

APPROVED

**City of Ketchikan &
PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center**

Healthcare Advisory Committee Meeting

January 23, 2025

1. Call to Order:

The Healthcare Advisory Committee Meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Lacey Simpson at 9:03 a.m. This meeting took place in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 334 Front Street, Ketchikan, Alaska. A WebEx option was available at this location and included four participants.

2. Roll Call:

Committee Members Present:

City of Ketchikan

Lacey Simpson - Chair
Amanda Robinson - City Member
Kim Stanker - City Clerk

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center

Scott Smith – Vice Chair, Director Support Services
Tim Horton, MD – Community Health Board Member
Sarah Cook – Chief Administration Officer
Lori Medvid - Executive Assistant

Committee Members Absent:

Judy Zenge – City Member

Members of the Community:

Kate Govaars – PeaceHealth
Jason Hawkins – PeaceHealth

Nick Kraska – True North Recovery - Call in
Karl Soderstrom – True North Recovery – Call in
Keja Whiteman – RISE – Call in

3. Communications:

None

4. Persons to be Heard:

None

5. Approval of Minutes:

Following a review of the draft minutes from the October 15, 2024, Healthcare Advisory Committee meeting, and there being no objections, the committee unanimously approved the minutes as presented.

6. Old Business:

A. Update on Community Substance Treatment and Behavioral Health Services

i. True North Recovery:

CEO, Karl Soderstrom addressed the committee and provided a brief history of True North Recovery, which originated in Wasilla, Alaska with a second facility in Fairbanks, and a 3rd facility which just opened in Ketchikan in the location previously operated by Akeela. TNR opened the Washington Street facility, now known as The Kara House, on December 9, 2024, with 10 patients. The facility is a 16-bed facility. Patients at The Kara House consists of local community members as well as from around the state.

True North Recovery in Ketchikan is currently focusing on SUD residential in person treatment. They hope to expand services to include Crisis; Detox; and Recovery Residential Programs. Residents of TNR include folks from all around Alaska. The walk-in crisis center has a targeted opening date of April 2025.

Lacey Simpson asked if a Stedman Street property was owned by TRN. Mr. Soderstrom stated while TNR is in the market for local housing for staff, but the Stedman Street property is not theirs.

Mr. Soderstrom wrapped up his presentation with a brief synopsis of the treatment program: The ideal length of stay is 121 days to 180 days. The program has 4 phases:

1. Fire – beginning stages of recovery, client is usually on fire.
2. Water – begin to stabilize; fire is put out.
3. Earth – getting grounded.
4. Air – ready to go.

ii. RISE Wellness Center:

Keja Whiteman, interim Director of RISE, addressed the committee by sharing the 3-Prong approach:

1. Partnering with SEARHC MAT Services
 - a. SEARHC received full accreditation.
 - b. RISE Wellness Center (formerly Gateway/Akeela) provided medication assisted treatment.
2. Facilities - Maintenance:
 - a. The renovations of the Gateway Mental Health building are halfway complete.
 - b. The Payton Place property is still in need of repair.
 - c. Both properties need extensive maintenance/repair.
3. Establish RISE as a Non-Profit entity.
 - a. The non-profit 501c3 application is in process.
 - b. Currently working with, and received a grant from KIC, to assist in determining what services RISE can offer.

RISE wants to be focus on the services the community needs most, being strategic and offering sustainable services. Services will be rolled out in increments.

Committee Chair, Lacey Simpson, asked what both TNR and RISE are doing to get the word out about what services they offer.

RISE is working with SEARHC in community awareness. There is an open house planned for February 12, 2025. There is community outreach, publishing notices in the Ketchikan Daily News and on Social Media platforms.

B. Same Day Clinic:

Sarah Cook, PeaceHealth Chief Administration Officer, provided an update to the committee, and it was noted the Same Day Clinic just celebrated its first year in operation. There is slow growth in the right direction as the number of patients seen is steadily increasing. The opening of a Same Day Clinic was a specific requirement of the lease agreement and will continue to be monitored.

C. Emergency Department Update:

Phase I – Moving the CT scan to the new location:

Mrs. Cook reported the construction project for Phase I has been awarded to Marble Construction. The completion date is tentatively July 2025.

Phase II – Lab Design and Renovation:

The conceptual design, engineering review, and cost estimate is complete. This is now seeking capital approval.

Phase III – Emergency Department Renovation:

The conceptual design is in review.

Mrs. Cook updated the committee on the changes with Behavioral Health with IRIS Telehealth, and shared recent Caregiver Engagement activities. Mrs. Cook also provided a brief update on the issues surrounding the ED Physician staffing. The physicians who were under contract with NES are now under contract with PeaceHealth and 24/7 coverage has been maintained. PeaceHealth is currently recruiting a new staffing partner. Finally, Mrs. Cook shared an update on the new providers with PeaceHealth in pediatrics, family medicine, nurse practitioner for the Prince of Wales clinic and a visiting dermatologist. PeaceHealth is also actively recruiting new providers for orthopedics, primary care, and general surgery.

7. New Business:

- a. Update on Community Housing Initiatives.
 - i. Lacey Simpson provided the committee with a comprehensive report from the Ketchikan Gateway Borough discussing housing needs.
 - ii. Amanda Robinson addressed the properties owned by the City. These properties have either been transferred to the city or foreclosed due to unpaid taxes, Mrs. Robinson also addressed the issues with timing, title issues, condition, and current city codes. The City is sifting through strategies on how to best get these properties back on the market.
 - iii. Dr. Horton stressed the need to local housing for physicians and hospital staff.

- iv. Scott Smith inquired about the process of city auctions and requirements of building codes. Mrs. Simpson reiterated the city's desire is to offload these properties and get them back into the community.
- b. Update on Capital Improvement Planning.
 - i. Lacey Simpson opened conversation by reminding those present that as part of the lease agreement between the City of Ketchikan and PeaceHealth, there were to be a number of capital improvement projects completed depending on priority of need. Mrs. Simpson reiterated that neither the city or PeaceHealth have been financially able to address current list of capital projects, with COVID and the ED update.
 - ii. Mrs. Simpson also provided a spreadsheet of current capital projects still on the list. Scott Smith, Sarah Cook, and Lacey Simpson got together last week to review the list and identify priorities. Scott Smith informed the committee that he sat down with PeaceHealth Facilities Manager, Pat McLavey, and they identified items on the list that have already been addressed. Mr. Smith noted the list needed to be updated and priorities reassessed.

Future Agenda Items:

1. Same Day Clinic – Standing Agenda Item
2. ED Renovation Update – Standing Agenda Items
3. Scheduled Road Work and Employee access & parking
4. DOT lighting
5. Update Capital Project list
6. ER Staffing

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Healthcare Advisory Committee, Vice-Chair Simpson adjourned the meeting at 10:04AM. The next meeting of the Healthcare Advisory Committee will take place on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 9:00am in the City Council Chambers, and available via Webex invitation.

Respectfully Submitted by: Lori Medvid, Executive Assistant
PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center