

To: Skagway Traditional Council
Fr: Ms. Judean Gordon 
SEARHC Board Representative
Re: SEARHC Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting
Date: May 4, 2023

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) board of directors met for quarterly board and committee meetings on April 26–28, 2023, in Sitka, Alaska. All meetings were held at SEARHC's Community Health Services building at 1212 Seward Avenue. The following are the results and highlights of the meetings.

Accreditation Governing Body Committee – April 26, 2023

Chief of Staff J. Kennon Kirk, M.D., reviewed updates to SEARHC's credentialing list of providers, updates to privilege forms, and policies for approval by the Accreditation Governing Body (AGB). Overall, the committee approved 13 new appointments, 24 reappointments, 15 administrative closures and resignations, one change in staff categories, and one change in privileges. Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer Elliot Bruhl, M.D., presented to the committee an overview of operations from the second quarter covering highlights in the Behavioral Health, Specialty Services, Rehabilitation Services and Primary Care divisions. Highlights are included below:

- SEARHC has successfully acquired Juneau Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB-GYN). SEARHC is now able to provide a full spectrum of obstetric and gynecologic services, including high and low risk prenatal care, well-women annual exams including pap smears, infection screening, genetic counseling, treatment of complex pelvic floor problems, and advanced minimally invasive pelvic and reconstructive surgery. This transition began on April 1 and is the first time SEARHC has been able to offer comprehensive Women's Health services with three board certified physicians and a nurse midwife available so patients will no longer have to travel out of the region for these services.
- The Hospital Quality Improvement/Performance Improvement team has been focused on Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center's (MEMC) upcoming Joint Commission Survey. Wrangell Medical Center has also been diligently working on completing its Level IV Trauma Center certification project and proceeding on schedule.
- SEARHC marked the opening of Wrangell Medical Center's expanded Long-Term Care (LTC) unit, which added four additional beds to the current 14.
- Juneau's Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) has seen tremendous growth and success since its opening last year, serving more than 545 patients and providing 11,300 treatment services to date. In February, our second Opioid Treatment Center opened in Sitka and started enrolling patients. With an increasingly high demand for addiction treatment services, SEARHC will be opening its 3rd location on Prince of Wales Island late fall 2023.

- SEARHC’s newest clinic opened in Gustavus and started seeing patients on April 3, 2023. The community celebrated with an open house and ribbon cutting event on April 29, 2023.
- The Quality Data Monitoring Report was provided, which included information on influenza cases, COVID-19 trends, hand hygiene and a review of clinical contracts that needed to be approved by the committee. Based on current COVID-19 trends, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is planning to end the Public Health Emergency (PHE) on May 11, 2023. SEARHC remains committed to continued focus in patient safety measures to control the spread of the virus.

COVID Rates for Southeast Alaska – as of May 2, 2023

Health Service Area	Cases Since 03/2020	Cases Last 7 Days	Case Rate* Last 7 Days
Angoon-Hoonah	947	0	-
Haines	803	0	-
Juneau	11,449	13	40.90
Petersburg-Kake	900	1	-
Prince of Wales	1,838	0	-
Sitka	3,385	17	199.50
Wrangell	795	0	126.10

*New cases in the past 7 days divided by the total population in the Health Service Area, multiplied by 100,000

Executive Committee – April 26, 2023

The Executive Committee met on Wednesday, April 26, to discuss and review proposed revisions to the SEARHC bylaws. The committee conducted its regular business of reviewing and approving the agenda including the January 25, 2023, minutes. Among the items on the agenda was the review of SEARHC's bylaws, which was led by Via Healthcare Consultant Karma Bass, who provided a proposed redline draft of SEARHC's current bylaws that were last amended on January 27, 2017.

The discussion centered around three main categories: reorganizing bylaw language, further defining how the board does its work, and moving toward board governance best practices. The committee approved Ms. Bass to update and revise the draft redlined changes in accordance with the suggestions of the committee for review by the board of directors on Friday, April 27, 2023.

Finance Committee – April 27, 2023

The Finance Committee met on Thursday, April 27. The committee conducted its regular business of reviewing and approving the agenda and the January 25, 2023, minutes. Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer, Dan Harris presented to the committee on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Long Range Plan and the Chief Financial Officer report.

- An overview of SEARHC’s FY 2024 budgeting process reviewed the timeline of preparing and finalizing the next fiscal budget. Finance will present the FY24 budget to the board of directors at the next committee meeting in August for board approval.
- Highlights from FY 2023 second quarter continue to show positive performance across the Consortium — projected volumes are expected to continue growing over the next five years as market share increases in the Juneau area. Year-to-date income and cash flow has been exceeding budget with volumes continuing to grow strong.
- Over the next two years, the plan is to grow the Raven’s Way program in Juneau for residential behavioral health services, wraparound case management, and after-hour care visits as the program continues to ramp up.

Patient Experience Committee – April 27, 2023

The Patient Experience Committee met on Thursday, April 27. The committee conducted its regular business of reviewing and approving the agenda and the January 26, 2023, minutes. Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Leatha Mercurieff presented on SEARHC’s patient satisfaction results of the second quarter, including responses from each community represented by the board of directors. Highlights are included below:

- 2,400 Patient Satisfaction Surveys were completed in the second quarter, results from the survey were broken down by the board’s representative community.
- “The 7 Standards of Customer Service Excellence” training has been provided to more than 1000 staff to date.
- Medical Director of Primary Care Clinics, Cate Buley, M.D., provided a presentation on cancer among Alaska Native (AN) People and screenings that are available at the SEARHC clinics for hepatitis C virus and cancers of the breast, colorectal, lung and prostate. Cancer remains the leading cause of death among AN people. Age-adjusted rates per 100,000 show that breast, colorectal and lung cancers are among the highest for AN people. An executive summary of Alaska Native Tumor Registry’s 50-Year Report prepared by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium’s (ANTHC) Alaska Native Epidemiology Center and Alaska Native Tumor Registry will be mailed out to each of the tribes this month.

Board of Directors – April 28, 2023

The SEARHC board of directors met on Friday, April 28, to conduct regular business. The board heard reports from Board Chair Kimberley Strong, President/Chief Executive Officer Charles Clement, and Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer Dan Harris. Some of the highlights are listed below:

- Two new board members were seated from Douglas Indian Association and Hoonah, Mrs. Barbara Cadiente-Nelson and Ms. Lily Hughes.
- Indian Health Service (IHS) Director Roslyn Tso was invited by the board chair to visit Southeast Alaska and tour SEARHC facilities. Director Tso will be visiting the communities of Angoon and Sitka on May 8th.

- ANTHC began planning a travel summit with all of the Tribal Health Organizations to work on the many of the travel issues that continue to impact each region. The summit is tentatively scheduled for the later part of the summer.
- Sitka Totem Hotel is under full ownership of SEARHC and is being utilized for Patient Housing purposes as well as the Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center's construction teams while the new hospital is being built.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent our community on the SEARHC board of directors and invite you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Again, thanks for your continued support of SEARHC's important mission: *Alaska Native People working in partnership to provide the best healthcare for our communities.*