

**MINUTES FOR:  
CASS COUNTY MEDICAL CARE FACILITY BOARD MEETING**

**June 23rd, 2025**

In attendance: Dr. James Wierman (Board Chairperson), Vicki Vaughn (Board Member), Jeff Carmen (Board Co-Chair), (Mercedes Schirripa (Administrator), Jenna Badner (Controller), Jennifer Bennett (Recording Minutes).

Meeting called to order at 9:25 a.m.

Guests: Rie Shimada, Lynda Newton, Veronica Labar

Public Comment: None

Additions/deletions to Agenda: None.

Vicki Vaughn made the motion that the agenda be accepted as presented. Jeff Carmen supported the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Vicki Vaughn made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Jeff Carmen supported the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Lynda Newton reported in her story, during a care conference with a resident and family that while concerns and complaints were being made there was also mention of how pleased with staff the resident and family are as well as how well the nurses and aides are performing.

Falls are currently at 23% facility wide. It is worth noting that 1 fall that results in an injury can skew an overall percentage.

Per QAPI, resident ADL abilities still need improvement. Restorative aides continue to work with residents on walking and self-care abilities. Restorative is also helping to improve bowel and bladder by strengthening resident ADL abilities.

Enhanced barriers, which were a State citation, continue to be improved upon. Use of gloves and gowns when applicable is complying. The facility passed this citation with a desk review. Through internal audits of compliance, we will be moving to monthly audits as staff is doing so well.

For Poly Pharmacy, currently 40% of residents are taking 8 or less medications. The new pharmacist working with the facility is much more receptive to decreasing medications.

Although there have been problems with deliveries and medication availability. The pharmacy currently in use was bought by a much larger company along with several other pharmacies and the adjustment has caused delays in delivery times as well as the availability of certain medications. Some medications are available in the facility, if necessary, but this is an issue that needs attention from the pharmacy.

Mercedes Schirripa states that along with the new physicians' contract through Cass Family Clinic, we hope to possibly change to that pharmacy as well for continuity of care for residents in facility or out as well as better cost on medications.

The check register was reviewed; Jeff Carmen questioned payment for Phil Alt and is informed that Phil will continue to be employed by Cass County Medical Care Facility through the rest of 2025, though his cost is going down as he no longer attends meetings and comes in person to the facility less frequently as well.

Jeff Carmen also questioned an amount attributed to Jerry Wilson, which was an A/R refund issued for credit. As well as a charge to Blue Cross Blue Shield which Jeff was informed is for employee benefits.

Jeff Carmen moved to approve the check register, Vicki Vaughn seconded, approved unanimously.

Jenna Badner stated nothing to report on Financials.

Mercedes Schirripa asked the Board if bank statements should be included in meeting packets.

Jeff Carmen asks if there is a differentiation of accounts, Jenna Badner informs there are separate accounts for millage amount and operating cash, though millage can be moved to operating cash if needed, they are reported separately. Jeff Carmen inquires if the county fronts the millage, Jenna Badner states the county receives millage funds from townships and pays it to facility.

For Census Mercedes Schirripa states we have 70 current residents with 80 being full capacity.

Per agenda, employee benefits renewal.

Per Mercedes Schirripa, employee benefits were last renewed when Linda Dushaun was interim administrator and staff costs were not altered at that time, costing the facility. Benefits are now due to be renewed by July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

The current employee cost is 16.6% and facility cost 83.4% with the aim of putting this ratio at an even 20/80. There are a couple of different plan options to consider that would be both more beneficial to employees and less costly to the facility.

Jenna Badner presented options for plans. One option allows employees to see doctors in Indiana if they name a primary care provider in Michigan. Being so close to the state line, this is a reality for number of employees. Jeff Carmine voiced he is uncomfortable with that option as it feels disingenuous. Another option would be a PPO HSA plan. This would allow employees to pay an HSA account towards medical costs that the facility would pay one time also. Broken down the facility would contribute \$500 for a single plan, \$1000 for a 2-person plan, and \$1500 for a family plan. Lynda Newton stated that an HSA plan was offered previously but with little education to staff enrollment numbers were low.

Ben Cohen, employee benefits relationship manager, plans to be on site at the facility to answer any staff questions and offer education on the offered health plans and HSA accounts.

Jeff Carmen moves to offer plan G and PPO HSA plans, Vicki Vaughn seconds, the motion passes unanimously.

Veronica Labar gave a presentation on MERS via zoom.

MERS is the retirement plan for the facility. It is completely voluntary and has had a high turnover and low participation rate within the facility. James Carmen has a question pertaining to reasonable expenses. Veronica Labar states expense ratio is at 49 basis points and that her calculations will be completed on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Motion for proposed changes to retirement plan is to amend the MERS contract and plan, add a probationary period which the length will be determined later, and add automatic enrollment to a 457 at 5% that can be opted out or altered after 6 months. There is emphasis on educating staff for a full understanding of options and benefits. Jeff Carmen moves to accept the motion, Vicki Vaughn seconds, the motion passes.

Duties of Board Members.

Dr. James Wierman states he would like to go through the pamphlet of duties and communications more thoroughly and prefers to move this discussion to next month's meeting. All in agreement.

Discussion of vaccinations.

Lynda Newton states staff are encouraged to vaccinate though not many are doing so. Vaccinations are offered at new hire with most still resistant to covid and influenza but opting for hep B vaccines. The issue at hand is how to encourage and offer vaccines without pressuring employees to do so.

Commissioner's report.

Jeff Carmen would prefer to provide an updated facility report to the Board of Commissioner's in person, perhaps at the millage meeting.

Millage.

Per Mercedes Schirripa, the Millage proposal for facility would need to be ready to be presented to the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup>. August 4<sup>th</sup> would be the approval date with a special election on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Jeff Carmen states that Phil Alt should be included as he is a prior donor.

Interim DON discussion.

Mercedes Schirripa states that an audit of current employee pay and salaries has shown there was a pay increase for the interim DON that was never adjusted once the position changed. There is

now an overpayment to this employee since 02/09/2024. Jeff Carmen makes a motion to adjust compensation for this employee and not to seek reimbursement of overpayments, Vicki Vaughn seconds and the motion passes.

Covid/Influenza update.

Mercedes Schirripa states there was no positive covid or influenza cases in the facility for May. There were parainfluenza cases but there is no testing for that so there are no set numbers for that virus. Lynda Newton states that while parainfluenza had been affecting the community at large it was not having outbreaks within facilities nearby. 5 of our cases did develop into pneumonia and while it is not necessary to report this information to the health department, Lynda was doing so voluntarily.

Capitalization policy.

Mercedes Schirripa states capitalization policy is printed and present in the meeting packet. Its purpose is to define purchasing authority in every department for day-to-day purchasing without Board approval being necessary within reason. Dr. James Wierman approves the policy as written; Jeff Carmen wants reporting added to 3<sup>rd</sup> tier for purchases that are not for regular supplies. Jeff Carmen moves to adopt the policy with this addition, Dr. James Wierman seconds and the motion passes.

Mercedes Schirripa provided an administrator's report.

Cass family clinic contract has been signed, as of 08/15/2025 our new physicians begin work at the facility, Dr. Papendick no longer employed through Theoria. Our attorney is working on a second contract to link Cass family clinics pharmacy with facility as well for better cohesion of care. Jeff Carmen requests liability issues be discussed in a future meeting with the attorney and physicians. Per the contract agreement, the physicians are paid a monthly fee that equals \$72,000.00 a year.

The holiday policy has been updated as well. Holiday pay will now be received for all hours worked, up to 16, previously would only have been for 8 regardless. Within management, if an employee chooses to work the holiday and take a different day off in it's place, it must now be within the same pay period. All policy changes are gone over with the facility attorney.

Mercedes Schirripa gives report on employee roster.

There have been a few recent terminations due to employees not following care plans properly or not fulfilling PRN requirements.

Mercedes Schirripa gives report on resident council minutes.

There are resident complaints of timing regarding receiving food based on waiting for tablemates or order time in general. The new Meal suite program is expected to remedy this as it streamlines

ordering and dining with dignity policy as well is aiming to help with any resident issues during mealtimes.

Jeff Carmen asks if the facility newsletter could go on the county website barring personal information such as birthdays. Vicki Vaughn questions why maintenance reports are no longer part of Board meetings. Mercedes Schirripa states both queries will be investigated.

Agenda states recess for closed session, Jeff Carmen proposes a special meeting instead for the administrator review. Board members check personal schedules and availability for a special meeting. Administrator review is agreed to be moved to Cass County Medical Care Facility on July 17<sup>th</sup> at 3pm ahead of the Committee of the Whole meeting on the same date at 5pm.

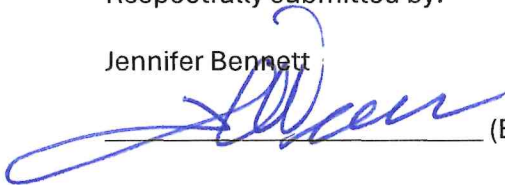
Next board meeting to take place July 28th. All present in agreement.

Dr. James Wierman moves to recess. Vicki Vaughn seconds motion.

Recess started at 11:46 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer Bennett



(Board Chairperson)



(Administrator)