

RPEA Northern Region Chapter Minutes  
Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 12:00 pm  
Raven Landing Center

Clark Milne convened the meeting at Noon with 63 people in attendance. Mary Zalar recorded minutes. Clark announced that election of Northern Region RPEA Chapter officers will take place at the May meeting. A nomination sheet is on each table, and members are encouraged to make suggestions. We do need a couple of volunteers to establish a nominating committee to manage the process, per earlier NR By Laws rules. Clark will not stand for re-election as Chair, and Mary Zalar is retiring as Secretary.

Featured Speaker: Ms. Kim Huffington, manager of the Fairbanks Foundation Health Partners (FMH) Hospice program. Kim encouraged the audience to ask questions during her presentation.

1. Kim moved to Fairbanks from Colorado in 2013 because her husband was working at Ft. Knox. She has worked as an RN since 1980.
2. FMH Hospice offers four levels of care:
  - a. Routine care: home-based care.
  - b. Respite care: providing temporary relief for caregiver. Respite care up to 5 days.
  - c. Continuous care (“crisis care”): Implemented for patient care whose symptoms cannot be adequately managed. Hospice staff can spend more time with the patient.
  - d. General in-patient care: If symptoms still cannot be managed, patient can be transferred to hospital.
3. In 1984, Medicare added the Hospice benefit to its program, with a number of program requirements including:
  - a. Patient and family are at the center of attention.
  - b. Care is designed well with a distinct “team approach”.
  - c. Staff must be available 24/7, 365 days/year.
  - d. Medicare requires two visits per week.
  - e. Bereavement services required to be available.
  - f. Volunteer hours must match employee work hours at minimum of 5% level
4. Central to Hospice Care is that the patient has the right to die pain-free and with dignity. Aggressive treatment of symptoms.
5. Kim had the FMH Hospice develop a mission statement: “We strive to provide superior and compassionate care to our patients and their loved ones, so they can complete their life journey in comfort with dignity and harmony.”
6. Today’s FMH Hospice is an interdisciplinary team with many skills. The volunteer rate is ~50%, which is VERY high compared to U.S. national hospice volunteer averages!
7. Medicare requires a terminal diagnosis to be admitted to hospice care (can’t die due to “old age”). Cancer is the chief diagnosis for ~32% of hospice patients, nationally.
8. The service area for FMH Hospice is “within 26 miles from Fairbanks”, although staff can provide phone support beyond that range.
9. Most referrals come from TVC, Chief Andrew, Cancer Treatment Center, doctors; and now some self-referrals.
10. In 2018, the average daily census for FMH Hospice was 33 patients with an average length of stay of 57 days.
11. FMH Hospice does not offer inpatient care.
12. Recommendation: An Advanced Care Directive should be given to one’s doctor, hospital, and your Medical Power of Attorney. Good idea to review annually. FMH Hospice offers help with Advanced Care Directives several times a month.

13. Separate from the Advanced Care Directive is completing forms at TVC and FMH to allow a personal representative to access your health records and billing information.
14. FMH Hospice offers two volunteer training classes each year. The next volunteer training dates are not set yet. Please consider calling their south Fairbanks office at 458-3090 to sign up for the next training. There are about 50 active volunteers and 20 inactive. In the past two years, all patient needs have been met. Volunteer coordinators are good at matching the right to volunteer to each family. Hospice plant sale volunteers are amazing! The event usually raises \$30K each year, and 100% of those funds are used for patients and families.
15. "It's all about you until you die. And then it's about your family." Bereavement services and support are also offered. FMH Hospice provides 5 grief classes/year that are open to the whole community. Monthly grief support groups are offered for both men and women.
16. FMH Hospice has about 15 paid employees.

### Chapter Business

1. Aging At Home (AAH) Fairbanks, per Mary Ann Borchert
  - a. Aging at Home Fairbanks has celebrated its third year of being active in Fairbanks.
  - b. Member organization that is part of the Village to Village national network.
  - c. Membership is \$400/year for an individual and \$600/year for a household.
  - d. "Get Your Ducks in a Row" class has been developed by AAH and presented through OLLI classes. Five-part series about end of life planning.
  - e. "Aging Well Series" is a lecture program held at the Senior Center on the third Tuesday of the month. Open to all.
2. Clark reported on RPEA Executive Board meetings
  - a. Judge may rule on DVA lawsuit in March or April.
  - b. Retiree Health Plan Advisory Board will meet February 6. You can listen to live meetings online; recordings of past meetings are also archived online at <http://doa.alaska.gov/drj/alaskacare/retiree/advisory.html>.
  - c. The quarterly TPA meeting for Aetna & Moda, OptumRX will be held in February.
3. Treasurer Report by Frank Abegg. The Chapter's bank account has \$2,048 dollars as of 12/31/2018. Our membership has grown to well over 750. An updated, current written report was submitted after the meeting.
4. No Legislative Committee Report this month.
5. Membership, by Jeff Goldsmith: Over 700 new members have joined RPEA (statewide) as the result of the last membership drive during 2018.
6. Next month's meeting speaker will be: **Randy Mitchell**, store director of West Fred Meyers, on the topic of **Food Security for Interior Alaska**.
7. Medical Information Committee, by Karen Milne
  - a. Everyone should have received their OptumRX cards. (if not, contact OptumRX!)
  - b. Aetna sent out their new Vision/Audio and Medical healthcare cards.
  - c. The Division of Retirement and Benefits' Tele-Town Hall meeting (10-11 AM today) was focused on the State's Long Term Care plans. LTC program is not medical services, it is custodial services. The next Tele-Town Hall is February 21, 10 am. Archived recordings of all Tele-Town Halls are available online at: [http://doa.alaska.gov/drj/headlines/2018/08/eqwp-tele-town-hall/#.XEId9\\_ZFx3Q](http://doa.alaska.gov/drj/headlines/2018/08/eqwp-tele-town-hall/#.XEId9_ZFx3Q)
  - d. If you have benefit questions, call the Division of Retirement and Benefits.
  - e. Local availability of Shingrix, the new two-part shingles vaccine is currently available at FMH pharmacy and Chief Andrew Isaac (if you have access to that facility). The vaccine is covered under the new pharmacy plan with a copay of \$8.

- f. CHCS, the TPA (third party administrator) for the State's Long Term Care plans, can be reached for questions or issues, at 888-281-7116 or 888-287-7116.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.