair & Vice-Chair

Mark Pyle moved to nominate and approve Marty Fattig for Chair and Rebecca Schroeder for Vice-Chair.

Marty Fattig and Rebecca Schroeder agreed to serve. Roger Wells seconded the motion. Roll call vote. Motion carried. YES: Dexter; Fattig; Greene; Hunt; Kramer; Pyle; Schroeder; Torres; Wells. NO: None. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Goertz; Dawson; Iske; Sitorius.

Set 2020 Meeting Dates

Ms. Wolfe stated that at the last meeting, some members had requested Friday mornings as opposed to Friday afternoons. For Friday morning meetings, those with a distance to travel could come into town on Thursday evening. There are some funds available for hotel stays.

The group felt that Kearney was a good site for the outside of Lincoln/Omaha RHAC meeting as it is centrally located, but that waiting until April (to pair it with the Rural Health Conference) may have meant going too long without a meeting. Therefore, the commission determined to meet again in February and to hold a meeting in Kearney in September.

The following dates, times, and locations were decided on:

- Friday, February 21, 2020 – 1:30 pm to 4 pm, Lincoln NSOB
- Friday, June 26, 2020 – 1:30 to 4 pm, Lincoln NSOB
- Friday, September 18, 2020 – 9:30 am to noon, Kearney
- Friday, December 4, 2020 – 9:30 am to noon, Lincoln NSOB

3. Office of Rural Health Activities

Margaret Brockman reported on a variety of activities within the Nebraska Office of Rural Health (ORH).

NOSORH – November 21st was National Rural Health Day. The ORH hosted a screening of the film “The Providers” with popcorn.

Dr. Brian Buhlke, who used to be on the commission, was recognized as 2019 Community Star for Nebraska.

Last week in Kearney, the CAH Quality Conference was held. The Nebraska Hospital Association sponsors it. This conference included rural health clinics for the first time. The inclusion of these clinics will continue next year and include more breakouts specific to them. As part of this conference, tickets are provided to eight quality leaders through a drawing to attend a conference put on by Bruce Lee. This is a great opportunity for them to attend something they normally wouldn't be able to. Chartis, which is a business that does

analysis of financial data, presented at the quality conference. The company is working with Critical Access Hospitals to improve scores. A lot of the work they're doing to improve is voluntary, but these hospitals are doing a great job and should be commended.

Ms. Brockman announced that the ORH was funded by CMS for a data project. The office has also been assisting area hospitals in working on a planning grant. Lexington hospital will submit the grant, along with two other CAHs. The office is working with NeHii to pull information from their electronic health records to use for quality measures. Lilypad will be looking at this to see how it could be implemented in other states.

Ms. Brockman mentioned using state funds to pay for a grant writer to assist organizations that want to apply for federal grant funding. She also mentioned that ORH funds the annual rural health conference, and to let her know if you'd like anything specific to be presented on.

Opioid Funding Available for Medication-Assisted Treatment

Margaret Brockman and Linda Wittmuss spoke about funding available for Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) training for NE NHSC State Loan Repayment Program recipients and they can get certified for free.

Ms. Brockman asked the Commission if they thought it should be a suggestion or requirement for NHSC Nebraska State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) participants. The consensus was that while it should not be mandatory, these practitioners definitely need to be informed of this opportunity and that it is strongly suggested. The commission requested Rachael Wolfe let recipients know that this is a possibility.

Ms. Wittmuss remarked that the Office of Behavioral Health has more than MAT available – first responder training is also available, for example.

NHA has opioid toolkits available; let Margaret know if you'd like one.

It was remarked that there are many toolkits available, but that it remains vital to get more providers trained. A clinic in North Platte was mentioned. Ms. Wittmuss remarked that Region 2 contracts with Behavioral Health to fund this clinic and they are using some of the federal funds mentioned earlier.

Ms. Brockman then mentioned that the human trafficking toolkit has been finalized and passed a couple of copies around. The ORH helped to fund printing.

There is an orientation guide for Quality Improvement (QI) for professionals that Ms. Brockman also passed around. She mentioned a January 30-31st nursing home conference and the "Healthier Rural America Conference" on September 15-17th in Omaha.

Tom Rauner then spoke about his current process of trying to make sure Medicare-certified rural health centers still qualify for federal programs like SLRP. These sites must be NHSC certified.

4. Review Current Federal & State Legislative Activities Impacting Rural Health

Legislative Resolution 172 was discussed:

The purpose of this resolution is to study and analyze state and local policy and initiatives to retain and incent health care providers and health-related businesses in the state to remain and expand in Nebraska. This interim study shall further examine the potential advantages of combining employee incentives of existing loan forgiveness programs with federal and state benefits from federally designated Opportunity Zones to stimulate private investment by health-related industries and health professions to address economic development and workforce development in high-need areas across Nebraska.

Roger Wells spoke to the group about this Legislative Resolution, stating that part of the intent seems to be to try and prevent outsourcing of education in Nebraska. He remarked that most of the items are things we currently are doing. He remarked the commission needs to work with UNMC to be part of the process. There is a meeting on the resolution December 4th at 2 pm and Mr. Wells will attend. He will forward information to the Commission after the December 4th meeting.

Marty Fattig updated the group, stating that the outpatient prospective payment rule had come out. He was relieved to report that “direct” supervision had been changed to “general” supervision. He also mentioned that FQHCs are scoring lower and less likely to qualify for NHSC funds. Amy Behnke is working with Mr. Fattig to submit a state legislative bill asking for \$2 million additional funding to apply to the loan repayment program.

5. Rural Health Systems & Professional Incentive Act Program Updates

RHAC 2019 Annual Report and Recommendations

It was determined to approve the recommendations as drafted and to begin work on addressing the issues laid out within them at the meeting in February. The Commission would like to be continuously working on and updating the recommendations throughout the year.

EMS, air care, and paramedics seem to be major issues. Behavioral health is also a large area of concern. Rural communities are seeing school threats of violence and need to address farmers’ mental health (continued follow up relating to flooding).

Topics of discussion for February will be: EMS and Behavioral Health.

Lynette Kramer moved to approve the Rural Health Advisory Commission’s 2019 Annual Report and Recommendations with no changes and to have the Office of Rural Health distribute the Annual Report and Recommendations with a cover letter from the Commission Chair via email to the following individuals/groups: Governor, Lt. Governor, all State Senators, Nebraska’s Congressional representatives, and DHHS’ Directors. Michael Greene seconded motion. Motion carried. YES: Dexter; Fattig; Greene; Hunt; Iske; Kramer;

Pyle; Schroeder; Torres; Wells. NO: None. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Goertz; Dawson; Sitorius.

The commission asked that the Report and Recommendations be finalized before the end of December and that each commission member receive a final electronic copy as well.

Review Budget

The budget remains the same, as all funds for FY19-20 have been obligated (see Agenda Item #5B). The new applications are all being recommended for the federal program.

Shortage Area Request

Adams County requested an assessment of their county as a shortage area for General Surgery. They do not qualify, but may if someone retires. They were notified of this on November 15, 2019.

6. CLOSED SESSION

Rebecca Schroeder moved to go into Closed Session at 3:13 p.m. April Dexter seconded the motion. Motion carried. YES: Dexter; Fattig; Greene; Hunt; Iske; Kramer; Pyle; Schroeder; Torres; Wells. NO: None. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Goertz; Dawson; Sitorius.

Marty Fattig announced that the Rural Health Advisory Commission would go into Closed Session at 3:13 p.m. to review loan repayment applications and updates on current recipients. Mr. Fattig asked guests to please wait outside the room.

7. OPEN SESSION

Roger Wells moved to go into Open Session at 3:25 p.m. April Dexter seconded the motion. Motion carried. YES: Dexter; Fattig; Greene; Hunt; Iske; Kramer; Pyle; Schroeder; Torres; Wells. NO: None. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Goertz; Dawson; Sitorius.

Mr. Wells motioned to approve the following loan repayment applications with estimated loan repayment start dates and loan repayment amounts as indicated or as determined by the Office of Rural Health staff, based on issuance of license and/or loan documentation, practice time in the shortage area, and the availability of funds for the state match.

WL	Status	Date Complete App Received	License	Name	Actual Practice Date	Expect/Eligible Start Date	Specialty	County (Community) of Practice	Total Loan Repayment (State and Local)
WL	recommend federal funds	9/20/2019	1870	Tara Callison	9/1/2020	9/1/2020	PA (FP)	Holt (O'Neill)	\$50,000.00
WL	recommend federal funds	10/6/2019	112971	Kimberly Smith	9/1/2019	9/1/2020	NP (FP)	Morrill (Bridgeport)	\$50,000.00
WL	recommend federal funds	10/8/2019	pending	Matthew Sexton	8/1/2020	9/1/2020	MD/DO (FP)	Dawson (Lexington)	\$100,000.00
WL	recommend federal funds	10/21/2019	112888	Melody Leisy	10/28/2019	9/1/2020	NP (Psychiatry)	Morrill (Bridgeport)	\$34,220.00

And Michael Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried. YES: Dexter; Fattig; Greene; Hunt; Iske; Kramer; Pyle; Schroeder; Torres; Wells. NO: None. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Goertz; Dawson; Sitorius.

8. Other Business

Marty Fattig thanked the commission members for their passion and commitment to rural healthcare. He applauded members for wanting to start work on the recommendations for the coming year.

9. Adjourn

Mark Pyle motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:27 p.m. Meeting adjourned.