

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

October 27th, 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 10:07 a.m.

Guests: Rie Shimada, Lynda Newton (DON), Austin Morgan (Director of Maintenance), Kim Romberg and Mike Horosko (Aurora Pharmacy), Jennifer Rentfrow (County Administrator)

No Public Comment.

Additions/deletions to Agenda:

Jeff Carmen would like to add in the Administrators report a discussion with County Administrator of the status of a claim or investigation towards the attorney error of policy and its cost.

Additions to the agenda approved.

Dr. James Wierman made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Vicki Vaughn supported the motion. Jeff Carmen would like the minutes corrected to reflect himself requesting a report of the attorney's error and that the facility and county Administrators work together on this.

Minutes will be corrected and approved at next month's meeting.

Lynda Newton reported her story.

A particular resident has stated on discharge that they were 95% happy with their care at the facility. This despite multiple challenges, they were still satisfied with their care and wanted it to be stated.

The facility hosted a Trunk or Treat event over this past Saturday the 25th, residents and families were very happy, it was fun for all, and the weather was pleasant.\

Per QAPI, falls are high but stable. There were 12 in total in September, 1 of which had a second fall.

Poly pharmacy continues as a PIP, specifically for long-term residents as the facility tries to limit unnecessary medications with our expectations vs state recommendations.

Lynda Newton recently attended a DON conference. One of the talking points was Medication aids and if they are helpful and worth implementing. Cass County Medical Care Facility is considering adding medication aids to staff. Michigan is the 32nd state to accept this as a job title and

certification. To qualify an employee must have been a CNA for at least 2 years and once certified can still only pass simple medications, no controlled substances.

There are 2 medical care facilities farther North that have implemented this for about 9 months now. They have found this allows the nursing staff more face to face time with residents for assessment as some of the med pass is taken off their daily schedule. Locally Southwester Michigan College, that the facility already has contract with for nursing and nurses aid training, offers a medication aid course with a 70% pass rate.

Regarding Poly Pharmacy, Lynda Newton states 66% residents are at 8 medications or less.

Dr. James Wierman passed out education on poly pharmacy from the American College of Physicians to discuss. Point click care as a program was also discussed as to how the medical record interacts with prescriptions. Should the facility move forward with new pharmacy Aurora, this process can be synchronized for a small additional fee, with physicians automatically being notified of any medication issues without having to wait for a nurse to call. Dr. Wierman wants this discussed with physicians on staff for their input on the subject.

Pharmacy contract approval is discussed.

Mercedes Schirripa has sought quotes from 6 different pharmacies. Her guests today are representatives of Aurora Pharmacy. The current contract with Remedi is terming on December 22nd of this year and as the facility has been having ongoing issues with Remedi, have been looking elsewhere. Mike Horosko and Kimberly Romberg are present for Aurora Pharmacy to answer any Board questions.

Jeff Carmen asked if there was a cost to end the Remedi contract sooner than December. Mercedes Schirripa states that there is but she feels letting the contract term on that timeframe is adequate to the process of switching pharmacies. PCC recommends a 45–60-day timeframe for such processes. for such processes.

Mike Horosko states that Aurora headquarters are stationed in Mattawan, MI with a secondary location in Traverse City, MI. They specialize in servicing assisted living and skilled nursing facilities. Jeff Carmen asks what the headquarters are like, office building or otherwise. Mike Horosko states it is a standard office building that is closed to the public. Only employees are allowed on site and that medications are stored, packaged, and shipped from this location. Kimberly Romberg states that deliveries are nightly, to aim to have medications available for the next morning, as opposed to currently receiving meds day of and often late. With Aurora medications are delivered in 3 day and 4 day amounts to cover weekends as well.

Dr. Wierman asks about PRN medications. Lynda Newton states that there are machines holding medications on site, that will be stocked for medications needed outside of regular deliveries. Kimberly adds that this machine is automated electronically to maintain stock and track what

medications are needed. Aurora pharmacy would also be able to assist with vaccine clinics at the facility for staff and residents as well as possibly county residents.

Jeff Carmen asks what the yearly cost for medications are. Mercedes Schirripa states that is not a set number, it varies based on need but is most likely hundreds of thousands per year. Mercedes and Lynda add that with Remedi the cost is extra as medications often need to be reordered due to not being delivered at all, or late.

Jeff Carmen asks about the indemnification clause in the Aurora contract regarding the pharmacy making a mistake. Mike Horosko states they have liability and that clause is standard and basically says that the facility cannot hold the pharmacy accountable for any mistakes the facility makes.

Jeff Carmen makes a motion to have an attorney review the Aurora contract and per approval by attorney the Board also would approve. Vicki Vaughn seconds. Dr. Wierman approves and the motion passes.

The check register was reviewed.

Both Jeff Carmen and Vicki Vaughn question payments to Cass County in regard to any money going to the village and an over six-thousand-dollar payment. Jenna Badner states that the facility pays the county electric for the sewer, as well as sewer and water utilities. She also states that the six thousand is for liability insurance to the county for the building, any litigation, etc.

Jeff Carmen asks if the County pays the facility for wells on property, Jenna Badner states no not currently.

Jeff Carmen moves to approve the check register, all in favor.

Recent census was reviewed:

Facility is at 90% census overall, with 75 beds in use. Medicaid payments account for 90% of active residents. Jeff Carmen inquired about Phil Altman employment status, Mercedes Schirripa states he is still advising Jenna Badner as his position with the facility phases out.

Cash position was reviewed.

Jenna Badner asks if there are any questions on the cash position. Dr. Wierman asks the status of the ERC appeal. Mercedes Schirripa states that is ongoing and likely to be a long process. She states she is not allowed to attend the meetings on this personally but is updated bi-weekly on the status of the appeal and reiterates that if the facility is ruled to reimburse the funds it would be a percentage and not the whole amount.

2026 Budget Approval.

Jenna Badner explains that page 1 of budget approval includes Millage revenue while page 2 does not. She states facility occupancy has remained stable at 90% and the largest cost to the facility was the employee benefit increase of 13% for employee health benefits.

Jeff Carmen questions the bad debts, as well as capital expenditures and minor equipment costs.

Jenna Badner states the bad debt write offs have gone down, being about \$470 thousand in 2024 to \$310 thousand at current estimates. All claims for a write off are sent to attorneys Lebenbom and Rothman for a letter stating to write off. Capital expenditures are generally for camera upgrades, the parking lot, etc., though Mercedes Schirripa and Jenna Badner can discuss this further with Jeff Carmen. Minor equipment expenses are for general maintenance issues, kitchen appliances, washers and dryers, and such. Per Jenna Badner, \$270 thousand will be needed towards minor equipment costs. This would be added to PCC and cover all of 2026, working with each department leader to monitor spending and need. Jeff Carmen requests a copy of the detailed report of the requested budget.

Jeff Carmen makes a motion to approve the 2026 budget per receipt of the detailed report. Vicki Vaughn seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Covid/Influenza update.

Lynda Newton reports, having discussed this at previous meeting. September 16th was the last date a staff member tested positive, and precautions were lifted 14 days later September 29th. Precautions include weekly testing and wearing a mask if any symptoms are present regardless of positive or negative test results.

Austin Morgan provided the maintenance report:

He met with Lapine on Thursday regarding the HVAC system. It is fully installed, now set up is focused on the monitoring system. It will require a computer dedicated just to this task as it will require a lot of processing power. Plans for full completion of this set for end of November.

Dr. Wierman asks if this aims to be a self-adjusting system, Austin Morgan states that is the expectation.

The repainting and caulking of resident bathrooms continue. A hall is complete, B hall is nearly complete, and work on C hall has started. Maintenance is also checking outlets for grounds.

Austin Morgan states he is updating and implementing preventative maintenance throughout the facility.

Mercedes Schirripa states on the HVAC system upgrade, that the facility has received the phase one check reimbursement from the grant. That covers \$179 thousand dollars.

Austin Morgan was hosted at Jackson County Medical Care Facility recently as a learning experience under their maintenance staff. It was extremely beneficial.

Camera Contract Approval.

Mercedes Schirripa states 3 quotes were sought for upgrading camera and paging systems. Working with the County communications company quote was for \$204 thousand. There are grants available that can offset this cost but only for working with the County Communications company. A second company quote amounted to \$199 thousand and Haas company, the 3rd quote was for \$140 thousand. Neither of the first 2 quotes include removal of old cameras, and updating the wiring, firewall, or paging systems. The Haas company quote does.

Jeff Carmen asks what the County recommends. Mercedes Schirripa states the Communications Company.

Mercedes states there are currently 12 plus cameras mounted and off-line due to not being removed when replaced. The communications company would charge about six thousand yearly to monitor installed systems with the Haas quote charging \$450 yearly. The paging system not included in 2 of the quotes offers a problem as they are severely needed to be in working order.

Jeff Carmen asks if Jodi form IT could be requested to attend a meeting to discuss this issue further, Mercedes Schirripa states she is who procured the quotes.

Jeff Carmen states he will not approve a contract today without County agreement. Vicki Vaughn seconds. Contract not approved.

Mowing and Plowing Contract Approval.

Jenna Badner reports on quotes. Jeff Withers, who currently plows, no longer salts. The facility does have a manual push salter though this is inefficient.

County Administrator Jennifer Rentfrow is questioned about who County maintenance services; she states only the County building.

Jenna Badner states Mack cut would offer mowing, plowing, and salting services. They currently mow in the summer; this would be expanding their contract. Prices are \$2100 monthly for mowing and \$650 for plowing and salting, salt is priced at ten 25-pound bags for the season. Those prices are monthly and only in effect per service provided.

Mack cut owner, Hunter, requests a meeting with the Board and a multiple-year contract, which Mercedes Schirripa is comfortable with as she would like to lock that price point for more than one season.

Jeff Carmen requests proof of liability insurance, which Mercedes can provide.

Jeff Carmen moves to approve mowing and plowing contract subject to proof of liability insurance provided and kept current. Vicki Vaughn seconds the motion. The motion passes.

MCSSA was previously discussed during DHHS meeting.

Mercedes Schirripa provided an administrator's report:

The recent Trunk or Treat at the facility went well, pictures without children present will soon be posted online to celebrate the event.

Per the Yeo and Yeo audit, Allen will be at the facility on November 13th at 2pm and would like to interview Dr. Wierman the Board Chair, Mercedes the Administrator, and Jenna the Controller.

Mercedes Schirripa states she is continuing the Medicare revalidation survey. This is necessary for payments from Medicare and Medicaid. It is due in January.

Payroll position was terminated, and it has been posted for replacement.

State was present in the facility from Monday and Tuesday the 20th and 21st due to a fall that resulted in a fracture. State acknowledged the fall was unpreventable and left with 2 concerns. Care plans need to be updated in a timelier manner, and our current fall policy needs to be updated as it does not reflect implemented plans of correction. Facility awaits State plan of correction for this investigation.

The updated pamphlets have been finished and are ready for distribution. There are 2, one for the facility and one for outpatient. Mercedes expresses how pleased she is with how they turned out and is thankful to Ambrosia for helping with pictures and final design.

Jennifer Rentfrow and Mercedes Schirripa have met and discussed the attorney policy mishap. Mercedes Schirripa has email correspondence from Karl Butterer stating the policy applies for time worked over 8 hours daily or 80 hours per pay period, which Mercedes took to mean not 40 hours weekly. Regardless of who is liable for this mistake Mercedes Schirripa states she would like to move forward with Foster and Swift attorneys in general and no longer work with Kark Butterer specifically.

Jeff Carmen insists a claim be filed against the attorney insurance policy for this costly mistake, stating if Karl is at fault for misadvising the facility should not have had to pay. Jennifer Rentfrow will contact Karl and notify him of intent to file claim against his company's liability insurance and invite him to be present at a meeting to discuss this.

Vicki Vaughn questions if the cost to file would outweigh the money recouped.

Relevant attachments:

There are no questions about the employee roster or resident council minutes.

Public comment.

Dr. James Wierman apologizes to Jennifer Rentfrow for comments at a previous meeting. Dr. Wierman also would like to survey for need in the community to possibly form an opioid committee for aid with drug use and addiction issues within the community.

Mercedes Schirripa confirms that the corrected minutes will be included with next month's meeting packet.

Next board meeting to take place November 24th. All present in agreement.

Dr. James Wierman moves to recess. Jeff Carmen seconded the motion.

Recess started at 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer Bennett

 (Board Chairperson)  (Administrator)