

Lake County Illinois

*Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center
3010 Grand Avenue
Waukegan, Illinois 60085
Conference Room #3112*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

5:30 PM

3010 Grand Ave., Waukegan, IL 60085

**Lake County Community Health Center Governing
Council**

1. Call to Order

Chair Fornero called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Members

Present 8 - Chair Fornero, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham, Member Scheurer and Member Young

Absent 3 - Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Member Aaroneaux and Member Chuc

3. Pledge of Allegiance

This matter was presented.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1

July 8, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [GC Meeting Minutes 7.8.25 - DRAFT](#)

Chair Fornero apologized for missing the previous meeting and expressed concern about its cancellation due to the lack of a physical quorum. Chair Fornero emphasized the importance of regular attendance and encouraged all members to make every effort to attend monthly meetings.

Chair Fornero asked for a motion to approve the July 8, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Motion by Member Scheurer, second by Member Young. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

Aye: 8 - Chair Fornero, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham, Member Scheurer and Member Young

Absent: 3 - Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Member Aaroneaux and Member Chuc

5. Public Comment to the Council

None

6. Executive Director's Report

Deputy Executive Director Sam Johnson delivered the following report on behalf of Executive Director Christopher Hoff:

1. Budget Presentation: On August 20, 2025, the proposed FQHC budget was presented to the Budget Committee. The budget, also presented to the Governing Council, is designed to sustain essential community healthcare services despite external pressures that impact access to care. It is funded by Lake County taxpayers, the Lake County Health Department, and a federal HRSA grant.

2. HRSA Recognition: The Lake County Health Department has been recognized by the HRSA as a Silver Health Center Quality Leader, placing it in the top 20% of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) nationwide. Additional recognitions were awarded for achievements in promoting heart health, diabetes care, preventive services, and health

information technology. Deputy Executive Director Johnson extended his gratitude to all staff in and supporting the health centers for their work, which has led to improved patient health outcomes.

3. *FQHC 30th Anniversary: September marks the 30th anniversary of the FQHC program at the Lake County Health Department, established in 1995. To commemorate this milestone, the department is planning open house events and tours at the BMB, Midlakes, and Zion health centers during the month. The Lake County Board formally recognized the Health Department's community impact and the high-quality care provided by staff on September 9, 2025.*

4. *Contingency Planning: The department has developed a preparedness plan in response to the potential deployment of federal agencies, including ICE and the National Guard, to Chicago and the Great Lakes Naval Station. Proactive measures are in place to ensure clients maintain access to services. These include providing staff with clear protocols, preparing to reactivate telehealth services for remote care, and adapting programs to meet clients where they are most comfortable. The department affirmed its commitment to ensuring all individuals can access the care they need.*

Following the report, Member Scheurer inquired about the department's provisions for ensuring uninsured community members receive medical care. Deputy Executive Director Johnson affirmed that the department serves all community members, regardless of their insurance status.

7. Action items

7.1

Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) Reappointment - Burke

Chair Fornero called for a motion to approve the reappointment of nineteen (19) licensed independent practitioners:

- **Nimat Akorede, APRN, Psychiatry-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner**
- **Aileen Benjakul, MD, Internal Medicine**
- **Kokeela Rathi, MD, Internal and Addiction Medicine**
- **Marina Smirnov, MD Psychiatry**
- **Carlie Terchin, APRN, Family Nurse Practitioner**
- **Mamerto Villamonte, DDS, Dentist**
- **Genevieve Waldschmidt, APRN, Family Nurse Practitioner**
- **Joanna Caban, MD Psychiatry**
- **Jamie Esmon, DO, Pediatrics**
- **Kathy Sonenthal, MD, Allergy and Immunology**
- **Daram Reddy, MD Psychiatry**
- **Nuha Shair, MD, Pediatrics**
- **Nagham Al-Bana, MD, Family Medicine**
- **Evelyn Chou, APRN, Family Nurse Practitioner**
- **Omar Cockey, DMD, Dentist**
- **Susan Felsenthal, MD, Internal Medicine**
- **Joshua Nathan, MD, Psychiatry**

- Teresita Rodriguez-Florida, APRN, Family Nurse Practitioner

- Suketu Patel, APRN, Family Nurse Practitioner

Motion by Member Ross Cunningham, second by Member Bejster. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

Aye: 8 - Chair Fornero, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham, Member Scheurer and Member Young

Absent: 3 - Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Member Aaroneaux and Member Chuc

7.2

Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) Privileging and Credentialing - Burke

Chair Fornero called for a motion to approve the privileging and credentialing of the six (6) licensed independent practitioners:

- Jamie Ehrenpreis, MD, Pediatrics

- Kattryn Guardiano, APRN, Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner

- Carmen Macias Huerta, MD, Internal Medicine and Pulmonary Disease

- James Estaver, MD-Resident, Psychiatry

- Ali Khoshkish, MD Psychiatry

- Jeremy Wolfe, MD-Resident, Psychiatry

Motion by Member Ross Cunningham, second by Member Scheurer. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

Aye: 8 - Chair Fornero, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham, Member Scheurer and Member Young

Absent: 3 - Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Member Aaroneaux and Member Chuc

7.3

Approval of FY2026 Proposed FQHC Budget - Cooper

Attachments: [330 Budget Narrative](#)

Chair Forenero called for a motion to approve the Section 330, H80CS00119 Grant funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration in the amount of \$4,974,007 as detailed in the attached Budget Narrative and the non-federal funds of \$37,323,960 totaling the Physical Health/FQHC FY26 budget amount of \$42,297,967. Motion by Member Hernandez, second by Member Scheurer. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

Aye: 8 - Chair Fornero, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham, Member Scheurer and Member Young

Absent: 3 - Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Member Aaroneaux and Member Chuc

8. Presentations

8.1

UDS January to July 2025 Quality Update - Steres

Attachments: [GC UDS 1.25 - 7.25](#)

Toni Steres, Director of Provider Operations, presented the UDS Quality Update for January through July 2025, as included in the meeting packet.

Member Scheurer inquired about the depression screening process detailed in the report, seeking clarification on the clinical pathway from initial screening to diagnosis or discharge. Director Steres elaborated on the process, explaining it as a complex, multi-step workflow. Patients typically undergo screening with standardized tools (e.g., PHQ-2/PHQ-9). However, she emphasized that while these tools provide initial indicators, the nuances of behavioral health often extend beyond simple diagnostic cutoffs. A positive screen triggers a warm handoff to a behavioral health specialist for a more thorough confirmatory assessment. This leads to collaborative treatment planning, follow-up scheduling, and eventual discharge only when clinically indicated, acknowledging the intricate nature of mental health recovery.

Member Hernandez asked for details on the BMI screening and follow-up process. Director Steres explained that BMI data is systematically collected at every patient visit across multiple departments to ensure comprehensive data capture. Director Steres noted that weight management is a consistent topic of discussion during patient encounters. The process involves recording height and weight, with EHR prompts guiding staff. Based on the results, clinicians provide counseling and may offer referrals to nutritionists or behavioral health services for additional support, with progress monitored over subsequent visits.

This matter was presented.

8.2

UDS Measure: Ischemic Vascular Disease - Steres

Attachments: [GC IVD 09.25](#)

Director of Provider Operations, Toni Steres, presented the UDS Measure: Ischemic Vascular Disease included in the packet.

This matter was presented.

9. Discussion Items

10. Director of Healthcare Operations Report

10.1

Director of Healthcare Operations Report - Burke

Attachments: [FQHC Healthcare Operations Metric Dashboard 09.25 \(002\)](#)

Director of Healthcare Operations, Kim Burke, reported that as of August 13, 2025, there are 3,387 individuals on our general medicine new client waitlist, 3,105 adults and 282 pediatrics. The total new client wait list has been increased by 361 individuals. There were 416 adults added to the wait list since the July 8, 2025, report to Governing Council. The pediatric wait list decreased by 55 individuals. There are currently 37 new patient appointment slots/week.

Member Young inquired about the department's preparedness for potential future limitations on health insurance coverage and its impact on waitlist growth. Director of Health Care Operations Kim Burke responded, noting that a significant challenge is the ongoing difficulty in recruiting and retaining healthcare providers for the FQHC. Member Young followed up with a concern about timely access to care, citing an example of a patient experiencing a two-week wait for a three-month psychiatric check-in. Deputy Executive Director Sam Johnson clarified that the department utilizes a "just-in-time" scheduling model. This process, which involves scheduling appointments approximately two weeks in advance rather than several months out, has been effective in reducing no-show rates and better managing waitlists.

Member Ross-Cunningham asked why the closed North Chicago location still appears on metrics reports. Deputy Executive Director Johnson explained that it is maintained for bookkeeping purposes to accurately track the percentage of patients originating from the North Chicago area.

11. Director of Finance & Administrative Services Report

11.1

Director of Finance & Administrative Services Report - Cooper

Attachments: [FQHC Jun 25 - Cooper](#)
 [FQHC Jul 25](#)

Director of Finance & Admin Services, Angela Cooper, presented the financial report, referencing the detailed statements included in the meeting packet. Director Cooper highlighted that the FQHC had a deficit of \$565,427 in June and \$1,050,866 in July. Director Cooper attributed this variance primarily to challenges with provider recruitment and retention. She confirmed that the department is actively implementing measures to address the financial shortfall, including focused expense reductions.

Chair Fornero inquired if Director Cooper was confident that these corrective actions would put the FQHC back on track by the end of the year. Director Cooper responded that the initial financials for August show improvement, and she is hopeful that the FQHC will break even for the year.

12. Added to Agenda

None

13. Old Business

None

14. New Business

None

15. Executive Session

None

16. Adjournment

Chair Fornero adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.