

February 2023 Cascade Medical Board Meeting Recap

By Clint Strand

With a lighter-than-usual agenda, the Cascade Medical Board of Commissioners worked through their agenda in under two hours.

The meeting started with an update from Cascade Medical Foundation's Shari Campbell. Campbell got the Board up to speed on current efforts on upcoming fundraisers such as the Cascade Golf Classic in June, a Mother's Day 5K Fun Run in May, and the return of the "Jive Time in the Cascades" event in September. The goal of fundraising is to assist Cascade Medical in standing up their Cardiac Rehabilitation Program.

Next up was an update from Molly Bloss, director of Cascade's Medical Informatics program. For those unfamiliar with the term, medical informatics works on improving and optimizing all the data CM receives from our Electronic Medical Record (EMR) program – making it run smoother for both providers and patients. Bloss said her department is working with an outside consulting group who are assisting in addressing known opportunities for improvement within the EMR, and is grateful for their help. This has not been the smoothest of transitions since the new EMR went live a year ago, but Bloss said Cascade isn't alone in that. For comparison, she checked with her counterpart at Klickitat Valley Health who are in the midst of their own EMR rollout. They started their rollout about a year and a half before Cascade, and Bloss said they have dealt with near identical challenges. Board Commissioner Gustavo Montoya asked Chief Information Officer Chad Schmitt if Cascade Medical is building a "technology roadmap," and Schmitt answered Cascade has a roadmap for a 3-5 year strategy, which we're in the middle of right now.

Next, Cascade Medical CEO Diane Blake updated the Board about her recent trip to Olympia Advocacy Day, where she and other leaders had a chance to converse with our state legislators about issues important to the health care industry. Blake mentioned a bill to monitor working its way through the Legislature will deal with nursing staffing that may have unintended consequences for patient care, and a request for the state to help with the issue of "difficult to discharge" patients. These are the patients that are, for all intents and purposes, healthy enough to be discharged from a health care facility, but deal with other factors that make their discharge impossible. These are folks who would typically be sent to skilled nursing facilities, but can not be sent there because those facilities are either full or lack the appropriate staffing to take a full compliment of patients. In the meantime, a significant percentage of hospital beds, especially in larger hospitals, are taken up with these patients when they could be used treating patients

that actually need care. The ask to legislators is to increase the daily rate hospitals receive to house these patients, and advocate for additional resources to go to skilled nursing facilities so those patients can go to where they will best receive the care they need.

Board Commissioner Tom Baranouskas updated the Board on their latest Governance Committee meeting, with an emphasis on long-range succession planning. Baranouskas also mentioned a desire for the Board to have greater opportunities to interact with our community, and will meet with Cascade Medical Director of PR Clint Strand to brainstorm ideas.

Chief Financial Officer Marianne Vincent updated the latest on December financials. Vincent reported a steady revenue stream in December, with a \$76,000 positive margin. While helpful, 2022 will still see the year end with a negative balance, with \$2.1M less revenue compared to anticipated budget. Finance was preparing for this all year long, though, and cash on hand continues to be very strong, ensuring CM remains in a strong financial position, in spite of a financially rough 2022.

Next up, Diane Blake continued with her Administrator Report. Blake mentioned Cascade is starting work with our outside pharmacy vendor, Medication Review, to expand our pharmacy services, namely to work on medication refills for our patients, which should provide greater efficiencies in our Clinic.

Blake introduced Cascade Medical's newest physician, Dr. Lauren Kendall, and announced a confirmed contract signing for another physician, Dr. Mark Wefel, who will join the organization in June. He will work full-time in the Clinic, and is also interested in possible shifts in the Emergency Department as well.

The next Board meeting is slated for Wednesday, March 22nd.