

May 25, 2022

Morrow County Health District received a list of questions during the public comment period of the May 23, 2022 board meeting. In Oregon, the Public Meetings Law is a public attendance law, not a public participation law. This means that the right of the public to attend does not include the right to participate by giving testimony or comment except as otherwise required by law (e.g. a budget hearing). The District's Board of Directors has voluntarily chosen to allow a 30 minute public comment period at the start of each board meeting in order to allow the public a greater chance for participation in the District's operations. On May 23, 2022, there were multiple community members wishing to make public comment, so in the interest of time and fairness to all attendees, the board requested that these questions be submitted via e-mail to allow the District to respond fully to all questions. Although the District has not yet received these questions via e-mail, the District has chosen to respond to those questions that were made public on social media.

The District is aware that there is speculation on social media about the employment status of current and former employees. In compliance with employment law, and out of respect for the privacy of our current and former employees, the District cannot comment on personnel matters.

The District welcomes the public to submit questions and comments at any time to community@mocoehd.org.

1. How much money is sitting and being wasted without the use of the Scope equipment?

There is no cost to the District to maintain the District's scope equipment while not in use. Some of this equipment will be used for nasopharyngoscopy (swallow studies), a service which the District has partnered with Pioneer Memorial Physical Therapy to provide. The remainder of the equipment will go back in to use when the District is able to resume scope procedures.

2. How many appointments are being cancelled by patients versus by the facility?

Each month, the District includes clinic stats in the board packet, which is available on the District's website. These stats include the number of patient cancellations and the number of clinic cancellations.

In April of 2022, there were: Pioneer Memorial Clinic – 11 patient cancellations, 26 clinic cancellations, Irrigon Medical Clinic – 0 patient cancellations, 0 clinic cancellations, Lone Community Clinic – 5 patient cancellations, 1 clinic cancellation.

The District voluntarily tracks and publishes these stats because this is an area that the District has identified for improvement.

3. How many days in April were there no providers in clinic for PMC? May?

This information is shown in the clinic stats that the District publishes to the website each month. In April, there were seven weekdays during which there was not a provider available at PMC. The stats for May are not yet complete, however, this data will be publicly available at the June board meeting and on the District's website. To increase access to providers, the District hired two additional providers for PMC in March of 2022. Amanda Roy, PA-C will start at PMC on July 13, 2022 and Dr. Rodney Schaffer will start at PMC on August 1, 2022.

4. Per your board packet PMC had 7 days with no provider in clinic.

Correct, see above.

5. Was the public notified that there were no providers in or were they told “we don’t have any available appointments today”.

The District’s protocol for responding to patients that want to be seen when there is no availability (for any reason) is to offer patients an appointment at another District location, an appointment via telehealth, or an appointment at a later date. This process was developed as a result of feedback from patients and community partners and has been well received. There is no requirement for the District to notify the public if a provider is not available in clinic, nor is it the District’s policy to do so because this has led to confusion on the part of the public about whether or not a provider is available in the ER. There is **always** a provider available in the ER.

6. Where have the Covid funds gone towards?

COVID funds have been used for a variety of purposes, but primarily: medical equipment purchases, personal protective equipment, staffing, and facility improvements that reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases. The District’s financials are public records, which are available to the public for inspection at any time. The District’s 2021 Audited Financials are published on the District’s website. Additionally, each time a purchase is made which exceeds \$10,000, that purchase is approved in a public board meeting.

7. The public would like to request the Covid budget and the last few years of audits.

The District’s 2021 Audited Financials are posted to the District’s website. The District will send documents necessary to satisfy the remainder of this request, however, it should be noted that the District does not maintain a separate COVID budget. The best way to make a public records request is to send a written request to the District either by mail or e-mail (community@mocoHD.org).

8. Patient satisfaction rates for PMC in May is 60%, what are you doing to fix this?

In order to answer this, some background is needed. The District uses a patient satisfaction survey called “CGCAHPS” (Clinician and Group Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems), which is a standardized assessment of patient satisfaction. The survey includes 29 questions about a patient’s experience. In order to meaningfully track change over time, the District reports two of the overall measures from these surveys to the board on a monthly basis for each location. In the first quarter of 2022, which is not closed (meaning surveys are still being tabulated), PMC’s scores are as follows:

- *Using any number from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst provider possible and 10 is the best provider possible, what number would you use to rate this provider? **60% with 20 responses.***
- *Would you recommend this provider’s office to your family and friends? **95% with 19 responses.***

In general, as more responses are received, scores improve (for example, the score which is now 60% was 54% in April when 13 responses were received).

The District is in the first year of a three year engagement with Custom Learning Systems to improve patient satisfaction and employee engagement. This is referred to as the District’s service excellence initiative. This initiative includes training, an enhanced focus on patient satisfaction scores, and a new framework for making process improvements to better serve patients and employees.

9. You are going to rent another property (per your board packet) for med students, providers, etc- what will be happening with the other property that is being used for that same purpose?

The lease agreement that was included in the May 2022 board packet is an extension on a lease that the District already holds on a property used to house a locum physician. Providing housing for locum physicians is a standard contractual requirement.

The District owns a duplex, which is used primarily to house on-call ER providers. These units have a nearly 100% occupancy rate.

10. With Nicole Mahoney being the new COO- who will be taking on the CFO duties? If also Nicole, how do you plan to make sure things are not missed and deadlines are being met?

The CFO position was posted for recruitment and the District is pleased to announce that an offer has been extended to a qualified local candidate. This individual's name will be made public after the individual has a chance to notify their current employer.

11. How often is Dr. Berretta- Chief of staff- traveling from WA to be present at the clinic? Is he seeing patients? If so, are those included in your stats?

To provide some background information, Chief of Staff is not a position that the District hires. This is a position which is elected by the medical staff and may be filled by any physician that is a member of the District's medical staff.

Dr. Berretta is employed by the District to provide physician oversight services, which include physician assistant supervision, clinic medical directorship, and EMS advisory duties.

Dr. Berretta is currently working 100% remotely. He has not provided direct patient care, though the District and Dr. Berretta have been working on the possibility of telehealth services, which may be available in the future.

12. Please clarify how much money was lost the first quarter of 2022- as it seems what was said in the paper is not exactly what was said in the meeting

The financial statements presented to the District's board on a monthly basis are draft, unaudited financial statements, which are subject to change. The District receives cost-based reimbursement, which is not calculated and applied to the District's financial statements until the cost report is completed after year end (typically September). Additionally, COVID funds cannot be recorded until the District's financial audit in August of 2022. For this reason, it is not possible to determine true losses or gains during the first quarter of the year. The March 2022 financials, which this question seems to refer to, show a YTD loss of 372,055. This is reflective of operations after nine months of the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2022.

13. Do you consider it a priority to hire and retain local qualified applicants?

Yes. The District also recognizes that remote work can be a valuable option to expand the applicant pool when needed.

14. Are locum doctors and traveling nurses more expensive then hiring and maintaining employed staff?

In general, yes. The District makes every effort to utilize employed personnel before engaging locums.

15. What is the plan with the unused property purchases that the district has made?

The District purchased a church building and a house in Heppner, Oregon as part of a package deal. The property purchase was made at a below market value price with a below market value interest rate.

The church will be used for administrative offices, which will free up space in existing buildings to be used for clinical needs and the house will be used primarily to house students and on-call staff.

The costs of construction materials and labor are currently significantly inflated and materials are difficult to access. Due to these factors, the District has put these renovation projects on hold.

16. Do you find it appropriate to be contacting previous employee's current employers to threaten them with a defamation lawsuit with zero factual evidence?

This appears to be a reference to current or potential litigation. The District cannot comment on current or potential litigation.