

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman Regional Hospital Date: 1-2-2022
Observer Reporting: Judy Stone Length of Meeting: 2 hours
Board Members Present: All present
Board Members Absent: none
Others Present (e.g., staff, other agency representatives, media, public): Department Heads; Doctor Tingstad; Rob Rembert, hospital attorney; unidentified members of public

Business Pertaining to League Positions or Topics of Interest:

The Palouse Surgeons group has dissolved and been replaced by the **Pullman Surgical Associates** (4 general surgeons, 2 of which will not have clinic patients and will provide 24-hour acute/emergency surgery resulting in an improved reorganization of surgical coverage for the hospital.

There is **no** longer a **gastroenterologist** in town. The hospital is actively recruiting for this much needed service.

PRH is **developing their workforce for the future** by collaborating with WallaWallaCC and Lewis-Clark State College, to educate **nursing** students with experience at the hospital, PullmanFamilyMedicine and Palouse Pediatrics. The hospital's **imaging and lab** directors also provide clinical rotations for professional students.

WA state nursing schools graduate about 2500 RNs/year and almost 40% of those leave our state to work elsewhere.

The hospital is getting staffing assistance from Travel Staff (called **'travelers'**). The common reasons for using travelers in 2021 and is in 2022 are to cover for medical, maternity, and personal leaves and general staff relief. Travelers have served in nursing, lab, imaging, front door screening, and occupational therapy.

Financial Report: The hospital district realized a net gain of \$6,702,080 in 2021. The largest contributing factors were rebound in surgical volume, overall hospital FTEs holding under budget, and addition to a couple CARES ACT related grants. Inpatient activity continues to decline as more services are offered on an outpatient basis.

Current practices in the **PRH Clinic Network** (wholly owned by PRH): Pullman Family Medicine, Pullman Heart, Pediatrics, Psych/Behavioral, Pulmonary/sleep, Surgical Associates, Foot and Ankle. The network is experiencing significant staffing shortages during the Omicron surge.

Current **Joint Ventures** (Gritman Medical Center, Pullman Regional Hospital, Whitman Hospital & Medical Clinics): **Palouse Specialty Physicians:** ENT/Audiology, Urology, Neurology, Oncology.

Legislation being watched: HB 1868 – Improving worker safety and patient care in health care facilities by addressing staffing needs, overtime, meal and rest breaks, and enforcement. The hospital opposes this bill. Commissioner Grantham stated the bill is succeeding.

HB 1862 concerning facility fees charged by certain health care providers.

SHB 1616 relating to the charity care act resulting in broader coverage.