



## North Dakota Hospital Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes September 30, 2021

**Directors Present:** Tim Blasl\*, Jeff Herman\*, Steven Weiser, MD\*, Daniel Kelly\*, Kurt Schley\*, Nikki Johnson\*, Bryan Nermoe\*, and Al Hurley\*

**Others Present:** Melissa Hauer\*, Pam Cook,\* and Kelly Cermak\*

\*Participated by video conferencing.

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the North Dakota Hospital Association (NDHA) was called to order at 10:04 a.m., Central time, on September 30, 2021, by Jeff Herman, Chair of the Board, at the NDHA office located at 1622 E. Interstate Avenue, Bismarck, ND. A quorum of directors was present.

Mr. Herman asked if there were any perceived or known conflicts of interest as per items listed on the agenda for this meeting. There were none.

**Agenda Approval:** Mr. Herman asked if there were any proposed changes to the meeting agenda. Bryan Nermoe asked to have workforce added. Tim Blasl mentioned the deletion of agenda items AHA and Washington updates as written reports were included in the meeting material. Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and adopted, the agenda with the noted addition and deletions was approved.

### **Action Items:**

- a. Approval of Minutes – Mr. Herman presented to the Board for approval the minutes from the June 24, 2021 board meeting. Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and adopted, the minutes from June 24, 2021 meeting were approved.
- b. Financials – Kelly Cermak, Finance Manager, presented the financial statements as of June 2021. Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and adopted, the June 2021 financial statements were approved.
- c. 2021/2022 Budget – Mr. Cermak presented the budget. Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and adopted, the 2021/2022 budget was approved.
- d. North Dakota Hospital Foundation Board of Directors Recommendations:
  - a. Chair and chair-elect: Tim Blasl, NDHA President, brought forth the recommendations for the North Dakota Hospital Foundation Board of Directors for Beverly Vilhauer, CEO,

South Central Health, Wishek, to serve as Chair and Jody Nelson, CEO, St. Luke's Medical Center, Crosby, to serve as Chair-elect.

- b. At-Large Board openings - Tod Graeber, CEO, President, CHI St. Alexius Health Garrison and Turtle Lake Hospital, to fulfill the remaining term of Glynda Troyo-Sauviac and Ryan Mickelson, President/CEO, Tioga Medical Center, Tioga, to fill the open position. Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and adopted, the recommendations of Chair and Chair-elect and at-large appointments were approved.
- e. NDHA At-Large Director Vacancy – that Al Hurley, Chief Operating Officer, Essentia, Fargo resigned his position on the board. Mr. Blasl nominated William Heegaard, MD, President West Market, Essentia, Fargo to fulfill the vacancy. Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and adopted, the resignation of Mr. Hurley and the appointment of Dr. Heegaard to fulfill the remainder of the At-Large term was approved.
- f. NDHA Board Election Results – Mr. Blasl stated the results of the NDHA Member Board of Directors election. The slate of nominees was approved by the NDHA members which was Steven Weiser, MD, President, Altru Health System, Grand Forks, Jeff Herman, CEO, Prairie St. John's, Fargo, and Todd Schaffer, President, Sanford Medical Center, Bismarck.
- g. President Contract/Onetime Bonus – Mr. Herman mentioned that at the last meeting a quorum was not established so the President's contract and onetime bonus could not be approved. Upon a motion duly made, seconded, and adopted, the NDHA President contract and onetime bonus were approved.

**Information Reports:** Mr. Blasl mentioned that the AHA and Washington update reports were included in the board meeting materials.

NDHA Health Benefits Trust Update – Mr. Blasl gave an update on the NDHA Health Benefits Trust. A board of trustees was set up and the trust began operating on September 1, 2021. There are eight hospitals participating along with NDHA. NDHA hired Aaron Brennan to be the NDHA Health Benefits Trust Administrator.

**Staff Reports:**

- a. Presidents - Mr. Blasl gave an update on legislative interim committees. The three key committees being tracked are the Acute Psychiatric Treatment Committee, dealing with the State Hospital, the Health Care Committee, dealing with drug pricing, telehealth, and medication optimization study, and the Human Services Committee dealing with the North Dakota Department of Human Services and the North Dakota Department of Health merger. NDHA is on the Acute Psychiatric Treatment Committee October agenda to provide perspective on behavioral health.

Legislative Session – Mr. Blasl reported that a legislative session will begin on November 8. Senate and House appropriations committees will be meeting in October to prepare. Topics addressed in the special session will be redistricting and the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for North Dakota of one billion dollars. The Governor will be speaking today on his recommendations of how the funding should be spent. As of now, the legislature has four days for the session unless the Governor calls them into special session.

NDHA visited with Chris Jones, Executive Director, North Dakota Department of Human Services, regarding the proposed DHS budget for the November legislative session and there is nothing

that impact hospitals directly. Discussion held on what NDHA should request. NDHA will focus on workforce retention and recruitment across the entire discipline of health sciences.

- b. Legal Activities – Melissa Hauer, General Counsel/VP, mentioned we are seeing more lawsuits across the country where patients are suing providers because they want to try a certain drug or treatment for COVID-19 that their provider did not prescribe, e.g., Ivermectin. There have been a few courts that have ordered hospitals/doctors to give the treatment. A request was made for Ms. Hauer to send examples of these cases to board members. Ms. Hauer will email links to these cases.

Federal vaccine mandate – Ms. Hauer gave an update on the federal vaccine mandates and Executive Order for federal employees, federal contractors, and health care workers. We are waiting for federal agencies to come out with additional guidance to see if testing will be allowed in lieu of vaccination. We are hearing that there will be another attempt during the November legislative session to put a ban on vaccination mandates. If such a ban were to pass, it would put health care providers in conflict with either a federal mandate or state mandate.

There being no further business, the board meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m. Central time.

*Lori Schmutz*

Recording Secretary