

Soldiers' Home in Holyoke Board of Trustees Operations Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Trustees Operations Committee of the Soldiers' Home Holyoke (HLY) was held virtually and telephonically on Tuesday, November 22, 2022. The meeting began at 6:06 PM.

Committee Members Present on WebEx:

Chairman, Sean Collins, Mark Bigda, and Carmen Ostrander

Also Present on WebEx:

Diane Dietzen, CMO (HLY); Kelly Jones, DON (HLY); Linda Lariviere, Quality Manager (HLY); Michael Lazo, Superintendent (HLY) Caitlin Menard, Director of Social Work, (HLY); Elba Pires-Morgan, Western Mass Eldercare, Ombudsman; Patty Spirito, Western Mass Eldercare, Ombudsman; Brett Walker, General Council (HLY); and Kathleen Denner, Recording Secretary (HLY).

Roll Call:

Chairman Collins conducted a Roll Call as follows: Mark Bigda (Yes), Carmen Ostrander (Yes), and Sean Collins (Yes).

Pledge of Allegiance - All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Trustee Bigda and seconded by Trustee Ostrander to accept the minutes as amended of the October 26, 2022 Board of Trustees Operations Committee meeting and as well as the executive session, it was unanimously VOTED to accept the minutes of both the standing meeting and the executive meeting. Roll Call Vote: Trustee Bigda (Yes), Trustee Ostrander (Yes), and Trustee Collins (Yes). Unanimously approved.

Old Business

CMS Mock survey – Matrix Development

Trustee Collins checked in with Mr. Lazo to see how the matrix development is moving along and how the team is approaching those items identified on the mock survey. Mr. Lazo replied that they spent some time as a group developing the tracker and identifying process owners so we know who the responsible party is for each task on the tracker and they have started working towards achieving the required end state. He continued that we do have a check in on a monthly basis with the consultant to make sure we are headed down the right path. Trustee Collins asked if he could turn that document into something more digestible and do you have a date when will it be ready to share. Mr. Lazo replied that tracker is complete and will send out to committee tomorrow morning. Trustee Collins stated it was a great discussion and there was a lot of goodness in there and he read it for prosperity, the great things that were said about folks working at the Soldiers' Home and once we see that matrix, they are going to hit it out of the ballpark.

Elopement policy -- update

Trustee Collins commented that he knows there was some rewrites that were going to go into that, is there a date that may be ready for review or publishing or is that still going under revisions. Mr. Lazo replied that it is still in discussion, and we do have some fine tuning to do and I will defer to Ms. Lariviere but I think we are just about complete and should have a in front of our policy committee fairly soon. Ms. Lariviere shared that they have a meeting next Tuesday to fine tune and

then it will be ready. Trustee Collins said he looks forward to that hitting the list of policies to review.

Standard Agenda Items (Updates) / Dashboards

KPI Updates

Trustee Collins reviewed the dashboard and noted that the staffing hours continue to be a challenge, but one would say at least it is not going up in a dramatic fashion, it is holding steady. He continued that we have discussed the summer months and the challenges to get staff he will anticipate that we are in the Thanksgiving week and will continue to have those issues as we head into the holidays as well. Trustee Collins asked if there will be more hiring of nursing staff or just continue to use agency hours. Ms. Jones replied nothing to add. Trustee Collins asked if there had been any new hires. Ms. Jones replied that there have been a couple of new organic hires and a few agency staff and we are still working on recruiting fulltime staff and on December 7 there having an in person hiring event at the Home so we are trying to get that out to social media and around town, to hopefully do some on the spot interviews. Trustee Collins you may have connections with the consortium and all of the undergraduate schools and If you send it my way I will push it as well.

Trustee Collins stated that the falls did improve in October from September when there was a significant fall, looks like it is heading in the right direction.

Trustee Collins reported that the behavioral health events are heading in the right direction as well.

Trustee Collins said the area addressing services are outstanding and all in the green.

Trustee Collins stated that pressure ulcers popped up and we will talk about that in the more in-depth reports. He continued that there was nothing else on KPI's you are doing great work. comments.

Trustee Collins reviewed the weight change and did see that the month of November really popped up quite a bit with 5 veterans which is 4.5% which is something we have not seen since late spring. He continued that sometimes veterans go on/off hospice or have different challenges with illness, and he would like a more in-depth review was there anything of note on the veterans that were picked up for the month of November showing any trends. Ms. Lariviere replied that a few of the veterans were new admissions and they are adjusting to the routine, the dietician has seen them and has ordered some supplements. She continued that two of the veterans have declined and are on the watchlist for potential hospice recommendations. Trustee Collins stated that he likes the detailed reports you send with the great notes and supplements being documented is good stuff, it catches your attention rock stable then it pops up with a new admission, and they go in and out with some health issues.

Trustee Collins was looking at the infection prevention and control report for October this is great and way down for October previous month is 3.4% to 1.49% couple of infections nothing seems out of the typical find for the organisms identified, no questions on that.

Trustee Collins complimented the team for the percentage of SBAR's completed is 100% this is awesome of the education and to get that addressed. He continued that this is awesome documentation, awesome effort overall addressing the requirements.

Trustee Collins reviewed the Antibiotic Stewardship review card this is fantastic just see consistent progress with the antibiotics prescribed with only one hiccup that did not meet the McGeers, this big improvement, a lot of education going into the medical staff. He continued in a sub report was the antibiotic starts in hospital and again it is not just a piece of paper you are really taking a veteran in totality when they go out to the hospital and come back in it is not just auto pilot there are really good thoughts going into this and everything looks spot on.

Trustee Collins discussed the acquired pressure injury prevalence data and had a couple of questions. He stated that you had 2 ulcers reported: 1 stage one and 1 stage 2, one was in the coccyx and the second was other so is the stage two on the coccyx or other. Mr. Lariviere replied that the stage 2 was on the coccyx, it is a reopening of an old injury.

Trustee Collins stated that on the case mix report you are looking rock stable again love to see things are balanced out and has no questions. He continued for the new report is the psych meds quality compare and how you are tracking that with the use of antipsychotic meds, those who received antianxiety or hypnotic meds and also tracking the symptoms of depression he added he enjoys seeing this tracking system and seeing how you are converting folks to different medications, as well as the symptom of depression, and watch the seasonal trends, there were no big questions that popped out, he did read in the medical staff minutes good discussion going on about switching veterans for one type of medication to another, he is glad to see the dialog is taking place. He asked one question surrounding other options / opportunity for behavior therapy/support groups that the veterans who may have a particular manifestation that you could get them into some type of behavioral therapy to try to get away from the medications, he continued that he knows it has come up in discussions of restraints, behavior modification. Ms. Menard added that we have a LICSW as well as social workers we do have psychotherapy we can offer and we try to help with structured ways that staff can intervein, she continued that it is difficult with this population because if people cannot appreciate the psychotherapy, it is a matter of behavior modification on the side how the staff interacts with people. She continued that they do a lot of care planning around that. Trustee Collins asked if they reach out to you and your staff if they are picking up on a trend on a particular veteran. Ms. Menard since I have been here, we have tried to stream line it if they want to be seen by Geri psych through Healthdrive that they put it our way first so we can do an MSW consult and see what the need is and what the Veterans cognitive ability is, and what they would benefit from. Trustee Collins asked, do you report your activities in some format like how many consults you did, outside of your normal day job routine. Ms. Menard replied that we round every morning on every unit to do behavioral rounds, if we go unit by unit and ask the CNA's what is going on and then we do a formal behavior rounds on Friday afternoon and create a report off of that. Trustee Collins asked if he could that report see and you are doing a great job and great to hear you are doing behavioral rounds every Friday so if you could document something that you you can make a report from to keep the process going, with the phenomenal work that is getting done. Ms. Menard replied that she will create a HIPPA protected report for him.

Medical Staff Update / Review of Minutes

Trustee Collins stated that the notes were great and glad to see you are getting after things like you are not using abbreviations and corrective actions that is all spot on. Trustee Collins commended that the dialog that Ms. Lariviere had with the group in regard to restraints and issues with using different medications and it is all well documented. Trustee Bigda commented that the antipsychotic numbers are incredible, I don't know if people know this or not but those numbers 17%, 14% with the use of those meds and not using those meds is phenomenal in this day in age in a care setting like this, my hat is off to those folks.

Outside Agency Audits / Inspections / Review of Tracker Recent Joint Commission Survey Update

Trustee Collins stated that we have addressed the CMS mock survey and we have closed out all of the old trackers and want to validate as we move forward no open trackers. Mr. Lazo replied that is correct sir.

Supporting Patients / Families / Staff / Community Stakeholders

Trustee Collins started with the Pinnacle report and how we don't want to get super excited this month was a good month, November everything is improved except for two areas communication and the admission process. Trustee Collins asked Mr. Lazo if he sees in the admission process if for certain to admit new veterans and if there was something that we missed in the admissions policy and process. Mr. Lazo replied that he was able to see, there is another document that comes with the report and it does have the actual interviews, I don't recall anything specific to the process I will say that it can be a paperwork heavy process, where a lot of our veterans have submitted a packet months ago and then as it gets closer, with 80 on wait list, we have to update that and it can be tedious to some of our older veterans, the process from our standpoint runs very smoothly. He continued that we have been able to bring new veterans in as beds become available, so I think this is more of a tedious process, but a necessary one. Trustee Collins stated that bringing in new veterans there may be some feedback on those process if you could take a look at those comments and see if that validates what your thoughts are or there needs to be something you can streamlining that or get Ms. Menard engaged. Ms. Jones shared that she has seen the comments and this is somebody who commented under the admission process that we did have some problems during this process and then their general over all comments wrote "Mr. Lazo is a great guy, he stepped up to the plate and helped us a lot" this was somebody who had an old application on file and in the transition of the admission process communication was not great and Mr. Lazo worked with his son and tried to help him streamline the process but that is where that comment comes from. Trustee Collins stated for clarification that he had an old application on file but there standing on the waitlist was the same, but they had to update their admission paperwork. Mr. Lazo replied that this veteran was denied a bed erroneously, as to good reason why he was denied, and we went back and relooked at it and spoke with son and daughter and offered the family a bed so it was fixed rather quickly.

Ms. Menard reported that a lot of calls from the community on seeing how long the waitlist is and how to apply. She is happy to report it has been streamlined so people are happy with process. She continued that on the Pinnacle report some of the people that were questioned on the admission process have been here for quite a bit and don't quite remember the admission process, she stated the newer families are very happy to have their veterans with us.

Ms. Menard stated that the Veteran Advocacy group is being attended more robustly, our new veterans are finding a sense of themselves in this. She reported that for the Family meetings they have been rotating them for about 9 months now and we are trying to find the best time, she continued that she is not sure it's the matter of the time, it is just a matter of fact that things are pretty calm at the Home and people feel very well communicate with. They feel can talk to VCC's, they can talk to the social work, they can talk to anyone who answers the phone and I can confidently say that it is not as well attend. Ms. Menard shared that we had a Palliative care and Hospice care open to the families and although it was not very well attended it will take people getting used to us being open again.

Census Update

Mr. Lazo reported that we have 110 veterans in House with 1 admission slated to come in on the 30th and that will bring us back to 111 which will fill all available beds. He continued that the waitlist has grown to 88 but our process is smooth, and the waitlist will grow as our beds are full.

New building update / Status

Mr. Lazo reported that there have been no updates from the VA in terms of where the build America buy America Act. He did share that the enabling construction has continued in that Holyoke Gas & Electric has installed new power lines and over the past two weeks the temporary chiller equipment has been moved into the existing structure, and that is to allow the current chiller building to be demolished probably springtime of next year. He added that the preparatory work continues, and we are looking forward to getting this thing underway. Trustee Collins asked for his memory to be refreshed regarding the awarding of funds amount, Mr. Lazo stated that at the end of September we received a conditional award from the VA in the amount of \$164 million.

New Business / Interest Items

Ombudsmen Quarterly Report (Jul-Sep)

Trustee Collins shared that the quarterly report for July and September between July 1st and September 30 there were 9 complaints opened and 80% were closed during that time. He continued that going back to August 1 there were 52 complaints opened and 70% of those were resolved. Trustee Collins feels a lot of progress is being made and just great effort getting out there and being with the residents. There were some observations in regard to some of the activities by the recreation department and the food services comments are well received by the board because we bring that up. Trustee Collins asked the ombudsman for your high-level perspective on how things are going with the ombudsman program and how we as a subcommittee can facilitate a more successful program. Ms. Spirito shared that Ms. Fenn is not on the call and she would be the one to answer that. Trustee Collins asked Ms. Spirito how her encounters with the veterans are going. Ms. Spirito replied that things are going well she is up here a minimum 3 days a week and she tries to vary when she goes sometimes she goes in the evenings and sometimes she goes earlier in the morning so the number of people I see kind of depends on the time of day that I go, if I go early in the morning then there is not as many people awake, if I go later in the evening then people are resting as well so I don't wake anyone up, build I have been able to build a rapport with the veterans. She continued that they are remembering her and they do not always want to have their names with concerns so she groups them together so they can stay anonymous and then we have weekly meetings to address the concerns. Trustee Collins loves having their presence in the building for the veterans, families and staff, it builds a bridge.

Trustee Jourdain asked how the volunteer program is coming along. Mr. Lazo replied that it is working very well and that we have approximately 20 volunteers in the building. He continued that he has a quarterly meeting with the veteran community, and we always announce to the veteran community that we are welcoming more volunteers. Mr. Lazo reported that we have a new recreation director, and we are hoping to work with her to use the volunteers for some of the activities that are not therapeutic so our recreation staff can be more on the therapeutic activity these groups work well together supporting veteran activities and even simply one on one conversation or going down to the basement to do the walk around America.

Val Liptak – Previous Interim Superintendent visit

Trustee Collins stated that this came up at the last board meeting and you have heard me make a statement that he did not think it was necessary to have Val Liptak come and evaluate how she thinks the Holyoke Soldiers' Home was doing. He continued that in the interest of her time and obviously I think she is fantastic but if that invite is going to happen he is curious as to what you thought that visit would like and what would the expectation of that type of visit. Trustee Collins does know if the board wanted a written report or observation versus having her for a cup of coffee and walking her around. Mr. Lazo said he agrees with Trustee Collins and although he had agreed that night to reach out to her but in deeper thought and conversation with DVS, we will not be inviting Ms. Liptak to the building. He continued that Ms. Liptak has taken on a new role with the DPH covering all hospitals and is quite busy and it would not good use of her time. Mr. Lazo stated that one of the focuses of this committee is to do exactly that review of operations and that would be a duplication of efforts. Trustee Collins stated that he knows that Trustee Bigda and Trustee Ostrander would agree too. He continued that he totally supports that discussion, and it will be in these minutes that we had this discussion and that three members of the board in agreement with that as well.

New Policy review

ADMIN-048 News Media and Release of Information

Trustee Collins asked Mr. Lazo if the department has a policy on being proactive like if you wanted to get something out and get ahead of the news cycle is there something that may not be in our purview but belongs to the administration. Mr. Lazo replied that for messages going out into the mainstream media we do work with DVS to make sure we have alignment of message. He continued that they have had some conversations trying to get good news out there to counteract the negative stories and we continuing to work on that. Trustee Collins was looking at this and thinking you can't post things you can't invite people in and he was curious if you needed to get a message and how you got it out.

CAN-002 Canteen Coupon Policy

Trustee Collins stated that this is super cool, but he has one question are the Canteen employees state employees. Mr. Lazo replied yes when COVID hit the Home the 2-3 Canteen employees, since the Canteen closed, those two employees worked in our main kitchen. Mr. Lazo stated that we now have one back in Canteen and another one as support in the kitchen and as new employees come into the kitchen he can return to the Canteen. Mr. Lazo shared that he had a good conversation with a veteran that is interested in the Canteen being open for extended hours so hopefully this second person going into the Canteen is going to allow us to do that.

CAN-004 Canteen Guidelines and Procedures

Trustee Collins stated that he did not have any questions.

CAN-009 Canteen Thickened Liquids

Trustee Collins stated that he did not have any questions.

IP-049 Vaccination Policy

Trustee Collins stated that he did not have any questions.

IP-057 Employee Return to Work Criteria

IP-059 COVID-19 Full Escalation Full Procedures

NSG-083 Safe Smoking Policy

Trustee Collins said that what caught his eye was starting January 1, 2023 you will not allow any new veterans to use tobacco on the grounds. He asked how is that going to work for you. Mr. Lazo replied that this is a good question and an interesting topic however using the example set by the VA, the VA has gone smokeless for their veterans on site at the campus so we will follow suite. He continued that we will grandfather any smoker currently in the building but any new admissions as of an January 1 will not be allowed to smoke and that will be in the admission paperwork and discussed prior to the admission. Trustee Collins stated as part of that will there be a smoking transition, relying more on the medical staff. Mr. Lazo followed up that just as we did during COVID we will have nicotine gum and patches available.

Trustee Collins had no other issues with the policy.

NSG-128 Motorized Mobility Aid Wheelchair

Trustee Collins stated that when he was reading it that he was thinking you need a waiver and what is attached to the back of the checklist saying you will adhere to the traffic rules. Mr. Lazo laughingly added that we will have to get traffic lights in the hallways

PER-003 Employee Standards of Workplace Behavior

Trustee Collins agrees with everything there and asked if all employees get a handbook. Mr. Lazo replied yes. Trustee Collins asked if this is in the handbook as well. Mr. Lazo stated that this pulls this out specifically so that the employee acknowledges it directly. He continued that based on past experience we have had some difficult interactions employee to employee, so this sets the guidelines very clear for them and on an annual basis as they go through their EPRS process they acknowledge this again.

VOL-004 Volunteer Policy

Trustee Collins said this is looking great and the applications are looking wonderful.

Reminder there is no December subcommittee, the full board has a joint meeting in December with Chelsea.

Trustee Collins thanked everybody for great work they are doing. He added his appreciation to Trustee Bigda and Trustee Ostrander for their volunteerism to support the board of trustees, you are really great wingmen. Trustee Collins thanked all of the employees for the incredible work they continue to do. He appreciates all the extra effort care the staff puts in to make sure we get the best care to our veterans. Trustee Collins thanked Mr. Lazo for his leadership of a great team and congratulations to you for the great efforts and work you are doing.

Trustee Collins wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and an early Merry Christmas.

Mr. Lazo thanked Trustee Collins, Trustee Bigda and Trustee Ostrander for your support over the past years, we could not be successful without your support on the board, and it is the team that I work with Kelly, Linda, Caitlin, Dr. Dietzen, Brett and Rich it is a great group. I appreciate your support on that.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Bigda, and Trustee Ostrander seconded.
The meeting concluded at 7:04 pm

Next meeting will January 24, 2023.

Kathleen Denner
Acting Secretary for the Board of Trustees

Attachments:

