

MINUTES OF THE HARRIS HEALTH BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Board Meeting
Thursday, October 23, 2025
9:00 A.M.

| AGENDA ITEM | DISCUSSION | ACTION/RECOMMENDATION |
|--|---|--|
| I. Call to Order and Record of Attendance | <p>The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM by Dr. Andrea Caracostis, Chair. It was noted that a quorum was present, and the attendance was recorded. Some Board members attended in person, while others joined via video conference in accordance with state law and Harris Health's videoconferencing policy. Only participants scheduled to speak were provided dial-in information for the meeting. All others who wish to view the meeting were advised to access the meeting online through the Harris Health website: http://harrishealthtx.swagit.com/live. Dr. Caracostis asked if there were any objections from the Board to taking agenda items out of order. With no objections raised, the Board agreed unanimously to take agenda out of order.</p> | <p>A copy of the attendance is appended to the archived minutes.</p> |
| II. Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Meeting – September 23, 2025 <p>Copies of the minutes are available in the permanent record.</p> | <p><u>Motion No. 25.10-119</u> Moved by Ms. Afsheen Davis, seconded by Mr. Paul Puente, and unanimously passed that the Board approve the minutes of September 23, 2025, Board meeting. Motion carried.</p> |
| III. Announcements/ Special Presentations | <p>CEO Report Including Special Announcements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Living Wage <p>Dr. Esmaeil Porsa, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), provided an update related to the recent government shutdown, noting its impact on Harris Health operations. He informed the Board that the hospital program had to be temporarily paused due to the expiration of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) labor coverage on September 30. Dr. Porsa expressed optimism that the program will resume once federal operations return to normal. He also noted that telemedicine services are affected, with delayed payments due to the shutdown, but that services will continue followed by reimbursements once payments are processed.</p> <p>Dr. Porsa shared that he recently held the fourth town hall of the calendar year with Harris County Commissioner Lesley Briones, thanking Trustee Marlen Trujillo for their representation of the Board and providing updates to the community, particularly in discussions regarding the expansion of services. He also announced an expedited increase in the minimum wage for staff to \$18.00 per hour, effective immediately. This adjustment was made ahead of schedule to provide support during challenging national circumstances, and the upcoming paycheck will reflect the increased wage.</p> | <p>As Presented.</p> |

| AGENDA ITEM | DISCUSSION | ACTION/RECOMMENDATION |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| | <p>A. Board Member Announcements Regarding Board Member Advocacy and Community Engagements</p> <p>Dr. Caracostis acknowledged that today marks Ms. Davis’s final meeting as a member of the Harris Health Board of Trustees. Since joining the Board in 2023, Ms. Davis has been a dedicated advocate for healthcare initiatives and a valued asset to our organization. Her leadership and insight have significantly contributed to the advance of our mission and the communities we serve.</p> <p>During her tenure, she served with distinction on the Quality Committee, the Governance Committee, and the Compliance and Audit Committee. Her thoughtful contributions and steadfast commitment have left a lasting impact, and she will be greatly missed.</p> <p>Ms. Davis expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve, reflecting on her experiences touring Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital and witnessing the dedication of nurses and care teams. She noted her excitement for new Board members joining and her continued willingness to support Harris Health in the future. Board members expressed appreciation for her service and contributions.</p> | |
| IV. Public Comment | <p>Mr. Brian Kelley, United Workers of Harris Center – CWA Local 6154, addressed the Board regarding recent layoffs at the Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, seeking guidance and support from Harris Health and other Hospital Districts.</p> <p>Ms. Alma Castillo, also representing United Workers of Harris Center – CWA Local 6154, spoke about the layoffs caused by reductions in federal funding. Both speakers emphasized the community impact of the staffing reductions and requested the Board’s attention to this matter.</p> | |
| V. Executive Session | At 9:12 AM, Dr. Caracostis stated that the Board would enter Executive Session for Items V.A through D, as permitted by law under Tex. Occ. Code Ann. §§151.002, 160.007, Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §161.032, and Tex. Gov’t Code Ann. §551.071. | |
| | A. Report Regarding Quality of Medical and Healthcare, Pursuant to Tex. Occ. Code Ann. §§151.002, 160.007 and Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §161.032 to Receive Peer Review and/or Medical Committee Report, Including Report of the Medical Executive Board in Connection with the Evaluation of the Quality of Medical and Healthcare Services, and also the Harris Health Quality, Safety Performance Measures, Good Catch Recipients, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Quality Reporting with Possible Action Regarding this Matter Upon Return to Open Session | No action taken. |
| | B. Medical Executive Board Report and Credentialing Discussion, Pursuant to Tex. Occ. Code Ann. §§151.002, 160.007 and Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §161.032 to Receive Peer Review and/or Medical Committee Report, Including Consideration of Approval of Credentialing Changes for Members of Harris Health Medical Staff Upon Return to Open Session | No action taken. |

| AGENDA ITEM | DISCUSSION | ACTION/RECOMMENDATION |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| | C. Report Regarding Harris Health Correctional Health Quality of Medical and Healthcare, Including Credentialing Discussion and Operational Updates, Pursuant to Tex. Occ. Code Ann. §§151.002, 160.007, Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §161.032 and Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §551.071 to Receive Peer Review and/or Medical Committee Report with Possible Action Upon Return to Open Session | No action taken. |
| | D. Consultation with Attorney Regarding Harris Health's Medical School Affiliation and Support Agreements, Pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §551.071, and Possible Action Upon Return to Open Session | No action taken. |
| VI. Reconvene to Open Meeting | At 9:34 AM, Dr. Caracostis reconvened the meeting in open session, noting that a quorum was present and that no action was taken during Executive Session. | |
| VII. General Action Item(s) | | |
| | A. General Action Item(s) Related to Quality: Medical Staff | |
| | 1. Approval of Credentialing Changes for Members of the Harris Health Medical Staff Dr. Kunal Sharma, Chair of the Medical Executive Board, presented credentialing changes for members of the Harris Health Medical Staff for October 2025. He reported that there were 49 initial appointments, 165 reappointments, 10 changes or additions of privileges, and 34 resignations. Copies of the credentialing report were available in the permanent record. | Motion No. 25.10-120 Moved by Ms. Carol Paret, seconded by Mr. Paul Puente, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item VII.A.1. Motion carried. |
| | B. General Action Item(s) Related to Quality: Correctional Health Medical Staff | |
| | 1. Approval of Credentialing Changes for Members of the Harris Health Correctional Health Medical Staff Dr. Otis Ekins, Chief Medical Officer of Harris Health Correctional Health, presented credentialing changes for October 2025. He reported 4 initial appointments and 26 resignations. Copies of the credentialing report were available in the permanent record. | Motion No. 25.10-121 Moved by Mr. Paul Puente, seconded by Ms. Afsheen Davis, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item VII.B.1. Motion carried. |
| XI. Executive Session | At 9:37 AM., Dr. Andrea Caracostis stated that the Board would enter Executive Session for Items XI. 'E through I' as permitted by law under Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §161.032, and Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §§551.071, 551.085. | <i>Items taken out of order.</i> |
| | E. Review of the Community Health Choice, Inc. and Community Health Choice Texas, Inc. Financial Performance for the Eight Months Ending August 31, 2025, Pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §551.085 Ms. Davis was recused from discussion on this item related to Texas Children's Hospital. | No action taken. |

| AGENDA ITEM | DISCUSSION | ACTION/RECOMMENDATION |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | <p>F. Review of the Community Health Choice, Inc. and Community Health Choice Texas, Inc. Investment Policy, Pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §551.085, Including Consideration of Approval of the Community Health Choice Investment Policy Upon Return to Open Session</p> <p>Ms. Davis was recused from discussion on this item related to Texas Children's Hospital.</p> <p>Motion: Approval of the Community Health Choice, Inc. and Community Health Choice Texas, Inc. Investment Policy adopted by the Community Health Choice Board with the understanding that this approval reflects CHC's independent determinations and does not constitute Harris Health's agreement of the underlying legal and regulatory conclusions, as presented in executive session.</p> | <p>Motion No. 25.10-122 Moved by Ms. Ingrid Robinson, seconded by Ms. Carol Paret, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item XI.F. Motion carried.</p> |
| | <p>G. Review of Harris Health's Investment Policy, Pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §551.071, Including Consideration of Approval of the Harris Health Investment Policy Upon Return to Open Session</p> <p>Motion: Approval of the Harris Health Investment Policy, as presented in executive session.</p> | <p>Motion No. 25.10-123 Moved by Mr. Paul Puente, seconded by Ms. Ingrid Robinson, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item XI.G. Motion carried.</p> |
| | <p>H. Consultation with Attorney Regarding Settlement of Claims, Pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §551.071 and Possible Action Upon Return to Open Session</p> <p>Motion: Approval of the Settlement of claims brought by or on behalf of Willie Coleman and/or Yolanda Creecy for the total amount of \$100,000.00. President/CEO of Harris Health or his designee is authorized to execute any agreement, release, or any other necessary documents to effectuate this settlement, Pursuant to the terms discussed in the executive session.</p> | <p>Motion No. 25.10-124 Moved by Ms. Afsheen Davis, seconded by Ms. Carol Paret, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item XI.H. Motion carried.</p> |
| | <p>I. Report by the Executive Vice President, Chief Compliance and Risk Officer, Regarding Compliance with Medicare, Medicaid, HIPAA and Other Federal and State Health Care Program Requirements, Including Status of Fraud and Abuse Investigations, Pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §551.071 and Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann. §161.032, and Possible Action Regarding this Matter Upon Return to Open Session</p> | <p>No action taken.</p> |
| XII. Reconvene | <p>At 10:17 AM Dr. Andrea Caracostis, reconvened the meeting in open session and confirmed that a quorum remained present. She noted that no action was taken in Executive Session. The Board took action on items XI. "F"," G" & "H" of the Executive Session Agenda.</p> | |
| IX. Consent Agenda Items | | Items taken out of order. |
| | A. Consent Purchasing Recommendations | |

| AGENDA ITEM | DISCUSSION | ACTION/RECOMMENDATION |
|-------------|--|---|
| | <p>1. Approval of Purchasing Recommendations (Items A1 through A12 of the Purchasing Matrix)</p> <p>Mr. Jack Adger, Assistant Purchasing Agent, Harris County, presented the purchasing recommendations for the Board's review and approval. A copy of the purchasing agenda is available in the permanent record.</p> | <p><u>Motion No. 25.10-125</u> Moved by Ms. Libby Viera-Bland, seconded by Ms. Ingrid Robinson, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item IX.A.1. of the purchasing recommendations (A1 through A12 of the purchasing matrix). Motion carried.</p> |
| | 2. Harris Health Third Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025 Premier Spend Report for Information Only | For Information Only. |
| | B. Consent Grant Recommendations | |
| | 1. Approval of Grant Recommendations (Item B1 of the Grant Matrix) | <p><u>Motion No. 25.10-126</u> Moved by Ms. Afsheen Davis, seconded by Mr. Paul Puente, and unanimously passed that the Board approve consent agenda items IX.B. – D. Motion carried.</p> |
| | C. Consent Contract Recommendations | |
| | 1. Approval of Contract Recommendations (Items C1 through C2 of the Contract Matrix) | <p><u>Motion No. 25.10-126</u> Moved by Ms. Afsheen Davis, seconded by Mr. Paul Puente, and unanimously passed that the Board approve consent agenda items IX.B. – D. Motion carried.</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | D. New Consent Items for Board Approval | |
| | 1. Approval to Convey a Water Meter Easement and Right of Way to The City of Houston for the Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital Expansion Project, Houston, Harris County, Texas | Motion No. 25.10-126 Moved by Ms. Afsheen Davis, seconded by Mr. Paul Puente, and unanimously passed that the Board approve consent agenda items IX.B. – D. Motion carried. |
| | 2. Approval to Convey a Perpetual Blanket Easement and Right of Way to CenterPoint Energy Houston Electric, LLC, at Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital, 5656 Kelley St, Houston, Harris County, Texas <i>{End of Consent Agenda}</i> | Motion No. 25.10-126 Moved by Ms. Afsheen Davis, seconded by Mr. Paul Puente, and unanimously passed that the Board approve consent agenda items IX.B. – D. Motion carried. |
| X. Item(s) Related to the Health Care for the Homeless Program | | |
| | <p>A. Review and Acceptance of the Following Reports for the Health Care for the Homeless Program (HCHP) as Required by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, which Provides Funding to the Harris County Hospital District d/b/a/Harris Health to Provide Health Services to Persons Experiencing Homelessness under Section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCHP October 2025 Operational Update <p>Mr. Nelson Gonzalez, Project Manager for the Healthcare for the Homeless Program, presented on behalf of Ms. Tracey Burdine. He provided the Board with an October 2025 operational update, productivity report, Consumer Advisory Council report, and updates on the Referral Tracking and Follow-up Care Policy and the Referrals of HCHP Patients to Harris Health Policy. Mr. Gonzalez reported that the year-to-date patient target was 7,250, and HCHP served 5,813 patients, exceeding expectations by approximately 5%. The program had completed 23,033 patient visits, consistently exceeding previous year's monthly totals. Family practice services comprised the majority of visits, as reflected in the departmental breakdown of unduplicated patients.</p> <p>Regarding the Consumer Advisory Council report, Mr. Gonzalez highlighted activities from May through July 2025, including progress on the Open Door Mission renovation project, review of the annual service area analysis report, discussion of the 2025 HRSA manual and quality indicators, and preparation for the expected 2026 triennial operational site visit. He noted that the HRSA visit ensures compliance with the HCHP manual requirements and typically includes three auditors focused on financial, clinical, and operational aspects over a 2.5–3-day period. He emphasized the</p> | <p>Motion No. 25.10-127 Moved by Ms. Paul Puente, seconded by Ms. Ingrid Robinson, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item X.A. Motion carried.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>importance of board participation in this review process.</p> <p>Mr. Gonzalez then reviewed updates to HCHP policies. The Referral Tracking and Follow-up Care Policy was revised to clarify standardized processes for referral creation, management, and follow-up care, with only minor grammatical changes made. The Referrals of HCHP Patients to Harris Health Policy, which provides guidelines for accepting and coordinating referrals for services not available directly through HCHP clinics, also underwent minor grammatical corrections, including removal of the term “system” from “aerosol system.” No substantive changes were made to either policy. A copy of each presentation is available in the permanent record.</p> <p>Note: Items A-D were presented together.</p> | |
| | B. Approval of the HCHP Consumer Advisory Council Report | <p><u>Motion No. 25.10-128</u> Moved by Ms. Paul Puente, seconded by Ms. Ingrid Robinson, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item X.B. Motion carried</p> |
| | C. Approval of the HCHP Referral Tracking and Follow-up Care Policy | <p><u>Motion No. 25.10-129</u> Moved by Ms. Afsheen Davis, seconded by Ms. Ingrid Robinson, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item X.C. Motion carried.</p> |
| | D. Approval of the Referrals of HCHP Patients to Harris Health Policy | <p><u>Motion No. 25.10-130</u> Moved by Ms. Ingrid Robinson, seconded by Mr. Paul Puente, and unanimously passed that the Board approve agenda item X.D. Motion carried.</p> |


| VIII. Strategic Discussion | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| | A. Harris Health Strategic Plan Initiatives | |
| | <p data-bbox="493 245 1371 272">1. Presentation Regarding the Harris Health 2026-2030 Strategic Plan Update</p> <p data-bbox="537 313 1598 542">Ms. Maria Cowles, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer, led the discussion regarding the Harris Health 2026–2030 Strategic Plan Update. She opened by expressing her excitement that the organization was in the final stages of the strategic planning process and thanked the Board for their thoughtful input on the draft of the strategic plan, noting that all received comments had been incorporated into the updated draft. Ms. Cowles emphasized that the Board would be asked to approve the plan in November and introduced the next speakers to provide additional perspective on the strategic planning process.</p> <p data-bbox="537 583 1598 1013">Ms. Karma Bass of Via Healthcare Consulting provided remarks regarding the Board’s role in strategic planning. She explained that strategic planning is one of the most important responsibilities of a board of trustees and serves as the foundation for all governance work. She emphasized the distinction between the board’s role and management’s role: the board is responsible for the “what” of the strategic plan, including the mission, vision, values, and the six strategic pillars, while management is responsible for the “how,” including goals and tactics. She encouraged the Board to actively engage with the plan by reviewing it before each meeting and using it as a framework for guiding questions and assessing organizational performance. Ms. Bass also highlighted the critical nature of the Board’s fiduciary responsibilities, noting that delays in meetings or lack of quorum could impact credentialing and privileging of providers, which are legally required functions. She encouraged Board members to commit to attendance, complete the upcoming board self-assessment survey, and leverage the strategic plan as a “North Star” for their governance work over the next five years.</p> <p data-bbox="537 1053 1598 1317">Following Ms. Bass, Mr. Sam Moskowitz of Berkley Research Group (BRG) led the Board in an in-depth discussion of the strategic plan itself. The discussion focused on organizational priorities, initiatives to improve patient access and outcomes, behavioral health integration, community partnerships, and performance metrics for monitoring success. Board members provided input on aligning strategic initiatives with financial and operational priorities, staffing needs, and long-term infrastructure planning. The discussion concluded with agreement that the plan would serve as a guiding document for the organization’s strategic direction from 2026 to 2030. A copy of the presentation is available in the permanent record.</p> | As Presented. |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| | <p>2. Discussion Regarding the Harris Health 2026 Board of Trustees Calendar</p> <p>Ms. Olga Rodriguez, Senior Vice President of Community Engagement, Corporate Communications, and Board Services, presented the proposed 2026 Board of Trustees calendar. She noted that, as part of the annual process, the calendar is provided to allow Board members to plan ahead and anticipate scheduling conflicts. Meeting planners will be sent to members once the calendar is adopted to hold the dates on their schedules. Ms. Maria Cowles, EVP and Chief Strategy Officer, mentioned a key update in the proposed calendar is the shift of regular Board meetings to the second Wednesday of each month, beginning in 2026, pending approval at the December 11th Board meeting. This adjustment was made to provide additional flexibility in the event a meeting must be rescheduled due to lack of quorum, to minimize conflicts with the Commissioners Court meetings, which now meets on Thursdays, and to streamline internal reporting schedules. She emphasized that the change is intended to create greater consistency and predictability for Board members when planning their calendars. Board members were asked to review the proposed dates and provide feedback as appropriate.</p> | As Discussed. |
| | <p>B. Committee Report(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 7, 2025 – Quality Committee <p>Ms. Paret noted that the October 7, 2025 Quality Committee reports were included in the Board packet and available in the permanent record.</p> | No presentation. Chair directed Board Members to review reports in their board packet due to time constraints. |
| XI. Adjournment | There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:34 AM. | |

I certify that the foregoing are the Minutes of the Harris Health Board of Trustees Meeting held on October 23, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,


Andrea Caracostis, MD, MPH, Chair


Libby Viera – Bland, AICP, Secretary

Minutes transcribed by Cherry A. Joseph, MBA