

**The purpose of Redwoods Rural Health Center is to provide responsive, preventive, high quality primary health care services, through a variety of healing disciplines, to all people without regard to social or economic status. We emphasize the client's right and responsibility to participate in his or her own health care decisions. It is our hope that the clinic be a place where the needs of the whole person are met--body, mind, and spirit.**

Redwoods Rural Health Center  
Board of Directors Meeting  
December 29, 2009  
At the Health Center in Redway, starting at 6:00PM

**Board members present:** Thad Horner, Janet Fitzgerald, Sydney King, Pamela Moore, Shelby, Kathy Epling

**Board members absent:** Carol Lee (out of the country); Shon Wellborn (out of town due to family matters); Rick Silva

**RRHC Staff present:** Anne Staunton, RRHC executive director; Jeanie Eldridge, RRHC CFO; Wendi Joiner, RRHC medical director, Megan McCormack, HIMS director.

**Also:** Beth Wells, Health Education Specialist, North Coast Aids Project and board member of Redwood AIDS Information Network and Services.

President Thad Horner brought the meeting to order at a few minutes past 6PM

The group decided that we could possibly function tonight without a timekeeper.

Anne Staunton suggested that the agenda be changed to allow for the special presentations on Suboxone, Needle Exchange, and ELF to come before other business, so that Wendi, Beth, and Megan might get home on this rainy night more quickly.

***MOTION: That the agenda be approved with the suggested change.***

Motion was made by Kathy Epling, seconded by Pamela Moore, and

***MOTION PASSED unanimously.***

**Dr. Wendi Joiner, Redwoods Rural Medical Director, gave a presentation on the proposed Suboxone treatment program.**

As the board is well aware, heroin and other opiate addiction is a major problem in our county and opiates are a leading cause of substance-related death in Humboldt County. Sadly, many of those who have died of overdoses have been those on waiting lists for treatment programs.

Wendi told the group that these addictions can be treated, and explained how the Suboxone treatment would work. She has completed training to prescribe this medicine

for opiate detoxification; RRHC has access to patient resources, and we are now getting prepared to start.

In the first year we may treat up to a maximum of 30 patients; in later years 100 per year.

Wendi explained that many of those addicted to opiates do not fit the stereotype of the street addict out for thrills; many come to this addiction as a result of prescribed medications for pain control. Whatever the reason for the addiction, it can be treated.

Open Door has a program, but it is full; there is a program further south as well, also at capacity. RRHC would be meeting a huge community need through this program.

There was considerable discussion of this program and extremely positive reactions from the Redwoods Rural Board

Wendi was thanked for her work, vision, and passion by the board.

**Beth Wells had been asked to provide the board with further information on the Needle Exchange Program and HIV program costs, in light of recent cuts.**

She provided an information sheet tracking client visits, syringes exchanged, RRHC inventory costs, and contributions from Public health in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

Visits in 2007 were 194; 9,257 syringes were exchanged, RRHC cost was \$962.00; in 2008 there were 166 visits, 6, 810 syringes, a cost of \$1,032.00; in 2009 174 visits; 10,859 syringes, \$1483.00 cost. In each of these years Public Health contributed \$1500 each year.

In Calendar year 2010 the Public Health funding for ancillary NEP supplies will end. Activity in this program at RRHC might increase, due to closure of programs in the north part of the county.

Beth is proposing that RRHC will pay \$1500 in calendar year 2010 and that RAINS will come up with \$1500. RRHC will pay for primary supplies (syringes, alcohol wipes, large sharps containers); RAINS will cover bleach kit supplies, personal sharps containers, client education materials, safer sex supplies, naloxone kits, and other HIV and hepatitis risk materials.

Beth's salary is not figured into this; however the RRHC contribution is already budgeted.

Beth will continue to function as county liaison, providing technical support including RRHC staff training, implementation of best practices, data collection and inventory control as part of her scope of work with Humboldt DHHS.

Beth's report was much appreciated and she was thanked for taking the time to come present it to the board. She was also thanked for her ongoing work and commitment.

**Megan McCormack, the newly hired HIMS director (health information management system) brought the board up to date on the process of choosing a system and the projected timetable.**

Anne Staunton gave the board a comparative scoresheet which was used to determine which system would best suit the needs of Redwoods Rural Health Center. Three major systems were explored by RRHC: Next Gen, OCHIN, and ECW.

After much investigation, including site visits to clinics already using one or another of the systems being reviewed, the RRHC staff has decided to go with Next Gen.

The timetable is for the Practice Management portion to launch starting in April, while the Electronic Medical Records portion will start with the fiscal year in July.

Thad Horner was particularly impressed by the research and attention given to choosing the best system for RRHC needs.

Anne and Megan talked of the many ways in which, once installed and once the staff is fully trained, these systems will help the health center improve at many levels.

There was much discussion. The RRHC board greatly encourages the RRHC staff to move forward with Next Gen, and appreciates the careful decision making process that led to this recommendation.

***MOTION: That the Consent Agenda be approved as submitted.***

This motion was made by Janet Fitzgerald and seconded by Pamela Moore.

***MOTION PASSED unanimously.***

The Consent Agenda for this meeting contained minutes of the November 24, 2009 Board Meeting, the December 15, 2009 Special Board Meeting, the November Finance Co notes; November 2009 reports from Behavioral Health, Dental, Medical, Finance and Operations, and Quality Improvement, and the November 2009 Financial Report.

**There was no correspondence, but Sydney King wanted to address the board during Open Time.**

She told her fellow board members that she has applied to Loyola University to take some advanced courses in biomedical ethics. The courses are offered online, but she will need to be gone a month during each of the two years of the course. There was some discussion. Her particular concerns are women's health and hospice related questions. She has not yet been accepted, but she thinks since she already has a PhD in the field she will be accepted. She is writing a grant to cover her expenses.

The board congratulated her on this new venture.

**Anne Staunton presented her Executive Director report.**

She touched on staffing changes and issues, talked of the training through the Law Office program. The group discussed how other board members might be able to check in to the learning program if they wished to do so. Anne will further research this.

**The Board had asked that she determine whether HRSA specifically prohibits extended sliding fee scale discounts to people who would be eligible based on their poverty level but who reside outside the service area.**

Anne reported that HRSA expects that FQHC clinics have sliding fee scale discount policy and that FQHC clinics set service area boundaries.

She said that HRSA expects that health centers follow the policies set by the board.

She mentioned that last spring there was some problem with our competing FQHC application; Jeanie clarified the situation, which was that the application should have contained the actual table of sliding fee scale adjustments based on federal poverty level percentages. This table was submitted in April. In July there were some changes authorized by the board to the minimum charge in various departments (mostly in response to the loss of dental Medi-Cal). At that time it was determined that HRSA permits differing base line charges on the sliding fee scale for different departments (medical, dental, behavioral health).

Anne stated that every organization is reviewing this (she had gone to the NCCN meeting right after the special board meeting in mid December). She said basically this is a financial decision, not a compliance decision.

The challenge is how to balance financial viability and our mission.

Anne looked into data from past years and noted that about 2 to 3 percent of those using the sliding fee scale adjustment were out of area clients. She feels this shows the system has built in flexibility. (the actual numbers were around 41 to 75 clients in the course of a given year).

She worries that if we do not limit sliding scale to those residing within the service area boundaries we will be swamped by people taking advantage of the discount, to the extent that we will be unable to care for our own communities.

There was considerable board discussion. The matter will be continued during the next (or at least during one of) the upcoming Strategic Planning sessions.

The Strategic Planning Dates are

February 15 (which happens to be Jeanie Eldridge's birthday) (also Susan B. Anthony's)

March 1

April 5

There was a bit more discussion about staffing changes, the ELF project, the workstation moves, and so on.

**Thad Horner noted that the only people declaring candidacy for the upcoming Board seats are the three incumbents, Janet Fitzgerald, Shelby, and Kathy Epling. Appointments will be made at the February meeting.**

***MOTION: That the Redwoods Rural Board of Directors approves the fiscal year 2008-2009 audit as submitted.***

The motion was made by Sydney King and seconded by Janet Fitzgerald.

***MOTION PASSED unanimously***

The next Finance committee meeting will be January 26, 2010 at 5PM at Redwoods Rural; the next Board meeting will follow at 6PM, same place, same date.

**MOTION: That the meeting be adjourned.**

Motion was made by Pamela Moore and seconded by Janet Fitzgerald.

**MOTION PASSED unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21PM, with wishes for a Happy New Year to all.

Respectfully submitted, Kathy Epling, RRHC board secretary