

Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 7 October 2021

Attendance (via Zoom)

Board

Elizabeth Crouch AM (Chair), David Nott (Deputy Chair), Dr Abby Bloom, Jack Ford, Jane Freudenstein, Bruce MacDiarmid and Mr Jeremy Wright AM

Ex-officio

Cathryn Cox PSM, Chief Executive; Dr Angus Alexander for Dr Kath Carmo, The Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW) Medical Staff Council; and Dr Matthew O'Meara, NSW State Paediatrician

Executive

Bart Cavalletto, Director, Strategy and Innovation; Professor Chris Cowell, Director, Research; Emma Cuell, Director, Office of the Chief Executive; Sam Galluccio, Director, People and Culture; Dr Joanne Ging, Executive Director, Clinical Operations; Judy Goldman, Director, Communication and Engagement; Tim Hoffman, Director, Redevelopment; Dr Mary McCaskill, Director, Medical Services and Clinical Governance; Sally Whalen, Director, Nursing, Midwifery and Education; and Sayeed Zia, Director, Finance and Corporate Services.

Secretariat – Melissa Gibson Darling, Board Executive Officer

Guests

Item 2.1: From the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN) Department of Psychological Medicine - Dr Katherine Knight, Medical Head of Department; Andrea Worth, Allied Health Head of Department; Alexandra Sepulveda, Network Mental Health Nurse Manager; and Dr Iain Perkes, Clinical Academic.

Item 4.1: VirtualKIDS team members Nadine Shaw, Emma Dickins, Monica Tamas and Dr Christine Lau.

Item 4.2: Tara Veldman, Managing Director, Billard Leece Partnership; Leisa Rathborne, Director Northern Region, Health Infrastructure; Gavin Thompson, Senior Project Director, Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick (SCH) Stage 1/Comprehensive Children's Cancer Centre; Caleb Teh, Senior Project Director, The CHW Stage 2; and Alexandra Loftus, Acting Communications and Engagement Manager, Redevelopment, SCHN.

1.0 In Camera Session

The Chair led an in camera session for Board members, Chief Executive and Director, Office of the Chief Executive. Other attendees joined the meeting from item 2.0.

2.0 Clinical Presentation

2.1 SCHN Mental Health Service (Psychological Medicine)

The Chair welcomed the guests and the Board received a presentation from the Network's Mental Health Service team. The team discussed Network services and programs, recent research findings and plans, and actions being taken to support the patient experience. A discussion with the Board followed including the impacts of COVID-19 and increased mental health presentations particularly for teenage girls over the last 18 months.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked the team for their important work and recognised the critical nature of child and adolescent mental health services for patients and their families.

3.0 Meeting Opening

3.1 Acknowledgement of Country

Jack Ford provided the Acknowledgement of Country.

3.2 Apologies

Dr Elizabeth McEntyre was not in attendance.

Dr Angus Alexander was welcomed as a proxy for Dr Kath Carmo, Chair, CHW Medical Staff Council.

3.3 Declaration of Interests

No new declarations were noted.

3.4 Previous Meeting Minutes

It was agreed that the first line of Item 5.4 of the minutes be amended to note that 'Mr Zia highlighted how the SCHN is working to improve its financial position over the financial year *to meet the position agreed with the Ministry of Health*'.

With that amendment, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3.5 Actions Arising

The Board noted the Action Item Register.

3.6 Board Chair Report

The Chair discussed the progress of new Board appointments being led by the Ministry of Health. The Board People, Strategy and Engagement Committee has considered Board applicants and held interviews with nominees from the Medical Staff Councils. Recommendations have been provided to the Ministry of Health considering potential skill gaps with several Board appointments expiring in 2021 and 2022.

The Chair acknowledged the excellent efforts of Network staff to obtain a COVID-19 staff vaccination rate of 98%.

Board Chairs continue to receive briefings from the NSW Health Secretary on the impact of COVID-19 on the NSW Health system and the extensive work being undertaken to support the community as restrictions ease.

3.7 Chief Executive Report

The Board noted the continued focus on the COVID-19 response, with the VirtualKIDS service currently supporting 1,400 children in the community, this peaked at 2,600. The Network is also providing paediatric advice and support to rural and regional colleagues in managing children and young people impacted by COVID-19. The Board discussed the importance of caring for staff and promoting staff safety and system resilience as the Network transitions to 'COVID normal'. The Board noted that cyber security and liberalisation of data remain significant system risks.

Arrangements are progressing with the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation (SCHF) to establish a Memorandum of Understanding for communication services.

Following NSW Health advice regarding establishment of Mental Health Medical Staff Councils, SCHN is reviewing the new 2021 Model By-Laws and requirements for Medical Staff Councils.

The Board noted ongoing discussions regarding governance arrangements for the Comprehensive Children's Cancer Centre with the Children's Cancer Institute.

4.0 Matters for Discussion

4.1 COVID-19 Update – Director, Medical Services and Clinical Governance

The Chair welcomed the VirtualKIDS team members and thanked them for their extraordinary efforts to date. The Board noted:

- Considerations for future models of care, where the role of the SCHN may be to focus on the most acute, infectious and complex COVID-19 patients while supporting local teams to care for less seriously ill children and young people closer to home.
- The changing nature of the 'Home in Hospital' service which at its peak supported approximately 55 patients. As adult vaccination rates have increased, the demand for this service has reduced. It was also noted that the use of hotel units at Wesley Lodge and the changing patient profile allowed for staffing by Assistants in Nursing and Assistants in Medicine (final year medical students).
- The Network will be caring for a significant unvaccinated population, with children under 12 years of age unable to currently access vaccination.
- A review of hospital visiting restrictions, noting that the Network's patient population remained significantly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19.
- The sharing of experiences and lessons learnt with interstate teams.

The Chair thanked the team for their efforts, acknowledging the agility displayed by the organisation in responding to COVID-19 and the excellent collaboration across Network sites.

4.2 Redevelopment Presentation – Director, Redevelopment

The Chair welcomed the guests. The team provided an update on the redevelopments at SCH and CHW. Board discussions included consumer and clinician engagement, environmental and operational sustainability, enhanced facilities, use of public spaces, and funding. Longer term sustainability, with the aim to achieve net zero emissions, was also discussed and will be further considered by Health Infrastructure.

The Chair thanked the team for the presentation and noted that the Board looked forward to receiving updates as the redevelopments progress. The detailed slide presentation will be available to Board members following the meeting.

4.3 SCHN Annual Review 2021 – Director, Communication and Engagement

The Board noted the draft version of the Annual Review 2021 focused on the SCHN's COVID-19 response. The Board was invited to provide feedback by 8 October 2021. As noted in the Board paper, the Review will be released for the SCHN Annual Public Meeting on 4 November 2021.

5.0 Executive Reports

5.1 Communication and Engagement Update – Director, Communication and Engagement

The Board noted there will be a delay in obtaining a response on the SCHN submission on logo positioning, with no early submissions being accepted. Work will proceed on SCHN logo consolidation as it is required to support the Network's digital consolidation project.

The environmental graphics for Block K (Westmead) will be provided to the Board following the meeting. Board feedback can be incorporated into the final design which will be installed once COVID-19 restrictions are sufficiently eased.

The Board was advised of the SCHF re-branding. Feedback on the branding will be provided directly to the SCHF by members who also sit on the SCHF Board.

5.2 Quality and Safety Update – Director, Medical Services and Clinical Governance

The Board noted the three patient stories shared, illustrating the impact of innovative care that is responsive to the patient and family situation.

The Board noted:

- There has been an increase in negative patient/family behaviour incidents reported during COVID-19 restrictions.
- The Network had one Harm Score 1 incident in August 2021, which is currently being reviewed through a joint Root Cause Analysis investigation with a Local Health District (LHD).
- Consumer complaints have increased by 27%, with many complainants expressing frustration with COVID related visitor restrictions. There has also been an increase in Network complaints received through the Health Care Complaints Commission. This is not inconsistent with what is being seen elsewhere across LHDs and health more broadly.
- The Network's Accreditation occurred in March 2020, and all recommendations were finalised by January 2021. It was noted that the recommendations received were consistent with the most frequent recommendations in Australia.
- The National Paediatric Medicines Forum considers the high cost and risks of emerging paediatric medication therapies. SCHN is a member of this group which presents concerns for consideration of adjustments to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

The report will be provided to the Board following the meeting.

5.3 People and Culture Update – Director, People and Culture

The Board noted SCHN had made a Safe Work NSW notification in relation to two SCH staff infected by COVID-19 in the workplace. Protocols were followed and an update will be provided next meeting.

The SCHN COVID-19 staff vaccination rate has now reached 99%. As per NSW Health requirements, the small number of staff who are not vaccinated will be issued with a 'show cause' letter next week providing 14 days to respond before their employment status will be formally considered.

The People Matter Employee Survey results are expected October 2021 and outcomes will be reported to the Board later this year.

5.4 Clinical Operations Update – Executive Director, Clinical Operations

The Board noted that surgical breaches continue to increase with the ongoing suspension of non-urgent elective surgery by NSW Health. A plan is being developed to respond to demand for Network surgical and outpatient services as COVID-19 restrictions ease.

Longer term options for management of COVID-19 patients are being developed, such as partnerships with local Primary Health Networks. It was noted that while this was progressing positively, the transition to GP-led patient management, with SCHN support, has been slow.

Work continues with the Cardiac Services team, supporting the service and building positive inter-team relationships. The Kids Early Years Network Western Sydney (KEYS) has been a successful collaboration with the Primary Health Network, NSW Police, and education and communities agencies. The Executive Director shared a patient story demonstrating the direct positive impact of the program and principle of “no wrong door”. The plan is to expand the Western Sydney service, and extend the service with other LHDs. The strategic importance of the SCHN working with Health services and other government and non-government agencies focused on improved patient outcomes was discussed.

5.5 Finance, Capital Works and Performance Update – Director, Finance and Corporate Services

The Board noted the impact of annual leave accruals on SCHN financial performance due to the COVID-19 response, and uncertainty of future COVID-related funding and elective surgery arrangements. Work is progressing in partnership with the Ministry of Health to respond to some of the structural challenges for SCHN operations.

The Delegations Manual has been reviewed to enable improved site leadership, will be presented at the next Finance, Capital Works and Performance Committee, and then be provided to the Board for further consideration.

The SCHN Financial Statements were received from the Ministry of Health yesterday, with cyber-security risk being the only SCHN risk with a moderate rating, all others were lower. The Chair noted that cyber-security is a risk that applied across NSW Health.

5.6 Strategic Risks Update – Director, Finance and Corporate Services

The Board paper was noted.

5.7 Redevelopment Update – Director, Redevelopment

The Board paper was noted.

5.8 Strategy and Innovation Update – Director, Strategy and Innovation

The Board paper was noted. Feedback will be sought from Board members on the SCHN Balanced Scorecard in the coming weeks.

5.9 Research Update – Director, Research

The Board paper was noted. The Chair acknowledged the success of the Research teams over the past three years particularly in relation to securing National Health and Medical Research Council and other grants.

6.0 Matters for Noting

6.1 Committee Meeting Minutes

Taken as read.

6.2 Mandatory Training Update

The Board paper was noted.

6.3 Correspondence

The correspondence was noted.

7.0 Any Other Business

Nil

8.0 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 0830, Thursday 4 November 2021. It will be followed by the SCHN Annual Public Meeting.

The meeting closed at 1205.