

Lake County Illinois

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



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, November 18, 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 5:33 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Members

Present 9 - Chair Fornero, Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Chuc, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham and Member Young

Absent 1 - Member Scheurer

3. Pledge of Allegiance

This matter was presented.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1

October 14, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [GC Meeting Minutes 10.14.25 - DRAFT](#)

Chair Fornero asked for a motion to approve the October 14, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Motion by Member Ross Cunningham, second by Member Young. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

Aye: 9 - Chair Fornero, Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Chuc, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham and Member Young

Absent: 1 - Member Scheurer

5. Public Comment to the Council

None

6. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Hoff reported the following:

1. As widely reported by news outlets, the federal government shutdown has ended. The State has indicated that it may take until Thursday to fully restore SNAP benefits, which impacts approximately 22,000 households and 70,000 individuals in Lake County who lost access to this critical resource during the shutdown. Executive Director Hoff expressed gratitude for the restoration of these benefits, as well as the funding secured through next year for WIC and SNAP programs, which are vital to many of the agency's clients. However, he noted that changes to SNAP eligibility requirements, introduced as part of the federal government's recent legislation, will present ongoing challenges in ensuring access to food resources. While the shutdown did not disrupt the Health Department's operations or grant funding, Hoff cautioned that the federal budget discussions set for January could lead to another shutdown. Additionally, Hoff highlighted concerns regarding potential changes to Affordable Care Act marketplace plan subsidies, which currently help approximately 10,000 Lake County residents afford health insurance. A vote on these

subsidies is expected in December, and the agency is closely monitoring developments.

2. The County Board has approved the 2026 County Budget, which includes funding for the FQHC and Health Department budgets. Executive Director Hoff thanked Member Ross Cunningham for her support during the County Board's budget approval process.

3. Executive Director Hoff reminded members that Chair Fornero's final meeting will take place in December, which is also the Governing Council's annual meeting. During this meeting, a slate of officers will be selected, and committee assignments will be finalized. The Nominating Committee will meet prior to the Governing Council meeting to recommend candidates for approval. Hoff encouraged members interested in leadership roles to express their interest to Chair Fornero or the Nominating Committee.

Member Ross Cunningham emphasized the importance of adhering to the by-laws by selecting only those who have expressed interest in specific positions. Executive Director Hoff assured her that the selection process is being carefully managed in compliance with the by-laws to ensure strong leadership for the Governing Council.

7. Action items

7.1

Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) Reappointment - Burke

Chair Fornero called for a motion to approve the privileging and credentialing, or reappointment of:

-Zina Banna, MD, Family Medicine

-Angela McElwee (Gorelick), MD, Obstetrics and Gynecology

-Pratibha Patel, DPM, Podiatry

-Brian Salzverg, MD, Psychiatry

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

Aye: 9 - Chair Fornero, Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Chuc, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham and Member Young

Absent: 1 - Member Scheurer

7.2

Fee Schedule Review for Lake County Health Department (all fees for clinical services) for Implementation in FY26 - Cooper

Attachments: [25-1389 Summary Grid of Fee Rationale](#)

[25-1389 Fee Schedule as of 12.1.25](#)

Member Argueta requested clarification on why some procedures, particularly CPT HCPS codes, have seen cost increases exceeding 100%. Director Cooper explained that the increases are based on a comprehensive analysis of industry benchmarks, which reflect rising costs across the healthcare sector. Director noted that the agency must align its fees with these benchmarks to remain competitive and ensure sustainability. Director Cooper also emphasized that the sliding fee scale remains available to ensure affordability for

clients, particularly those who are uninsured or underinsured. Director Cooper further explained that the increases are not arbitrary but are tied to the actual costs of providing services, including staffing, equipment, and operational expenses.

Chair Fornero asked for a motion to approve the Medical, Dental and Behavioral Health fee schedule effective December 1, 2025, except for the flu codes to be effective July 1, 2026, and to use the methodology described in the attached Summary Grid of fee Rationale for assigning a fee to any CPT codes added during the next fiscal year not listed but required for billing purposes. Motion by Member Ross Cunningham, second by Member Bejster. Voice vote, all in favor, motion carried.

Aye: 9 - Chair Fornero, Vice Chair Smith-Taylor, Secretary Lara, Member Argueta, Member Bejster, Member Chuc, Member Hernandez, Member Ross Cunningham and Member Young

Absent: 1 - Member Scheurer

8. Presentations

None

9. Discussion Items

None

10. Director of Healthcare Operations Report

10.1

Director of Healthcare Operations Report - Burke

Attachments: [FQHC Healthcare Operations Metric Dashboard 11.25 - Copy](#)

Director of Healthcare Operations, Kim Burke, reported that as of October 29, 2025, there are 3,611 individuals on our general medicine new client wait list, 3,253 adults and 358 pediatrics. The total new client wait list has been decreased by 519 individuals. There were 562 adults removed and 43 children added to the wait list since the October 14, 2025, report to Governing Council. There are currently 20 new patient appointment slots/week.

Member Argueta raised concerns about the ongoing difficulty in filling general medicine positions, noting that five positions remain open. Director Burke acknowledged the challenge, stating that only 45% of budgeted provider positions are currently filled. Director Burke explained that the agency is working closely with HR and recruitment teams to address the issue, including hiring new graduates who require training but represent a long-term investment. However, Director Burke noted that salary competitiveness remains a significant barrier, as private sector employers in Lake County, such as Northwestern and Advocate Health, offer higher compensation. Director Burke elaborated that the agency is exploring options to improve salaries, including reallocating funds to offer performance-based bonuses tied to patient outcomes. Director Cooper also highlighted the agency's efforts to attract mission-driven providers through public relations campaigns

and partnerships with local training programs.

Member Argueta suggested exploring additional strategies, such as recruiting foreign-trained physicians or volunteers. Director Burke explained that while Illinois legislation allows foreign medical graduates to work in FQHCs, they must be paired with full-time providers, which is challenging given current staffing levels. Director Cooper also noted that volunteer positions are difficult to secure but welcomed any individuals willing to contribute their time. Member Chuc asked whether doctors from abroad could be hired. Executive Director Hoff clarified that HRSA requires providers to be licensed in the U.S. to work at FQHCs.

Member Argueta expressed interest in learning more about these programs, mentioning a family member who is a physician and has submitted a resume without success. Director Burke agreed to provide additional information at the January meeting. Vice-Chair Smith-Taylor suggested that this topic be revisited in greater depth at a future meeting with input from experts, given its complexity and the multiple factors involved.

11. Director of Finance & Administrative Services Report

11.1

Director of Finance & Administrative Services Report - Cooper

Attachments: [FQHC Sep 25](#)

Director of Finance & Administrative Services, Angela Cooper, presented the financial report for September 2025 referencing the detailed statements included in the packet.

Member Young inquired about survey data collection and its implications for patient satisfaction. Director Burke explained that, for the Belvidere location, 672 surveys were collected, with 98% of respondents indicating they would recommend the facility. She explained that the increase in survey responses is due to a shift in methodology, with surveys now being conducted during visits rather than through follow-up outreach. This change has resulted in a more accurate and timely reflection of patient experiences. Director Burke also noted that the survey questions have been standardized across all locations to ensure consistency in data collection and analysis. Executive Director Hoff clarified that the 98% figure represents the percentage of respondents who would recommend the facility, not the percentage of total patients. Executive Director Hoff emphasized that the data reflects strong client satisfaction, though the small number of negative responses is being addressed through corrective action plans. These plans include targeted staff training, process improvements, and enhanced communication with patients to address specific concerns.

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 6:15 p.m.