

BLANCHE RIVER HEALTH

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22



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Board of Directors 2021-22

Name	Role
Chester Jobson	Chair
Terry Rosko	Vice Chair
Paula Mangotich	Treasurer
Michelle Lafreniere	Director
Norm Koch	Director
Barry Ryan	Director
Lois Dekker	Director
Marcel Joliat	Director
Mike Mazetti	Director
Michel Moreau	Director
Sean Conroy	Secretary, President and Chief Executive Officer
Joan Brazeau	Vice President, Clinical Services and Chief Nursing Officer
Andrew Brown	Vice President, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Mark Spiller	Chief of Staff, Chief of Emergency Medicine
Dr. Ted Jordan	President of the Professional Staff



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Annual Report

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Report of the Board Chair

Chester Jobson

As Chair of the Blanche River Health Board of Directors, I am pleased to provide my fellow directors with a Board Chair report for the past year.

Our organization has had many triumphs and has accomplished a lot since the amalgamation of the two hospital sites in October of 2020. Our hardworking staff and medical staff continue to adapt to changes in order to prioritize patient care despite the ongoing pandemic. I want to take this opportunity to recognize and express appreciation for the efforts of our physicians, management team and all of our front line staff who have been so successful in meeting the challenges and rising above the usual requirements of their positions to tackle the pressures of staff shortages and increased patient loads.

Both our Englehart and Kirkland Lake hospital sites have played important roles in the pandemic plans and response, and we have much to be proud of despite the challenging times we saw earlier this spring. There have been countless staff who have worked many extra hours to ensure our patients continue to receive the quality care they have become accustomed to, and for that I want to personally say thank you!

We have a wonderful team of caring physicians who work across both sites and are committed to ensuring our patients receive the high-quality care they expect and deserve. Thank you to Dr. Spiller for his continued support and leadership as our Chief of Staff. This past year has seen some changes in our regular physician complement and an increasing reliance on locum physicians from outside the area which is well supported by Dr. Spiller and our local physician team due to physician shortages in the province and in the nation.

To our Patient Advisors, Auxiliary and Foundation members / volunteers, thank you for all you continue to do for Blanche River Health. Public health measures and hospital pandemic policies did not allow for the normal committee participation, operation of our gift shops and fundraising efforts, but we are hopeful to return to in-person fundraising efforts in the near future. Our Foundation's monthly online 50/50 draw has been a welcomed addition to their efforts in support of hospital equipment needs and we are thankful for this source of revenue!

Despite another year of pandemic impacts to our hospital, we are fortunate to have a solid financial footing as a result of good financial oversight and planning over the past few

years. A sincere thank you goes out to our executive and management teams as they make operational decisions and strategic investments in our programs and services. We have continued to invest in our facilities and equipment to support the current and future needs of our hospital. Many capital investments this year focused on improved patient care.

As a final note, I would like to thank our volunteer Board of Directors for all your time, dedication and commitment over the past year. Our diverse Board brings forth new and exciting ideas while focusing on continuous improvement in quality patient care at Blanche River Health. It's been my pleasure to serve as Board Chair and work with each and every one of you, and I am especially thankful for the opportunity to support our dedicated management team, physicians and staff.

Respectfully,

Chester Jobson
Board Chair
Blanche River Health

Report of the Chief Executive Officer

Sean Conroy

I am pleased to present the 2021-22 Chief Executive Officer (CEO) report for Blanche River Health. Last year's report began by introducing the newly amalgamated organization. We are nearly two years post-amalgamation and I can confidently say that our evolution has been one which has significantly and positively impacted the care we are able to provide our patients and the communities we serve. As we continue our work with wrapping up initiatives associated with the amalgamation (such as collective agreements and internal branding / signage), it's important to take a moment to recognize the significance of what we have accomplished in a few short years, especially in light of the many challenges we faced with the pandemic's impact on the healthcare system.

One of the main focuses and influences in the previous year was on COVID-19, and once again, our 2021-22 fiscal year has continued to focus on Blanche River Health's pandemic response. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to challenge health care systems and hospitals such as ours in ways previously unseen – we have had the highest levels of staff absences / shortages and inpatient loads in the last half of the fiscal year, and both hospital sites experienced their largest-ever pandemic related outbreaks, all occurring almost simultaneously! Throughout these various challenges our organization and team continued to prevail as we managed the increasing pressures and adapted our services to maintain their availability.

Although it's been said many times, our staff continue to show their commitment, dedication and resiliency in an environment where our resources and capacity face challenges due to ongoing shortages in health human resources and long term care capacity in the district. To work in healthcare means to put the needs of others ahead of your own, and our healthcare professionals demonstrate their selflessness daily!

The pandemic continues to impact the hiring environment in healthcare as a whole, and we are seeing higher staff turnover and job vacancy rates that has resulted in a renewed emphasis on recruiting staff and physicians. We are seeing some of that change impact our executive team, and I am pleased that we have recently hired a new Chief Financial Officer and are working to finalize the upcoming replacement of our Chief Nursing Officer who will be retiring in September after a long and successful career in healthcare.

We have continued to work closely and collaboratively with our various community partners, and I want to specifically recognize the Kirkland District Family Health Team, the Englehart & District Family Health Team and the Timiskaming Health Unit for their support and role they have played in ensuring we can continue to provide the high-quality care our patients have come to expect, even during the peak pressures of the pandemic. On the horizon, we look forward to addressing some of our pressures in staffing and long-term care bed capacity through partnership opportunities which will see the addition of beds and much-needed staff for our aging population.

Our hospital was once again fortunate to receive a significant financial commitment from Kirkland Lake Gold (now part of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited) during the year amounting to \$4.1 million for the redevelopment of our emergency department and purchase of new equipment including a mammography unit, ultrasound machines and laboratory point of care testing equipment. Their combined total donations over the past 5 years have amounted to almost \$8.0 million, which represents the organizations single largest donor in its history! I want to again thank the executive team and Board of the former Kirkland Lake Gold for this monumental support and I very much look forward to working with the new executive team at Agnico Eagle as these current initiatives are completed and new initiatives are considered in the future.

Blanche River Health continues to modernize our services through the acquisition of new and enhanced patient equipment as a result of the fundraising efforts from both our Auxiliaries and Foundation. The Foundation's online monthly 50/50 draw is currently celebrating its one-year anniversary with an astounding \$63,405 raised through our first 12 draws! Planning is also underway to introduce a new capital equipment fundraising campaign that the Foundation will initiate in 2022-23 with the aim of creating a sustainable reserve of funds to support all future equipment replacement and expansion requirements!

In terms of our Auxiliaries, we are currently working towards a newly named Auxiliary that falls under the Blanche River Health banner, much like the Foundation did in the previous year. Recently, our Kirkland Lake Auxiliary has resumed the operation of the Gift Shop and donated \$30,000 towards clinical equipment. The Englehart Auxiliary has also pledged \$35,000 towards equipment needs at our Englehart site.

I want to thank the Foundation and Auxiliaries for their continued support of our clinical programs and their associated equipment requirements. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers in support of these integral organizations.

As we near the end of my report, I would like to acknowledge and recognize the following:

- Thank you to our volunteer Board of Directors for their dedication and unwavering support as we continue to plan and navigate within the healthcare system, always with the best interests of our communities in mind. A special

thank you to Chester Jobson (Board Chair) and the Board Executive for their ongoing support and leadership!

- Thank you to our local physicians and locums who are so committed to serving our patients and dedicated to supporting our hospitals each and every day! In a time of physician shortages both on a provincial and national level, you continue to ensure our local patients are not negatively impacted by these broader pressures. A special thank you to Dr. Mark Spiller as Chief of Staff and Dr. Ted Jordan as President of the Professional Staff for their commitment to our hospital!
- A heartfelt “thank you” to our management team! We have continued to be challenged and faced significant change over the past year. I am so very proud, grateful, amazed and humbled by your teamwork, dedication, tireless support and commitment to our staff and patients!
- Once again, an immense “THANK YOU” and with much appreciation to our staff – across all departments and positions! Your commitment and dedication to our patients, each other, and the communities we serve has been so important and especially instrumental in our pandemic response. Thank you for your dedication to our hospitals, coming to work every day during times of high stress and staff shortages and always keeping a smile on your face!

And to everyone - thank you for everything you have done in support of our hospital and most importantly our patients, as well as for continuing to demonstrate patience and compassion while being mindful of each other’s well-being!

Respectfully,

Sean Conroy
President and Chief Executive Officer



Report of the Chief Nursing Officer

Joan Brazeau

In 2021, Blanche River Health and the community continued to meet unprecedented challenges and change. Through it all, we remained committed to providing our patients and community member's safe care. As you read into this report, our team's strength and proficiency has allowed us to rise above the challenges, work through the continual changes and do whatever was necessary to ensure the safety of our staff, patients and community.

I would like to thank all of our staff and physicians at BRH for all you have done and the sacrifices made during the last year. It has not been an easy year for anyone, missing family members, celebrations, isolating from others that bring us joy and happiness. However, it is our team's resilience, determination and commitment that shone bright to ensure our patients received the best safe care possible.

This report outlines some of the ways we rose to the challenge and supported our staff throughout the pandemic times.

- Successfully participated in the 2021 Accreditation process and received Accreditation with Commendation.
- Bringing agency nurses into the facility to off-set some of the staffing challenges and demands
- On boarding external physiotherapy staff to provide more support to patients
- Moving meetings to virtual platforms so we could continue these critical functions remotely
- Keeping vital information flowing through different communication channels (e-mails, newsletters) in order to maintain constant contact with our staff and community
- Maintaining on-line educational opportunities for all staff and when able welcoming in person sessions.
- Due to supply chain delays, patiently waiting and welcoming new equipment into departments. (cardiac monitors, bone density machine, ultrasound equipment)
- Implementing automatic dispensing cabinets into the emergency department and in-patient area.

- Creating a plan to implement point of care testing in the emergency department to alleviate pressures on the lab due to the medical laboratory technologist shortage across the province.
- Working collaborably with our community partners to ensure patients receive seamless care within the community.
- Committed to weekly virtual meetings with the Timiskaming Health Unit for updates and guidance throughout the pandemic.
- Creating a transfer of accountability document for the purpose of ensuring the continuity of care and the safety of patients.
- Working as a team to ensure peri-operative services were maintained with strict infection control measures in place
- Maintaining visiting specialist clinics, diabetes clinics, oncology and renal appointments all while following MOH covid guidelines.
- Performed 3865 CT's , 997 mammograms (KL site) and 15,377 x-rays in total at both sites
- 16,299 patients were triaged through the emergency departments (both sites combined)
- 1028 patients were admitted to BRH in 2021.

From the initiatives and numbers listed above it is apparent the staff at BRH continued to provide services and care to members of the community throughout the year.

Despite the challenges we have faced and continue to face, our ultimate goal is to have an impact on improved community health.

I would like to thank our patients and community members. Your health care experience was certainly different over the past year; however, you put your trust in our organization and followed our guidelines to ensure our patients and staff remained safe.

Also many thanks to our dedicated Board Members at BRH for their continued support and guidance throughout these challenging times.

Amidst the challenges over the past year, we can be optimistic for the future. We are confident that vaccines are effective and we are hopeful we have survived the worst of the pandemic.

I am confident the future is bright with the many initiatives in place, the advancement of our meditech system and the resiliency created during the most challenging times in health care.

My hope for the future of BRH is that we continue to put our patients and families first and continue to be here for each other.

Respectfully,

Joan Brazeau, VP Clinical Services and CNO



Report of the Interim Chief Financial Officer

Sean Conroy

As the (interim) Chief Financial Officer of Blanche River Health, I am pleased to report on the financial results of our organization for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

As we continued to face pressures associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our organization has once again been able to adapt and manage a variety of financial challenges that included cost pressures in everything from services to supplies, as well as staffing and physician recruitment where our efforts significantly escalated in response to the more competitive environment for these resources.

Despite the increased financial pressures our organization continued with sound fiscal management practices and received additional funding support from the Ministry / Ontario Health to offset incremental pandemic costs and for the operation of additional bed capacity in 2021-22. Overall our financial results were very positive as we finished the year with an operating surplus of \$4.0 million!

Our audited financial statements depict results for 2021-22 that is among the best in the organizations history – the surplus has supported a significantly improved cash and working capital position, and we were able to fund our \$2.8 million in capital expenditures without taking on any additional debt. Our capital investments during the year included initial costs of our 3 year EMR / Meditech Expanse Project to replace our clinical, financial and data management systems, as well as a new mammography unit, ICU/ER monitoring system, surgical table, and facility upgrades in our water service and flooring. Many of the capital equipment purchases were funded through community donations that come through our Foundation and Auxiliaries, while the facility improvements were mainly funded through the Ministry of Health / Ontario Health.

Overall, our working capital position, a measure of liquidity, improved dramatically during the year to 2.40 (2020-21: 1.45), as evidenced by strong improvement in our cash (due to the surplus) and accounts receivable (due to donation commitments coming to us in the near future) positions.

As we noted in last years' report, it is always a challenge to maintain let alone improve the financial performance within the healthcare sector – and we have managed to do it through the combined efforts of our financially astute management team and advocating for additional funding in support of our operations. I want to thank our entire organizational team – including the Board of Directors, executive and management team, physicians, staff, and community partners for their ongoing support as we all continue to work in collaboration to improve patient care in conjunction with our financial performance.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we are in a solid financial position with the ability to absorb any short-term operational pressures while continuing to invest in key capital equipment and infrastructure projects. This will support our efforts to continually improve our ability to deliver the best possible patient care in our communities!

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Conroy, CPA
(interim) Vice President, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer



Report of the Hospital Chief of Staff

Dr. Mark Spiller

I am honored to present the Chief of Staff report for Blanche River Health this year. The Medical Staff are cautiously optimistic that the most difficult times in the pandemic are behind us. Positive signs include the operating room activity returning to normal, and the visiting specialist clinic visits rising as doctor's return.

Our biggest challenge is the physician shortage, occurring here and throughout the province.

Thank you to our small group of dedicated doctors who work more than they ever have, and to administration for supporting this work, and to Crystal Burns who coordinates this along with the visiting doctors to fill in gaps. The shortage extends to nursing, our lab and x-ray departments where staff are also working short.

I understand and apologize to patients who experience difficulty because of this situation, but much time and effort will continue in recruitment of physicians and staff.

The relationship between the Englehart and the Kirkland lake site is excellent and shared staff and expertise benefits everyone.

Blanche River Health has created a strong organization that will serve both communities and the surrounding area well into the future.

Respectfully,

Dr. Mark Spiller
Chief of Staff
Blanche River Health



Report of the Hospital Foundation Board Chair

John Sullivan

The Blanche River Health Foundation Board would like to thank our communities for the generous support it has received through its charitable fund-raising efforts.

I wish to acknowledge the individuals, families, employers, employees, organizations and corporations that have donated to our Foundation.

The Foundation issues charitable receipts for all donations made and recognizes larger donations on our recognition wall in the lobby of the hospital.

All funds donated enhance care of patients at Blanche River Health (encompassing the Kirkland Lake and Englehart sites).

The foundation continues to work on many improvements to the hospital to make patient stays more comfortable and to purchase equipment to assist our healthcare providers in providing patients with improved healthcare.

Our latest fund raising project is our monthly 50/50 draw; funds raised have been earmarked for the refurbishing of the outdoor patient seating areas at both sites. Further details of the refurbishing project will follow once plans have been finalized.

The Foundation Board gives special recognition to AGNICO EAGLE MINES LIMITED (KIRKLAND LAKE GOLD) for their continued support towards major equipment and renovation projects.

Cumulative donations from 1999 to 2022 = \$3,745,700.00.

On behalf of the Blanche River Health Foundation Board and the patients of our hospitals, I wish to thank our many allies who continue to help us in facilitating these significant improvements to our health care facilities.

Respectfully submitted,

John Sullivan
Chair –Blanche River Health Foundation Board

