



DATE: February 4, 2022
TO: Skagway Traditional Council
FROM: Judean Gordon 
SEARHC Board Representative
SUBJECT: SEARHC Board and Committee Meetings, January 27-28, 2022

Due to the spike in Omicron cases in Southeast Alaska, the SEARHC Board of Directors (Board) met virtually on January 27 and 28, 2022.

Accreditation Governing Body Committee

The Accreditation Governing Body (AGB), which has oversight of the SEARHC clinics and hospitals, kicked off the meeting on Thursday, January 27.

The AGB heard and approved the Consortium-wide Credentials Report. This report includes new medical staff appointments and reappointments, changes in privilege requests, and closed files for medical staff no longer providing services at SEARHC. The Committee also approved the Providence TeleICU TeleStroke Provider Roster.

The Committee reviewed and approved the publication of manuscripts titled “Health Care Utilization in Alaska Native People Receiving Chronic Disease Specialty Care by Video Telemedicine Compared to Propensity-Matched Controls” and “Hospitalized Infections in Patients with Rheumatic Disease in Alaska 2015-2018,” both authored by Dr. Elizabeth Ferucci.

Under the Leadership Report, the Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer (SVP/CMO) discussed current COVID-19 mitigation efforts, behavioral health expansions, facilities projects, and quality improvement indicators.

The Behavioral Health Division has increased its staffing in Haines, Juneau, Wrangell, and Sitka to support future behavioral health and substance abuse treatment access. The Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) recently opened its doors at the Front Street Clinic in downtown Juneau. OTP is a highly specialized service designed to provide medication and therapy for people with debilitating dependence on opioids. In Sitka, the Raven’s Way adolescent program will expand its capacity and provide enhanced program experiences; and the intensive outpatient treatment and housing program continues to experience high demand.

Additionally, the Committee approved the Review of SEARHC’s Clinical Contracts for 2022 and approved designating Kay Turner, Administrator of the SEARHC Home Health Program, with Dr. David Vastola as alternate and Laura Turcott as the Clinical Manager with Rebekah Ewers, Alternate.

Executive Committee

The Committee discussed the July 2022 meeting location and endorsed to the Board the July 27, 28, 29, 2022 meeting dates hosted in Petersburg, Alaska.

Finance Committee

The Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer (SVP/CFO) reviewed the financial report that included summarized volumes, revenues, expenses, cash flow, collection, A/R days, income statement variance, and payor mix, noting that volumes and cash collections remain strong.

The Committee heard the FY2021 Audit Report from Elgee Rehfeld partners Sara Griffith, Karen Tarver, and Adam Sycks.

Patient Experience Committee

The Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer (SVP/COO) reported on the patient satisfaction text survey launched in October 2021. The survey, consisting of four questions and two comment fields is sent to the patient's mobile device by text three hours after appointments. In this first quarter, 1,175 responses were completed by patients, all indicating positive reviews.

In addition to the text survey and to improve patient satisfaction, a pilot Call Center has been implemented in Juneau. The Call Center reduces patient on-hold wait time to an average of eight seconds. The plan is to continue to grow the program to provide the service across the Consortium.

The SVP/CMO presented this quarter's educational component on "Opioid Treatment." The Board learned about non-pharmacologic treatment of pain, non-surgical pain management, pain treatment, overdose deaths involving prescription opioids and SEARHC's approach to addressing pain management. The presentation also included information on the Consortium's pain management team and the intensive outpatient treatment programs, which offers rolling enrollment that enables clients to get into programs as needed.

Board of Directors

Board members heard the Board Chair Report, ANTHC Report, and reports from the President/CEO, SVP/CFO and Elgee Rehfeld.

The Board Chair's Report covered participation in SEARHC-related meetings and activities that included the Bond Buyers Award Ceremony. In late fall, Bank of America nominated SEARHC for the Healthcare deal of the year with the Bond Buyers Association. SEARHC won the award and a small group of representatives attended the event to accept the award on behalf of the Consortium.

The ANTHC representative was elected Board Chair of the organization in December 2021. The representative gave updates on the organization's activities that included Covid mitigation, efforts to improve Cerner, case management, patient housing, and beds. The representative continues to advocate for improved housing and travel coordination.

Under the President/CEO Report, the Board heard updates on the rollout of the strategic plan, the Joint Venture project, Behavioral Health and the Opioid Treatment program, and the employee Premium Pay Bonus, which is paid out every quarter in recognition of the struggles brought on by the pandemic.

The SVP/CFO reviewed the financial statements, noting that the Consortium had a solid financial quarter with improvements in billing and collections.

Sara Griffith, Elgee Rehfeld, reviewed the FY2021 Audit noting a clean audit. She expressed appreciation to the finance staff for their assistance in completing the Audit.

Key accomplishments from the January 2022 Board meeting include:

- Approval of the Consortium-wide Credentials List.
- Approval of the Providence TeleICU Telestroke Provider Roster.
- Approved the publication of manuscript “Health Care Utilization in Alaska Native People Receiving Chronic Disease Specialty Care by Video Telemedicine Compared to Propensity-Matched Controls.”
- Approved the publication of manuscript “Hospitalized Infections in Patients with Rheumatic Disease in Alaska 2015-2018.”
- Approval of SEARHC’s Clinical Contracts for 2022.
- Designation of key leadership positions for the Home Health Program.
- Approval of the July 27, 28, 29, 2022 meeting in Petersburg, AK.
- Approval of the FY2021 Audit.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent you on the SEARHC Board and invite you to contact me if you have any questions. Again, thank you for your continual support of SEARHC’s important Mission: ***Alaska Native People working in partnership to provide the best healthcare for our communities.***