

Lowell General Hospital
Department of Family Medicine
June 11, 2021

Zoom Attendees: Lourdes Ada, MD; Eleanor Bueno, DO; Deirdre Connolly, MD; Christen Fragala, MD; Paul Harcourt, MD; Raymond Lewis, MD; Emelyn Molato, MD; Clea Moore, MD; Stephanie Oliva, MD; Frank Osborn, MD; Sangita Pillai, MD; John Ragucci, MD; Joanna Sleeper, RN; Christine Smith, RN; Chong So, DO; Catherine Trinh, MD.

Guest: Stacie Swanson, MHA; Laura Federico, RN

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM by Dr. Fragala

II. MINUTES

The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as written.

III. NEW BUSINESS

Troponins will no longer be able to be ordered in the outpatient setting, patients will need to be referred to Emergency.

There is an opening for a representative for the Credentials Committee. They meet the second Friday of every month at 8 am. Attendance is excused on the months when the Family Medicine Department meeting meets at the same time. Anyone interested in filling the vacancy can contact Dr. Fragala.

Laura Federico, RN introduced herself to the group. She has replaced Liz Lydstone as the Director of Maternal Child Health. Laura had formally worked as the Manager of the Infant Mother Unit, she had left to work at Lawrence General and has returned to Lowell General as the director. Welcome back Laura.

Diversity Equity and Inclusion program has kicked off Pride Month this month, look for information in emails and on the WIRE. We will be celebrating Juneteenth as the 156th memorial commemoration. On June 23rd there will be a program in conjunction with Tufts through both zoom and some seating in the Clark Auditorium for the centennial commemoration of the Tulsa massacre in 1921. Dr. Pillai now serves as a DEI mentor within Circle Health. Relationship with the Boys and Girls Club is also being formed by Circle Health to offer DEI mentor training for youths. It is very early in the planning but the Boys and Girls Club agrees with having the relationship with Circle Health in forming youth mentors. There is also internal DEI mentor training for adults within Circle Health for those who are interested in becoming a mentor. Dr. Fragala will bring this information to the next Medical Executive Committee meeting.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Stacie Swanson came to speak to the group regarding questions and concerns that arose during the April Family Medicine meeting. Communication has gone out to the physicians about the integration of the physicians and Wellforce in addition to townhalls that were held in March and April. They are working towards a collaboration to form an Employed Physician Group which includes physicians from both Melrose Wakefield and Lowell General. The plan is to have a free-standing physician group that will report to the hospital. The three organizations will remain distinct entities, it is not a merger, more an integration. Since December Dr. Osborn and Dr. Galvin have met with two physicians from Melrose Wakefield and four physicians from Tufts including research representatives. This group will morph into a board and will be the first board of the physician organization. The term for the board will be most likely a two-year term and the boards will be elected in. The goal for the end of the fiscal year is to create a management team and to have the board setup.

The question regarding the affect the collaboration will have on the day to day workflow for the clinics was asked. Local leadership at Circle Health will not change. Stacie Swanson will be taking a system level position within Wellforce, with a plan for her to oversee Melrose within the next year. There will be no other leadership coming into Circle Health. It is the general consensus within Wellforce that Circle Health is in a very good place and there thy are not anticipating any change to the day to day functions of the clinics. Any changes that come into effect from the collaboration will be positive change that is physician driven. For example, there is a move to get PCPs off call by having a call center through EPIC. Patients will be able to call into a call center to schedule multiple appointments. The goal is to improve the work load at the offices. Staffing within Circle Health is very lean compared to other systems and any staff repositioning will be decided by the physicians for positive reasons. Staff will never be expected to go to another system.

The focus on physician wellness was asked about coming off the heels of a pandemic. This is a priority for Mike Dandorph. EPIC has a home for dinner feature for optimizing the system by making charting more efficient for physicians. The goal is to become efficient enough that physicians can complete their work load by the end of their work day and not have charting carry over to after hours. Dr. Harvey with Tufts is working on a program which will continue improvements with EPIC even after we are on line. Intergraded Behavioral Health System will connect with the providers at Melrose Wakefield allowing to bring them up to this community.

The current data base used by physicians is different for everyone and there is a struggle with IT support. EPIC support will be better. There will opportunity for MD builders which are physicians that are interested in training to become able to make changes to the system for other physicians. This will allow those who are familiar with the day to day tasks of the system and can identify challenges customize the system for optimization. The Employed Physician Group will allow private practices to join for buying power; access to Wellforce malpractice policies; physician recruitment opportunities; HR policies and procedures; employee benefits; IT and billing. These services will be optional and can chose to opt in or not on any of the options. The goal is to keep the care at the local level

with the layered entity giving resources. Wellforce has become the third largest health system in the area. The larger patient scale has protecting element.

There are family medicine, OB and surgical teaching opportunities with residents that Lowell General is interested in getting involved with. It will not be expected that everyone participate in the residency program but the opportunity is available.

The lack of diversity for the Unified Physician Group board was mentioned and there is recruitment being done within the system to bring more diversity to the physicians in the area. The committee that is in now is transitional and it will change. Diversity will be considered for future boards. Physicians can reach out to Stacie Swanson with any questions or concerns.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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|--|----------------------|
| 1. Med Exec Committee -
none | Christen Fragala, MD |
| 2. Labor and Delivery Committee -
none | Raymond Lewis, MD |
| 3. Cancer Committee
none | Paul Harcourt, MD |
| 4. Credentials Committee
Open | |
| 5. Infection Control
none | Stephanie Oliva, MD |
| 6. Morbidity and Mortality Council
Dr. Pillai reported on a case that was reviewed by the M&M Council for a patient who had stat troponins ordered as an outpatient but did not go for the bloodwork for a couple of days. The results were positive and the patient ultimately came in for a angioplasty for 100% occlusions. This speaks to the risks of ordering troponins in the outpatient setting. | Sangita Pillai, MD |
| 7. Perinatal Committee
Will meet on June 15 th , will update group next month. Special care nursery is conducting interviews. L&D is working on improved communication between the prenatal physicians and hospitalists. The visitor policy has been changed, visitors can now be with patients that are in labor. The VTE policy is being reviewed, more information on this to come out next week. | Raymond Lewis, MD |
| 8. MCH Updates
Liz Lydstone has retired. | Laura Federico, RN |

VI. Next Meeting

- Scheduled for Friday, September 10, 2021.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at AM

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Sleeper, RN

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6/11/2021

Date

Approved:

DocuSigned by:
Christen Fragala MD

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Christen Fragala, MD

1/21/2022

Date