

TO: Skagway Traditional Council

FR: Judean Gordon 
SEARHC Board Representative

RE: SEARHC Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) Board of Directors held another successful quarterly meeting on August 9-11, 2023, in Juneau. During the meetings, the Board heard operational reports for the third quarter, discussed current projects and initiatives, and approved the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Below are some highlights from the meetings:

Accreditation Governing Body Committee – August 9, 2023

SEARHC's Chief of Staff J. Kennon Kirk, M.D., presented updates to SEARHC's credentialing list of providers, which included 15 new appointments, 37 reappointments, and 7 administrative closures/resignations. Also presented were updates to the Providence TeleICU/TeleStroke provider list, two privileges to the Radiologic (vRad) teleradiology provider list, and the ANTHC/ANMC Telemedicine provider list. Dr. Kirk also announced his departure from SEARHC to the committee and that Vice Chief of Staff Guillermo Espinoza, M.D., will serve as the next Chief of Staff.

Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer Elliot Bruhl, M.D., presented his third quarter report to the committee, highlighting key accomplishments across Southeast communities:

- SEARHC served over 25,000 patients in Primary Care, 3,000 patients in Specialty Care and held 132 specialty clinics in Juneau and Sitka in the third quarter.
 - A new feature online was launched for appointment scheduling on SEARHC's external website (searhc.org) to allow patients to easily book their appointments online.
- There has been a large focus on increasing access within Behavioral Health services and Substance Use Disorder treatment programs.
 - Juneau's Front Street Clinic has expanded by adding additional treatment rooms, three new counseling officers, and a renovated waiting area.
 - Over 100 patients are currently being served within the Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) currently, with 12 patients enrolled in Sitka.
 - SEARHC's OTP has seen significant growth since its conception in February 2022; construction is currently underway in Klawock, building a new OTP Clinic at the Alicia Roberts Medical Center campus, and is on track to open in September.
 - SEARHC's Sitka-based Comprehensive Addiction Treatment and Wellness Program has expanded its services and increased the number of beds from 10 to 20. The program is open to anyone residing within the region.
 - 20 Behavioral Health staff participated in White Bison's "Medicine Wheel & 12 Steps" training, a culturally sensitive 12-step training program specifically for Alaska Natives/American Indians based upon teachings of the Medicine Wheel, the Cycle of Life, and the Four Laws of Change.
 - SEARHC also collaborated with Sister Sky, a native-owned organization that hosted an Indian Health Service (IHS) QPR (*Question, Persuade, Refer*) Suicide Prevention Training in June, customized for IHS and Native communities. Over 30 people were trained in

suicide prevention curriculum, including community participants from Sitka, Hoonah, Petersburg, Haines, Kake, Angoon and Juneau.

- SEARHC's Wrangell Long-Term Care facility successfully completed its Center for Medicare Services (CMS) survey with zero findings

A request also was presented for the approval of a Sterilization and High-Level Disinfection Committee as a sub-committee of the existing Infection Prevention and Control Committee.

Executive Committee – August 9, 2023

On Wednesday, SEARHC SVP/Chief Legal Officer presented to the Committee the July 5, 2023 draft bylaws for consideration to move to the full Board. In addition, a consultant with Via Healthcare, Inc. provided the committee with an updated redlined version of SEARHC's board policies to coincide with the revisions and updates to the proposed bylaws. Both items were approved by the Committee and were moved to the full Board for consideration. The Committee reviewed meeting dates proposed for 2024 and approved for final consideration by the Board.

Finance Committee – August 10, 2023

On Thursday, SEARHC's SVP/Chief Finance Officer presented to the Committee the third quarter financial performance and the proposed budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. Highlights from the CFO Report included:

- SEARHC continues to produce successful financial results, seeing solid growth in patient volumes served this year.
 - SEARHC has grown by 36,434 visits from the prior year, which translates into seeing 193 more patients per clinic day.
- Specialty clinic visits are up 1,627, or 19.2% over the prior year, due to growth in Juneau and the addition of ENT, Audiology and OB/GYN services.
- The proposed FY24 Operating and Capital Budget was approved to be moved to the Board for consideration.

An amendment was made to the agenda, moving two resolution items regarding the Walker Foundation to a later date.

Patient Experience Committee – August 10, 2023

On Thursday, SEARHC's Senior Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Leatha Mercurieff presented on SEARHC's patient satisfaction results of the third quarter, including responses from each community represented by the Board of Directors. Highlights are included below:

- A total of 1,731 Post-Visit Patient Satisfaction Surveys were completed over the quarter.
- The WISEWOMAN Program and Mobile Mammogram unit visited Angoon and Hoonah in April, followed by Gustavus and Kake in May and June.
 - The team enrolled 94 WISEWOMAN participants and completed 143 mammograms.
 - Overall, the WISEWOMAN/Women's Health Program completed 1,956 mammograms and 838 pap smears year-to-date.
- Taylor Hartwick, RN, has been named the new Cancer Care Coordinator. She is based in Juneau and will provide extra support to patients diagnosed with cancer, coordinate care with the patient's primary care provider, oncologist, case manager, patient navigator and follow-up appointments for all clinics in Juneau, Gustavus, Haines, Hoonah, Pelican, Klukwan, and Tenakee Springs.

SEARHC welcomed a new Specialty Care System Director, Rose Lawhorn, RN, MBA. She has been joined with the existing specialty care services across the region. Imaging Department has improved with new technology offering services for liver elastography and fat attenuation, calcium scoring and echocardiography. The division has filled and retained over 25 vacant positions since October 2021.

Board of Directors - August 11, 2022

On Friday, the Board of Directors heard reports from Board Chair Kimberley Strong, President/Chief Executive Officer Charles Clement, and Senior Vice President/Chief Financial Officer Dan Harris. Some of the highlights are listed below:

- In May, SEARHC met with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Deputy Secretary Andrea Palm, and IHS Director Roselyn Tso. The hosted visit gave officials the opportunity to see first-hand the health system in Southeast Alaska. IHS presented SEARHC with the official warranty deed in Sitka and the Consortium now owns all former IHS properties.
- In August, ANTHC is hosting a travel summit for THO representatives to work together on patient travel issues across Alaska. The summit will take place in Anchorage on August 30-31.
- Juneau's Vintage Park campus is on target to open January 2024 and the anticipation of its future community impacts is generating a lot of excitement both internally and externally.
- Vertical construction began at the Mt. Edgecumbe Medical Center's new campus with steel framing underway.
- In May, SEARHC conducted its first quarterly employee engagement survey that focused on a variety of topics related to employees' work environment, satisfaction, professional development, organizational culture and communication.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent our community on the SEARHC Board of Directors and invite you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued support of SEARHC's important mission: *Alaska Native People working in partnership to provide the best healthcare for our communities.*