

## League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman Regional Hospital Date: 5/6/2020

Observer Reporting: Judy Stone Length of Meeting: 2 hours

Members Present: All **Virtual Zoom**

Members Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

Others Present (e.g., media, public) A few public – not identified; Mr. Kuipers, MPDN

### **Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:**

#### Administrative Update

- ✓ The hospital's C-Section rate continues to be above the national average since 8/2018 and above the WA State Goal since 9/2019.
- ✓ Trauma Service Level IV Designation was granted continuation to 6/2023.
- ✓ Social Media pivoted from marketing of hospital services and outreach events to communication about COVID19.
- ✓ **All employees are taking part in a 25% reduction** in either their hours of work or compensation rate. This began on April 11, 2020 and is scheduled to conclude on June 5, 2020. This is a total of 4-pay periods. The goal is to save \$1 M in compensation costs. Fifty-one employees have taken voluntary furloughs.
- ✓ Phase 1 of a program called **Phreesia** will be implemented May 6<sup>th</sup> in all network clinics. This is a patient intake management system which allows for mobile check in, electronic form completion, patient reminders, mobile payment, and appointment requests.
- ✓ **Physician Recruitment**; Pullman Family Medicine and Palouse Medical have each hired two new Family Practice doctors. PFM: Dr Baker and Dr. Webb. No names given for Palouse Medical hires. Recruitment is underway for a pediatrician to join Palouse Pediatrics.
- ✓ The hospital established an onsite laundry service for PPE.
- ✓ Over 4,000 masks have been donated by the community.

#### First Quarter Financial Update

A detailed report was given. Finances were stable until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April.

- The Hospital Foundation has moved close to \$1 M from the COVID19 Fund to the hospital.
- The CARES Act sent \$228 K and one or two more installments are expected.
- No FEMA funds – they are restricted to direct patient care and PRH has not had a COVID19 case.
- Many federal grants and loans have been applied for and two or three have been received at this time.
  - Medicare Advanced Payment Program awarded a \$9.5 M loan. The interest rate is extremely high so the hospital is banking this until it may become necessary to use it.

**At the end of the report, CFO Steve Febus stated that at this time he expects the hospital to break even unless there is a second surge of the virus.**

#### CEO Compensation Resolution

CEO Scott Adams requested that his 25% pay reduction be extended through July 3<sup>rd</sup>. This was passed.

#### Future Planning Considerations

This was an open discussion among all Commissioners and hospital Executive Officers of issues they are aware of and/or are expecting to have to deal with. One comment was made that everything needs to be done to keep the hospital from closing.

- Area Healthcare Providers (HCP) say some patients are wary of coming to the hospital for allowed elective procedures. Reasons include fear of becoming infected and some don't want to have the required COVID19 testing.

- ***The hospital has not had a patient with COVID 19.***
- Area HCPs are actively working with the hospital to coordinate care issues, planning, mitigation, and available services. Telemedicine using Zoom is increasing.
- **Scott Adams stated it will take years, perhaps decades, for all the services the hospital has provided prior to this pandemic to return.**
- Healthcare providers are seeing necessary patients and working hard to keep immunizations current.
- **COVID19 testing supplies:** The community is coordinating the supply chain. There are no shortages at this time. Testing is only being done at the hospital testing trailer and at Palouse Medical lab. Incyte Diagnostics is providing testing supplies at this time. It was not clear to this observer whether they are charging for them or not. WSU is converting testing at the Vet Lab to human testing.
- **Phase 1 reopening:** Whitman County has not had a new COVID19 case since April 16. The 3-week period for consideration of reopening the county will end May 14. It was stated that the County Commissioners and the Director of the Public Health Department are writing to encourage the Governor to reopen. WSU will reopen in-person classes for the Fall Semester. The hospital is expecting this will cause a **surge** in cases. The reopening of Moscow is also expected to result in a **surge**.
- Nursing Homes/Assisted Living: Neither Avalon Nursing Home nor the county's two Assisted Living facilities have had a case of COVID19! Some people have refused to be admitted to these facilities for fear of becoming infected.
- **Expanding the boundaries of Public Hospital District NO. 1-A of Whitman County** will be discussed at the June meeting. They expect to send a Resolution to the County Auditor in August.

**Process & Protocol:** This Board behaved as usual – competent, polite, caring, considerate of each other, thoughtful and involved.

**Your additional comments/opinions:** It seems that PRH has taken this pandemic seriously from the first notice that a novel virus was circulating. They put their established plans into place right away. It is very sad to hear that the incredible number of services they have established over the years are gone and will be very slow, if ever, to be reinstated. The repercussions of this pandemic are daunting and have yet to be realized.