

Gracedale Advisory Board
September 8, 2016
Minutes

Members Present: Deborah Jean DeNardo, J.D.; James Irwin; Susan L. Lawrence; Ann Terres;
Honorable Robert Werner

Members Absent: Rosemarie Fehr; MaryAnn McEvoy; Maryann Schmoyer; Kenneth Sun, MD

Public Present: Jack D'Allessandro

Staff Present: Catherine Allen, Susan Edwards, Allison Frantz, Jennie Repsher, Hector Rivera,
Raymond Soto

Call to Order/Welcome:

The meeting was called to order by J. Irwin, Chair. A. Frantz introduced Raymond Soto, the new NHA from Premier Healthcare Resources. He was a Premier employee for a number of years and also has experience with county-run nursing homes. R. Soto stated that he was at Claremont Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. He was originally from New York and then moved to New Jersey. He has a Master of Social Work from New York University and is a licensed NHA in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Approval of June's Minutes:

A motion was made by D. DeNardo to accept the minutes from the June meeting. Motion carried.

Courtesy of the Floor:

By Guests:

None

By Committee Members:

None

Chair Report:

Election of Officers

D. DeNardo nominated J. Irwin to serve as Chair. J. Irwin accepted. No other nominations for Chair.

D. DeNardo nominated A. Terres to serve as Vice Chair. A. Terres accepted. No other nominations for Vice Chair.

J. Irwin nominated D. DeNardo to serve as Secretary. D. DeNardo accepted. No other nominations for Secretary.

A motion was made by A. Terres to accept the slate of officers. Motion carried.

Director of Human Services Report:

A. Frantz stated that the Citizens' Academy started last night. Gracedale will present to the Citizens' Academy on October 19th; the week before that they will be at the Department of Human Services. C. Allen noted that the 911 Center and Gracedale will now each have their own night with the Citizens' Academy. It was mentioned that the Citizens' Academy could be a recruitment resource for the Advisory Board.

A. Frantz stated that the Medicaid rate in the state budget did not change and the Medicare rate went up 2%. The Intergovernmental Transfer (IGT) dollars went through. The county sent roughly \$7 million to the state and received \$10 million back, netting us \$2.4 million. The whole process took place within 28 days, with no risk to the county.

The "county share" tax that county nursing homes currently pay will be phased out as Community Health Choices is phased in. For Northampton County, this will happen in 2019. It was asked what the current tax is. A. Frantz believes it is 5% of the Medicaid allotment for each bed. It is not an amount we actually pay, it is simply subtracted from the amount we receive.

It was asked how our budget looks for the end of this year. A. Frantz stated that there have been no major negatives, and the IGT was a positive, but it is still too soon to predict. It was also noted that the IGT is not guaranteed every year. A. Frantz mentioned that the state is working with the federal government on an IGT for next year.

It was asked if there was any progress with the generators. B. Werner stated we will be under budget on the generators. They should be installed during the first quarter and installation will take about 16 weeks.

Gracedale Administrator's Report:

Admissions

R. Soto stated that we have increased our daily census and reached a high of 684. A. Frantz stated that the bed licenses have been sold and should be finalized by the end of October. The county should receive \$880,000 by the end of the calendar year. B. Werner stated that the funds from the bed sale will be directed back to Gracedale.

The Medicare average daily census dropped because of a decrease in those here for short term rehab. Our private pay average daily census increased.

The referral conversion time was cut in half compared to last month and overall we accepted 36% of our referrals.

Finance

The cost per resident day decreased because the census increased. We are still waiting on the

final numbers for Medicare reimbursement. We are at 3.12 nursing hours per patient day, which is under budget.

It was asked if Gracedale is experiencing any personnel shortages. R. Soto stated that we are doing our best to hire and have interviews occurring. It was asked how many vacancies Gracedale currently has. S. Edwards stated that staffing on the 3-11 shift is difficult; R. Soto stated that shift is a problem in every building.

It was asked how many beds are on the short term rehab unit. S. Edwards stated that there are 27 beds on Southeast 1. If needed, we will also use Southwest 1 for short term rehab patients, but we prefer to use that as a transitional unit. It was asked if we are marketing the short term rehab unit. R. Soto stated that our clinical nurse liaison visits hospitals and assess residents. He also stated that he would like to become a member of the local Rotary Club, which could then be used as a marketing tool.

It was asked why the cost per resident day fluctuates. S. Edwards stated that when the census increases, the cost per resident day decreases. It was asked if private pay residents were the best from a financial standpoint. R. Soto stated that we are paid the quickest by private pay residents. Medicare is the highest payer, then private pay, then medical assistance.

Quality Measures

There were zero complaint visits during the past month. The short term rehab unit had an increase in pain, which caused an increase in the quality measures pain metric. Pressure ulcers increased because more residents are coming in from the hospitals with pressure ulcers. Our pressure ulcer rate is actually half of what the state and national requirements are. A. Frantz asked if the benchmark of 16 pressure ulcers was inaccurate; R. Soto stated yes. The infection control rate increased due to new admissions. We have a committee to address falls with a major injury. It was asked when the majority of falls happen. S. Edwards stated most falls happen on day shift. R. Soto stated that the goal is to become restraint-free, but there are some individuals who cannot be fully restraint-free. S. Edwards stated that you can restrain residents as long as you follow the guidelines and have justification. R. Soto stated that a toileting program can help reduce falls, along with lowering beds. C. Allen noted that these measures also help keep our staff safe.

Satisfaction Surveys

A total of 39 satisfaction surveys were sent last month, 20 were returned and the average score increased. With our new Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) program, we are looking at each department to determine what we can do better for the residents.

Human Resources

It was asked how we are tracking sick days, FMLA, and IFMLA days. C. Allen stated that both Amy Trapp and Courtney Kendzejeski will be at County Council to address questions regarding sick time, FMLA and IFMLA days. Gracedale is a large facility and A. Trapp is often here

working with C. Kendzejeski. Both the FMLA and IFMLA policies have been revised. It was mentioned that there may be more people applying for FMLA, but they are not abusing it. It was countered that with the changes to the sick leave policy, employees may now take advantage of FMLA and IFMLA. A. Frantz stated that we still need to be able to track those days being taken. We also cannot find data on what is an average callout for a facility of 688 beds. It was asked what the definition of FMLA is. A. Frantz stated that would be a good question for Human Resources. C. Allen stated that she would like to ask Human Resources to attend the next Advisory Board meeting.

It was noted that there was a program in place to track overtime and types of time off used. A. Frantz stated that Gracedale utilizes OnShift, which helps stop casual overtime. A. Frantz explained that casual overtime is when an employee is not on the schedule, but shows up to work anyway, and is allowed to do so. It was asked why allowing someone to work, who is willing to even if not on the schedule, is a bad thing, especially if they are needed. It was noted that this practice causes animosity.

The turnover rate decreased for both RNs and LPNs, but increased for CNAs.

Our star rating has remained the same at four stars. Five stars is the best rating. We are creating committees and have plans in place to increase our Quality Measures.

R. Soto passed out an informational sheet that displayed how many deficiencies were given to nursing homes throughout Pennsylvania by each Field Office in the state. Gracedale is in the Lehigh zone, which is the least tagged area. It was asked how many residents are in each zone. R. Soto stated that it would depend on the facilities in each zone. This document includes all facilities within Pennsylvania.

R. Soto stated that he is starting a “Brag Book”. It has letters from families and residents, complimenting staff. R. Soto stated that he meets with the employees mentioned in the letters, reads the letter to them and thanks them for doing a good job.

It was asked if Gracedale still hosts quarterly family meetings. S. Edwards stated that we will have representatives from the pharmacy or a hospice come in and speak. Turnout varies between 5-15 family members. Usually, if there are family concerns, the family meets with Administration separately.

S. Edwards stated that Family Fest will take place next Tuesday, September 13th at 4:30 in the Gracedale Gardens.

It was decided that since both R. Soto and S. Edwards would be at a conference on October 13, the Advisory Board meeting scheduled for that date would be canceled.

Next Meeting:

J. Irwin reminded Advisory Board members that the next meeting will be held on November 10, 2016, at 4:30 PM.

A motion was made by D. DeNardo and seconded by A. Terres to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennie R. Repsher