



RURAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMISSION

NEBRASKA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH
P.O. BOX 95026 • LINCOLN, NE 68509-5026 • PHONE (402) 471-2337 • FAX (402) 471-0180

MINUTES of the

Rural Health Advisory Commission (RHAC)

Thursday May 25th, 2023

1:00 p.m. – 2:25 p.m.

Crowne Plaza & Younes Conference Center North

Silver Room #3 – 1st Floor

707 W. Talmadge Street

Kearney, Nebraska

1. Call Meeting to Order; Open Meetings Act and Agenda Posted/Available for Download; Adopt Agenda; Approve Minutes from February 24th, 2023, Meeting

Chairman Marty Fattig called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. with the following members present: Marty Fattig; Tony Green; Kate Kusek, D.D.S.; Sue Medinger for Charity Menefee; Rebecca Schroeder, Ph.D.; Myra Stoney; Jeffrey Wallman, M.D.; Roger Wells, PA-C.

Guests in attendance: Catherine Plumlee, DHHS Office of Performance Management

Mr. Fattig announced that the meeting notice had been posted to the DHHS website and sent out via email and USPS on May 11, 2023.* Handouts and meeting agenda were also posted on the DHHS website, with a link to these given on the agenda itself (<http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Rural-Health-Advisory-Commission.aspx> - under "Documents"). Additionally, the open meetings act and meeting agenda were posted outside the meeting room.

**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.*

Rebecca Schroeder, Ph.D., moved to approve the May 25th, 2023, meeting agenda and Myra Stoney, seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Fattig, Green, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Wallman, Wells. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Dexter, Greene, Harrison, Hesser, Hunt.

Myra Stoney moved to approve the February 24th, 2023, meeting minutes and Kate Kusek, D.D.S. seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Fattig, Green, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Wallman, Wells. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Dexter, Greene, Harrison, Hesser, Hunt.

2. Administrative Items

Commission Member Update

None of the new appointments have been confirmed by the Legislature yet. They have been voted on by the committees, but the Legislature has put such items on hold and very few have been approved in recent months.

Other Announcements

Chairman Marty Fattig mentioned that Tom Rauner (recently retired from the Office of Rural Health) had received the “Outstanding Rural Health Achievement” award at the 2023 NHA-NeRHA Spring Forum and Rural Health Clinic Conference. He congratulated Mr. Rauner on this award for all the work he’s done over the years. Chairman Fattig then mentioned that Dave Palm and Margaret Brockman (previous and current administrators of the Office of Rural Health, respectively) each received Nebraska Admiralships at the Spring Forum. He congratulated them as well.

3. RHAC Recommendations – Strategic Planning Session in August

Catherine Plumlee, with DHHS Office of Performance Management, spoke about some options available for strategic planning through her office. Ms. Plumlee has facilitated for the Trauma Board as well, and went over a proposed agenda for strategic planning for the commission. She encouraged RHAC members to think of the times between their quarterly meetings as action periods and explained that at the end of a half day planning session, RHAC members would end up with a Gantt Chart instead of a report. This chart would include all activities, who is responsible, and a schedule of when these activities are going to take place.

Kate Kusek, D.D.S., moved to have Catherine Plumlee facilitate a half day strategic planning session on August 18th, 2023, and Rebecca Schroeder, Ph.D. seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Fattig, Green, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Wallman, Wells. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Dexter, Greene, Harrison, Hesser, Hunt.

4. Rural Health Systems & Professional Incentive Act Program Updates

Budget Update

Rachael Wolfe provided an update on the budget:

- Total FY 2022-23 general fund allotment (plus carryover from FY21-22)
\$2.63 million
- Total FY 2022-23 general fund obligations
\$2.1 million

If all new applications are approved, general fund obligations for FY2023-24 will total \$1.85 million, with just under \$325,000 remaining for additional awards in FY2023-24.

Chairman Fattig mentioned that \$5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was obligated pretty much immediately. He commended the group for using this money quickly and in the way it was intended.

Emily Lux presented on the differences between the ARPA (no match) and standard (match required) programs, pointing out that there are more licensed mental health providers and more dentists when match is not required. Chairman Fattig remarked that any profession that isn’t hospital-based does struggle with match.

Roger Wells asked if loan repayment funds are meeting the needs of the state, or if there are groups that need to be targeted for funds and informed about the programs. Chairman Fattig remarked that there is no agency charged with predicting rural health personnel needs, and that this might be something to suggest in a strategic plan.

5. Review Current Federal and State Legislative Activities Impacting Rural Health

Chairman Fattig gave a summary of current federal and state legislative activities, mentioning that the Nebraska Hospital Association (NHA) had asked for 4% and 5% provider increases for Medicaid reimbursement in the first and second year of the biennium. This was trimmed to 3% and 2% by the Legislature. The Governor vetoed the second-year increase, putting it at 3% for the first year and 0% for the second year. Kate Kusek, D.D.S. remarked that costs are higher than reimbursement, and Chairman Fattig agreed. He stated that the NHA is requesting all members of their association to advocate for an override of the veto. Chairman Fattig continued by stating he had received a legislative update from HRSA this morning at the Spring Forum; until the debt ceiling is increased and appropriations bill goes through, not

much will happen on the federal level. Congress has passed only three bills this year. He finished by mentioning that accolades have been going around for Congressman Smith for the introduction of rural-related bills.

Roger Wells then gave an overlook of what has been going on in rural health. He will be going to DC in a few weeks as a provider representative. Infrastructure of rural health is challenged by telehealth changes. He remarked that 40% of hospitals are in the red because they had ARPA funds and were supported, but now it's gone and staff is gone. There is a worldwide shortage of providers of all types, and other staff (receptionists, janitors, etc.). Rural areas are older, sicker, and have less insurance, so need more support. He discussed how, during the public health emergency, they gave shots anywhere, stating that it saved money and lives. Mr. Wells also mentioned that Nebraska is expanding the facility in Kearney to attempt to supply access to more rural providers, hoping that when you come from rural, you stay rural.

Chairman Fattig remarked that he would encourage RHAC members to think about what they want this commission to be. DHHS is very limited in what they can do in interacting with legislative body, so this is something he asked of the commission as an independent body. Chairman Fattig remarked that he goes to the legislature quite a bit and speaks as an individual, and that if the commission votes on it, they can advocate as a commission. The direction they choose to go in with strategic planning will impact their work so he encouraged members to consider it.

Tony Green then mentioned that he had some good news to share, as the Governor had just signed Certified Behavioral Health Centers into law. Mr. Green remarked that there was now funding and more would be up and running in 18 months. He explained that some had already been started via SAMSA grants, but the grants didn't include funding going forward, so it was up to the state to support the continuation. This is whole person health. Whoever wants to apply and meet the standards will be able to open a site.

Chairman Fattig mentioned that regional director of the CMS office in Kansas City has requested a meeting with him on July 14th and asked members to send him any items they'd like discussed.

6. Public Comment

No public present, no one spoke.

7. CLOSED SESSION

Marty Fattig moved to go to Closed Session for the purpose of review and discussion of accounts receivable, loan repayment program applications, and other confidential information, and for the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of the individuals at 2:09 p.m.

Tony Green seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Fattig, Green, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Wallman, Wells. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Dexter, Greene, Harrison, Hesser, Hunt. Chairman Marty Fattig announced that the Commission would go into Closed Session at 2:09 p.m.

It was announced that guests should leave the room. No guests remained at this time.

8. OPEN SESSION

Myra Stoney moved to go into Open Session at 2:15 p.m. and Jeffrey Wallman, M.D., seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Fattig, Green, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Wallman, Wells. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Dexter, Greene, Harrison, Hesser, Hunt.

Kate Kusek, D.D.S., moved to approve the loan repayment applications with estimated loan repayment start dates and loan repayment amounts as indicated or as determined by 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, and also to approve action discussed during the accounts receivable portion. Tony Green seconded the motion. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Green, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Wallman, Wells. ABSTAIN: Fattig. EXCUSED: Dexter, Greene, Harrison, Hesser, Hunt.

Date application submitted	First Name:	Last Name:	Profession:	Site 1 County:	State Start Date:	State Award Amount:	SLRP Start Date:	SLRP Minimum Award Amount:	SLRP Maximum Award Amount:
3/2/2023	Jamie	Kuper	Nurse Practitioner, Family Practice	Chase	7/1/2023	\$ 83,597.00			
3/7/2023	Lauren	Schenck	Licensed Mental Health Professional	Hall	7/1/2023	\$ 52,912.78			
3/8/2023	Rebecca	Clouse	Nurse Practitioner, Family Practice	Cheyenne	7/1/2023	\$ 77,303.50			
3/8/2023	Tiffany	Gies	Nurse Practitioner, Family Practice	Box Butte	7/1/2023	\$ 86,414.02			
3/10/2023	Kameron	Murray	Physician Assistant, Family Practice	Phelps	7/1/2023	\$ 60,000.00	9/1/2025	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
3/10/2023	William	Griffith	Physician Assistant, General Internal Medicine	Box Butte	7/1/2023	\$ 90,000.00			
3/15/2023	Brenna	Ogley	Nurse Practitioner, Family Practice	Cheyenne	7/1/2023	\$ 27,290.92			
3/22/2023	Abby	Hanzlicek	MD/DO, Family Practice	Pawnee	7/1/2023	\$120,000.00	9/1/2025	\$ 80,000.00	\$122,436.36
3/22/2023	Jacob	Morrill	Physician Assistant, General Internal Medicine	Madison	7/1/2023	\$ 60,000.00			
3/24/2023	Jack	Steffen	Pharmacist	Cedar	8/1/2023	\$ 90,000.00			
4/11/2023	Candice	Schnoor	Nurse Practitioner, Family Practice	Boone	7/1/2023	\$ 68,814.96	9/1/2025	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 68,814.96
4/14/2023	Jonathon	Korth	Physician Assistant, Family Practice	Merrick	7/1/2023	\$ 24,000.00			
4/19/2023	Nathan	Strasser	Physician Assistant, Family Practice	Nemaha	7/1/2023	\$ 46,886.67			
4/21/2023	Shannon	Stuhlmiller	Physician Assistant, Family Practice	Boone	7/1/2023	\$ 90,000.00	9/1/2025	\$ 50,000.00	\$100,000.00
4/22/2023	Carissa	Mangus	MD/DO, Family Practice	Boone	9/1/2024	\$117,019.64	9/1/2025	\$100,000.00	\$117,019.64
4/25/2023	Ian	Ahrens	Physician Assistant, Family Practice	Dawes	7/1/2023	\$ 48,000.00	9/1/2025	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 80,000.00
5/12/2023	Kenneth	Wasmund	MD/DO, Family Practice	Brown	8/1/2023	\$180,000.00			
5/15/2023	Morgan	Carson	MD/DO, General Pediatrics	Hall	8/1/2024	\$180,000.00			
5/22/2023	Rachel	Wecker	Nurse Practitioner, Family Practice	Holt	7/1/2023	\$54,951.38			

Note: If award amount is blank for a particular program, provider does not qualify for that program. If \$0 is listed, funds for that program were already obligated and provider will be added to a waitlist to allow time for them to find a match or to potentially be funded in the case of another provider's withdrawal.

9. Adjourn

Rebecca Schroeder, PhD., moved to adjourn at 2:25 p.m., and no second is necessary. Deb Stoltenberg initiated roll call vote. YES: Fattig, Green, Kusek, Schroeder, Stoney, Wallman, Wells. ABSTAIN: None. EXCUSED: Dexter, Greene, Harrison, Hesser, Hunt.