



## RURAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMISSION

NEBRASKA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH  
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### **DRAFT MINUTES** of the

### **Rural Health Advisory Commission (RHAC)**

**Friday, February 13, 2026**

**1:00 p.m. – 1:47 p.m.**

**NSOB Conference Room 6K**

**301 Centennial Mall South**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

#### **1. Call Meeting to Order; Open Meetings Act and Agenda Posted; Adopt Agenda.**

Vice-Chairperson Kate Hesser, M.D. called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. with the following members present: April Dexter, N.P.; Kate Hesser, M.D.; Kate Kusek, D.D.S.; Rebecca Schroeder, Ph.D.; Myra Stoney; Timothy Tesmer, M.D.; Jim Ulrich.

Dr. Hesser announced that the meeting notice had been posted to the DHHS website and sent out via email and USPS on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2026.\* Additionally, the Open Meetings Act and meeting agenda are posted outside the meeting room and on the commission webpage.

Diva Wilson, M.D. joined the meeting at 1:03pm.

Kate Kusek, D.D.S. moved to approve the February 13<sup>th</sup> 2026, meeting agenda and Rebecca Schroeder, PhD. seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Dexter, Hesser, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Tesmer, Ulrich, Wilson. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Brockhaus, Harrison, Janousek, Wells, Zamora. Motion carried.

#### **2. Administrative Items**

*Discuss LB 1071 and authorize an advocate for an official statement*

Rachael Wolfe explained that LB1071 is a budget bill that contains a proposal to cut funding for the Rural Health Provider Incentive Program by \$1.5 million in Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (from \$2,180,723 to \$680,723). As discussed at the previous commission meeting, nearly \$1.5 million has already been obligated in FY2026-2027, so this would result in 30-60 contract cancellations. Dr. Hesser and Dr. Harrison submitted a draft letter for commission members consideration. Dr. Harrison is currently away, so Dr. Hesser has taken responsibility for managing the meeting and following up on any action items.

*\*Sent as usual to: NE Rural Hospital CEOs, NE Certified Rural Health Clinic Directors, NE Local Public Health Departments, NE Community Action Partners, NE Community Health Centers/FQHCs, NE Professional Associations/ Organizations, NE State Senators, the Offices of the Governor and Lt. Governor, and other rural interested parties and groups.*

Dr. Hesser asked if there was any discussion. Members discussed the matter and two guests spoke up to clarify questions about the current legislative session and timelines - Amy Reynoldson with the Nebraska Medical Association (NMA) and David Slattery with the Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA). Amy Reynoldson explained that the cut is included in the Governor's budget bill package. The bill is expected to be released around day 40 – roughly March 9<sup>th</sup>. The legislature is required to pass a balanced budget this year so it will be debated on the floor of the legislature beginning around that time. She further explained that because the bill is so large, there are many voices reaching out about multiple sections, and that while submitting a letter may not have sufficient weight, weighing in even after the initial hearing is common and vital.

Myra Stoney moved to have Vice-Chairperson Kate Hesser, M.D. submit the letter as written to the state legislature and to allow all commission members to contact their local senator and speak as a representative of the commission in opposition to LB1071. Kate Kusek, D.D.S. seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Dexter, Hesser, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Ulrich, Wilson. ABSTAIN: Tesmer. EXCUSED: Brockhaus, Harrison, Janousek, Wells, Zamora. Motion carried.

Roger Wells joined the meeting at 1:30pm.

### **3. Public Comment**

Amy Reynoldson asked whether the commission could contact those that would be directly impacted by this potential cut and ask them to contact their senators. There was discussion about how to accomplish this as commission members were interested and saw the value in this suggestion. The Office of Rural Health cannot do this outreach, but commission members could.

Roger Wells motioned to have the Office of Rural Health provide a list of current and past loan repayment recipients (all those available in the REDCap system), to allow individual members of the commission to discuss LB1071 with providers they know. Rebecca Schroeder seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Dexter, Hesser, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Ulrich, Wells, Wilson. ABSTAIN: Tesmer. EXCUSED: Brockhaus, Harrison, Janousek, Zamora. Motion carried.

### **Adjourn**

The Commission adjourned at 1:47 p.m.