



MINNESOTA RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August, 8, 2011

Conference Call

Present: Allison O'Connor, Laurissa Stigen, Mark Schoenbaum, Darrell Carter, David Borgert, Judy Neppel

Excused: Jack Geller, Ray Christensen, David Brenne, Jenny Schlagenhaft, Jenni Lohse, Robin Weis, Jill Myer, Jim Dregney, Marnie Moore

1. **Call Meeting to Order;** President Allison O'Connor called the conference call Board meeting to order at 9:05 AM.
2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** The minutes were sent with the agenda. Motion to approve was made by Darrell Carter. Seconded by Laurissa Stigen. Motion approved unanimously.
3. **Business Arising from Minutes:** None
4. **Update from M Moore and M Schoenbaum:** In Marnie Moore's absence, Mark Schoenbaum summarized the recent legislative decisions on rural health as follows:

State Reform

- There are two ways to discuss the legislative outcomes broadly: (1) in terms of cuts to rural health, the final decisions weren't as bad as they were being discussed during the session and (2) the cuts were plenty bad enough.
- In terms of the ORHPC – The loan forgiveness program was cut 20%. The workforce some and the summer high school internship was eliminated. The program was administered by the MN Hospital Association and served approximately 300 high school students interested in health careers. It will be interesting to see if after this summer (the program is in place this summer) whether the program will continue with another source of funding made available. It is not an expensive program and has had great success.
- MERC monies – The MERC monies were cut by 25 % in 2011 and by another 50% in 2012.

The activities of the MRHA were important and helpful in preserving what was saved. There was an increase in the tempo of the organization with the detailed information provided to the legislature and Marnie Moore did an excellent job of getting the MRHA to the appropriate legislators. MRHA should pat itself on the back as we were heard.

- Medicaid was continued. You'll recall that there were 4 metro hospitals who served GMAC recipients this past year. That program did not come back as it was reported that rural health consumers drove hundreds of miles to seek services.

Federal Reform

- There will be healthcare coverage for single adults without children which is huge.
- Medicaid reimbursement has been cut across the board. Rural pharmacies did get a small increase.

Policy Change - The definition of rural has been changed and does not include large rural communities but rather only small isolated communities. This definition will be applied to the small reimbursement increases to pharmacies just referenced.

This was the worst budget environment in 20-25 years. We will face shortfalls in 2012 and 2013 so MRHA will have much work to do.

5. **New Business:** Board Retreat: After much discussion, the Board Retreat date was established as Monday September 26. It was suggested that the Committee Chairs who could not attend the retreat prepare a report regarding their past activities and their plans for the future and have that report shared with the Board by one of the committee members. The retreat will be held at Liz Quam's home in Maple Grove. Efforts to include Board members who cannot attend in person will be made.

6. **Finance Report:** The Board Treasurer was unable to attend but will send his report as soon as possible.

7. **Executive Director's Report:** The report was send in advance of the meeting and was reviewed by the Executive Director.

8. **Other:** A question was raised about cancelling the September 12 regularly scheduled Board meeting given the newly established September 26th Board retreat date. The decision was to cancel the September 12th meeting date. The Executive Director will send an email to the Board indicating that meeting cancellation.

9. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 AM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:

Judith Neppel, Secretary

