

PIONEERS MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE DISTRICT
207 West Legion Road, Brawley, CA 92227
SUPPLEMENTAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wednesday, January 18, 2023
5:00 pm
PMH Auditorium

MINUTES

PMHD MISSION: Quality healthcare and compassionate service for families of the Imperial Valley

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you require special accommodations to participate in a board meeting, please contact the District at (760) 351-3250 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER (time: 5:00 pm – 5:15 pm)

President Santillan called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm in the PMH Auditorium

A. Roll Call

BOARD MEMBERS:

Katy Santillan, President
Enola Berker, Vice President
Rachel Fonseca, Secretary
Linda Rubin, Treasurer
Nick Aguirre, Asst. Secretary/Treasurer

STAFF:

Damon Sorensen, Interim CEO
Carly Loper, CFO
Kristi Gillespie, CNO
Sally Nguyen, General Counsel

GUESTS:

Carly Zamora, Chief of Clinics
Ryan Kelley, Chief of Logistics & Support Services
Carol Bojorquez, Director of Quality
Jorge Reyes, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Staats, EMS Medical Director for Imperial County (attended telephonically)
David Creighlow, EMS and disaster preparedness manager

B. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Director Aguirre, seconded by Director Berker. The motion was unanimously carried.

II. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Director Fonseca advised that she was able to tour the facility and saw all of the hard work that takes place that a lot of the public does not get to see. She thanked the employees for their hard work. Ms. Fonseca also noted that this weekend is the IV Brisket Cook-off event for the City of Brawley from 12pm-4pm; all are invited.

Director Rubin thanked everyone who is in attendance. She is happy to see more members of the public attending the meetings.

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Director Santillan stated that the Pioneers District is working on more transparency. Last night, they attended the City Council meeting to let them know what is going on regarding Pioneers and El Centro Regional. They were very appreciative of the information. More meetings will be attended to share information with the community.

- III. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – At this time, the Board will hear comments on any agenda item and on any item not on this agenda. If any person wishes to be heard, he or she shall stand; address the chairperson and state the subject, or subjects, upon which he or she desires to comment. Time limit for each speaker is 5 minutes. A total of 15 minutes shall be allocated for each item. *(time: 5:15 pm – 5:30 pm)*

Surgery Staff member, Linda, addressed the Board. She mentioned that the laparoscopic towers have been falling apart for the last three years and continue to breakdown. She asked if new towers could be purchased with the funds generated from the sale of the old surgery equipment. The Board asked Administration to look at this issue.

Ms. Oreda Chin, Executive Director of the Imperial Valley Cancer Support Center, addressed the Board. Her organization has been associated with Pioneers for the last 20 years. Ms. Chin wanted to request that the hospital not forget those cancer patients that still need support. Her organization is still available to provide help and support services to Pioneers' patients. Ms. Chin advised that they no longer have a contact person at the District. The Board directed Administration to reach out to Ms. Chin to establish a contact person. Director Fonseca mentioned that she is in charge of the Senior Center and can assist Ms. Chin in arranging for her to disseminate information about her organization to that population. Ms. Guadalupe Ruiz, Director of Case Management at Pioneers, stated that her department does have the information regarding the Cancer Support Center, but she would like for Ms. Chin to come and speak to her department.

A Staff member reported that it was told to her today that the employees were going to lose their PTO. She requested more information regarding that. Mr. Sorensen advised that there has been zero discussion about all the employees losing their PTO. Mr. Sorensen advised that leadership, department heads and above, have been asked to contribute in some fashion whether it is a salary reduction or a PTO-accrual reduction. This is on a voluntary basis and would not be extended to anyone else outside of leadership.

- IV. OLD BUSINESS** *(time: 5:30 pm – 5:45 pm)*

There was nothing to report.

- V. REVIEW OF OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION** – The Board will consider and may take action on the following: *(time: 5:45 pm – 6:45 pm)*

A. December 2022 Finance Report

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Ms. Loper reported that the Average Daily Census decreased to 42 for December compared to 45 in November. This resulted in a decrease in revenue on the Inpatient side. There was also a decrease in revenue on the outpatient side due to a decrease in surgeries. ER volumes were down as well as the clinic volumes. The decrease in clinic volumes was due to some providers being out during the holidays. There was an increase on expenses. The bottom line had a profit of \$1.7 million due to the District receiving \$3.3 million from FEMA expedited funds. The year-to-date is a loss of \$7.2 million. It is hoped that FEMA will be sending the other half of the funds which will also be in the amount of \$3.3 million. However, it is unknown how soon they will approve and release that reimbursement. Ms. Loper advised that she will be signing for the CHFFA loan. It usually takes about two-three weeks to receive that funding. The expected amount is about \$3.7 million, which will help with operational funds. The IGT Rate Range and QIP have been received and the \$4 million in payment must be sent by February 17th. This will yield a return of about \$14 million in matching funds from the State in June. The Revenue Cycle consultant has been on campus for the last two weeks looking at areas of improvement within the District. Some documentation issues have been identified and work is being done on scheduling a training for physicians. Ms. Loper mentioned that she participated in the DHLF meeting this morning. They were advised that Congress has decided that they have to make a ten trillion dollar change and that will affect the Medicare and Medicaid programs over the next ten years. The State of California did finalize their budget; while there were no decreases in reimbursement, they did not increase either and/or add any support funding for healthcare. Ms. Loper noted that there seems to be a misconception that PMHD received funds from the State for COVID-19, but we did not. What the State provided to Pioneers was some help with actual staff, but no funding. Pioneers did receive federal funds which helped pay for travelers, rental of equipment and some testing during the height of the pandemic. Director Santillan stated that the District needs to improve its efforts to save funds when they are received. She would also like to see more efforts placed in grant writing as there are programs available that can yield more funding for the hospital. Ms. Loper noted that she will be sending a letter of interest for a possible grant for Pioneers to become the base hospital. She does not yet know all of the details, or level of funding, but will be looking at that should the District decide to take that project on. Director Fonseca advised that the City of Brawley has a grant writer who sends out a monthly or quarterly listing of grants available to the City. PMHD can reach out to inquire if they can also provide grant writing support services us. Director Aguirre stated that PMHD should work closely with IVC's nursing program to recruit new nurses. Ms. Gillespie advised that she has met with Dr. Ortiz, of IVC, today. PMHD will see an increase of IVC's nursing students doing their clinicals here. PMHD Nursing Admin will be in close communication with IVC as they are experiencing changes in their leadership.

B. Human Resources Report

Mr. Reyes reported that December was a slow recruitment month. However, preparations were made to have the staff ready for the hiring and onboarding of the ECRMC nurses. 20 ECRMC nurses began on January 9, 2023, and one more nurse is expected next Monday. Two of the nurses were assigned to Pediatrics, five were assigned to the NICU and the rest to the OB department. The turnover for the month of December was at 1.8% with a year-to-date of 21.5%. Three long-tenured employees retired last month. Mr. Reyes advised that meetings with Gallagher have begun to review the employee health benefits plan as it is done every year. The quarterly retirement

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committee meeting was held on December 8th and two investments were recommended to be changed due to low performance.

A motion was made to approve the finance and human resources reports by Director Rubin, seconded by Director Berker. **The motion was unanimously carried.**

C. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Designation of Pioneers Memorial Hospital as the Base Hospital for the Emergency Medical Services System of the County of Imperial

This item was moved to the top of the agenda. Dr. Catherine Staats, EMS Medical Director for Imperial County, and Mr. David Creighlow, EMS and disaster preparedness manager, addressed the Board. They thanked the Board for allowing them to present today. They provided a background on what has transpired and what this would mean for the County. On December 27, 2022, the County EMS agency received a notification from El Centro Regional Medical Center advising that as of March 23, 2023, they will no longer be the base hospital for Imperial County. Mr. Creighlow reached out to Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District to initiate conversations about PMHD taking on the role of base hospital. Several meetings were held early January to begin discussions and further explore options. The local emergency management services agency makes sure that EMTs, Advanced EMTs and paramedics all operate within scope as outlined by the State of California and established protocols. This includes fire personnel, transport agency personnel, and some law enforcement agency personnel. Part of the EMSA requirement is to establish a base hospital for the County. The base hospital is a 24/7, 365 day/year medical control for EMS personnel to provide care while on the field. If a base hospital is not designated, the LEMSA will not be able to provide Imperial County citizens with advanced life support in the field. They humbly asked that the PMHD Board of Directors consider making Pioneers the base hospital. Mr. Sorensen, PMHD Interim CEO, noted that we are aware of the situation. PMHD is short staffed and faces challenges providing the current resource of our emergency services at the hospital every day. Taking on the base hospital designation would require more resources, so we are interested in seeing how PMHD can work together with LEMSA. Personnel is the biggest issue right now. He mentioned that it's not that Pioneers doesn't want to do it. Mr. Sorensen feels this is something that Pioneers really needs to do in some fashion; however, we need to come together as a community and figure out how we can do that. Mr. Creighlow agreed and stated that they are more than willing to have those discussions. The Board advised Mr. Creighlow and Dr. Staats that they know how important their services are to the County and they will be discussing this issue tonight.

D. CEO Report – Damon Sorensen

Mr. Sorensen mentioned that the District's finances continue to be a little on the edge; however, he feels that it is starting to move in the right direction. The Revenue Cycle consultant is conducting some reviews and we are already heading in the right direction. Work is being done on the contract staffing and that number is declining. Ms. Gillespie noted that there are currently 21 on site with five leaving in the next two weeks, eight leaving in February, four in March and the last four in April. Other initiatives are being looked at to improve customer service and increase volumes.

1. Physician Fees

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Mr. Sorensen provided a brief overview of five-year trends on volumes, revenues and physician fees. In comparison to the ups and downs of revenues, the physician fees have only increased. This is informational only so the Board can see the trends and impact of professional fees on operations.

2. El Centro Due Diligence Update

There have been a lot of rumors about the ECRMC CEO being fired and other things going on. Mr. Sorensen stated that we do not know what is happening to a large extent. He does know that they will be having a special Board meeting tonight. Pioneers just waits every day for the other shoe to drop and the bay station hospital designation is another big project that will impact finances, physicians and staffing. It is a big burden that has been placed on PMHD at this time, but we are certainly committed to see how we can make it work.

3. OB Program Update

ECRMC closed their OB practice on January 9th. The leadership at PMHD have been working very hard and the OB department staff have gone above and beyond. The first two weeks brought a surge in volumes before the new OB staff was onboarded. The existing staff stepped up and filled in wherever there was a need. Staffing is looking better this week. The new staff will be going to the OB department, and some will be placed in couplet care. They will be provided an additional day of training on c-sections. There are still 11 registry nurses in the department, but we are looking to decrease that number to two in the first two weeks of February. Leadership is still trying to figure out where the need is going to be for staffing and how much of a surge they will see. The equipment from ECRMC was received last Friday and have some already on the floor after all the safety checks were completed. Ms. Bojorquez advised that she work will continue on improving communication with the staff. Director Santillan thanked Ms. Bojorquez for covering the OB department, but she asked when the position is going to be filled. Ms. Gillespie advised that there was one interview done for the position and she still must review additional applications. Director Santillan acknowledged that there is a shortage of staff throughout the organization, so it is not just the OB department. She was happy to hear of the efforts to improve communication with staff. Director Berker asked if any plans have been developed to have more communication with the public about the OB services. Ms. Bojorquez stated that there has been some information shared via social media, but more needs to be done. Director Berker recommends an outreach done more than once a year to make the public aware and more comfortable in accessing the service. A member of the public echoed the need to do more marketing of all services to the community and feels social media alone is not enough. Director Berker asked if there have been enough anesthesiologists given the surge in OB cases. Mr. Brabec, who was in attendance, reported that there have been enough to meet the demand. Mr. Sorensen mentioned that he agreed that there is a need to do more outreach about PMHD services to the community. However, before that is done, work needs to be done to make sure PMHD is customer friendly and everything we are doing is top notch. The last

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thing that is needed is for patients to come here, have a bad experience and then never come back because of that.

The Cardio-pulmonary director of ECRMC asked if EMS was prepared for pediatric patients who require respiratory care when transferring them to Pioneers. Mr. Sorensen mentioned that the OB physicians have been in daily meetings and established protocols to help the Emergency departments understand the process needed for whatever category of transfer is needed. Mr. Creighlow, from the Local EMS, advised that they are prepared for those types of transfers with their CC peers and Reach. LEMSA has a process in place to take care of those types of transfers. Mr. Sorensen reported that work is being done to develop a LVN-model in the delivery of care. He will update the Board at a later date as the plan begins to take shape. Director Santillan asked what department has recruited the most LVNs. It was advised that the ER has recruited seven within the last six months. Director Berker asked if PMH has respiratory therapists for Pediatrics. It was noted that PMH has respiratory therapists that cover the entire hospital, which cover all areas. There are two per shift, ideally; however, there are days when there is only one on duty. The ECRMC Director of Respiratory advised that respiratory therapists must have a specific type of training. It was reported that when PMHD completed the level two CCS certification, it was able to meet all the required standards. A PMHD Respiratory Therapist stated that she has not received all the required hours of training and that PMH does not follow the Title 22 staffing ratios for ventilators. She's not seen a staffing matrix and feels this is a safety issue. She noted that RT's are everywhere and when she is working with another RT, that RT usually only takes Peds and she takes the rest. She reported it was the same during the pandemic; there was no appropriately staffed matrix. Director Santillan stated that she knows the leadership is sometimes overwhelmed and they are trying to do the right thing by addressing things as they come up. Some things do get left out, but when they are brought up, they do try to do the right thing. The ECRMC Director of Respiratory mentioned that she knows a few of her colleagues would love to come to Pioneers to help. Ms. Gillespie advised that she would review the applications to see if any have been received for the RT positions. Ms. Yolanda Smith, Peds Manager, advised that while we may be short in RT's, the current team at Pioneers is excellent. During the pandemic, Mr. Mike Gilbert and his team worked very hard and went above and beyond. She reminded everyone in attendance that everyone at PMHD is doing the best we can to solve issues and we cannot continue looking at the past but move forward and work together to do our best.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA – The following items will be acted upon by one motion, without discussion, unless a director, or other person, requests that an item be considered separately. In the event of such a request, the item will be addressed, considered, and acted upon, separately. *(time: 6:45 pm – 7:15 pm)*

- A. Approval of Minutes
1. 12/14/22 Regular Meeting
 2. 12/21/22 Special Meeting

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- B. Hospital Policies
1. Charge Nurse Pay
- C. Consider and Approval of Resolution 2023-01; A Resolution Designating as an Appropriate Matter for Discussion, Deliberation and Possible Action in Closed Session as a Trade Secret Updating Certain District Strategic Planning Initiatives.
- D. Authorize Renewal of Confidential Document Destruction Agreement with Desert Document Shredders
Contract Value: \$29,996.⁴⁵/yr.; Contract Term: Five (5) years; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Purchased Services
- E. Authorize Addendum No. 5 to the Lead Physician Advisor Services Agreement with Ramon Rodrigues, MD
Contract Value: Approx. \$65,000-75,000/yr.; Contract Term: One (1) year; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Professional Fees
- F. Authorize Medical Executive Committee Chief of Staff & Consulting Agreements
Contract Value: savings of \$24,000; Contract Term: Two (2) years; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Professional Fees
- G. Authorize Change Order No. 2 for Clinical Documentation Improvement with Claro Healthcare
Contract Value: \$65,000 + expenses; Contract Term: Six (6) months; Budgeted: No; Budget Classification: Purchased Services
- H. Authorize Receipt of OB Medical Equipment Donation from El Centro Regional Medical Center
- I. Authorize Global Master Services Agreement with ADP, Inc.
Contract Value: \$122,018.³⁵ /yr. + \$5,000 implementation fee; Contract Term: annual renewal with 90-day out clause; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Software Licenses
- J. Authorize Agreement with American Safety Emergency Medical Training Corp.
Contract Value: depends on number of trainees; Contract Term: One (1) year; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Training & Education
- K. Authorize Renewal of Microsoft Enterprise Subscription with Microsoft
Contract Value: \$889,668.⁷²; Contract Term: Three (3) years; Budgeted: Yes; Budget Classification: Subscriptions
- L. Authorize Master Service Agreement with i2i Systems, Inc.
Contract Value: \$101,495; Contract Term: 101 months; Budgeted: No, grant monies to support; Budget Classification: Subscription

Advised the Board that Item E on the Consent Agenda will be deferred and not be considered today. A motion was made to approve the consent agenda with the exception of item E by Director Rubin, seconded by Director Aguirre.

ITEM F – Mr. Sorensen reported that all the physicians are being asked to cut their fees by a certain amount. The Chief of Staff is being asked to cut his fee by 50% for the first year. The others are being asked to reduce their fee to zero the first year, and then resume the regular fee the second year of the agreement. All recommendations are open for negotiation. Director Berker noted that the MEC did not agree with the

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recommendations. It was advised that the MEC cannot vote on these agreements. The agreements are between the District and individual physicians, so negotiation talks should be with each individual.

ITEM G – Director Berker asked if the work done by Claro in the ER had any impact. Ms. Loper advised that the first couple of months, we did see a jump as much as was projected by Claro. They returned in November to do another training session with the staff and in December their target was met. Ms. Loper had purposely waited on the OR project because she wanted to see if they would produce what they had promised on the ER side. It was asked who Claro is providing the training to in the ER. Ms. Loper mentioned that they are training all the nurses and the staff that enter charges.

ITEM H – Director Fonseca asked if the medical equipment came with any warranties and/or contracts attached to them. Mr. Kelley noted that he asked ECRMC prior to taking the equipment and there are no payments, warranties and/or contracts attached to them. The equipment will be added to our maintenance agreements.

ITEM L – There was a concern raised about acquiring more software when physicians should be receiving more education. Ms. Teague reported that i2i is an application that will facilitate reporting to the State's QIP program. A lot of the extrapolation is currently done manually and only by one individual. If that individual is not at work, then no one else can do the work. This will preserve continuity and automate the process since PMHD will be moving to Cerner. The State defines the data points that must be gathered and reported on. This application helps with continued enrollment and cleans the data to ensure we are reporting the correct data for whatever initiative the State has on a yearly basis.

The motion was unanimously carried.

VII. CLOSED SESSION – The following matters will be considered by the Board in closed session; the Board will reconvene in open session to announce any action taken on matters considered in closed session. *(time: 7:15 pm – 7:55 pm)*

A. **CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS INVOLVING TRADE SECRETS** – Safe Harbor: Health and Safety Code §32106, subparagraph (b)

1. Based on the Board's prior findings regarding Trade Secret classification, as contained in Resolution 2019-02, consideration, and discussion of possible initiation of the following:
 - a. Updating Certain District Strategic Planning Initiatives

VIII. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION *(time: 7:55 – 8:00 pm)*

A. Take Actions as Required on Closed Session Matters

The Board directed Senior Leaders to move forward with exploring the possible designation of Pioneers Memorial Hospital as the base hospital for the Emergency Medical Services System of the County of Imperial.

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IX. ADJOURNMENT *(time: 8: 00 pm)*

The meeting was adjourned to the next regular meeting.



Clerk of the Board



Board Secretary