



Administration

Telephone: 701-241-5770

Fax: 701-241-5776

wilsonro@casscountynd.gov

MEMO

TO: County Commission

FROM: Robert W. Wilson

Date: March 14, 2024

Subject: Jail Inmate Nursing Proposal & Recommendation

Fargo Cass Public Health (FCPH) currently provides two contractual services to Cass County Government. One delivers public health services outside the City of Fargo; the other provides inmate nursing services at the Cass County Jail. FCPH is a City of Fargo Department, and department staff are City of Fargo employees.

Last fall FCPH notified Cass County it intended to transition out of providing inmate nursing services at the jail. FCPH staff was and continues to be very helpful as County staff explore alternative inmate nursing options and prepare for a transition.

Extensive conversations involving the County's Administration, Human Resources, Sheriff, Information Technology, Finance and State's Attorney offices have led to the consideration of one of two options:

Option #1: Fargo Cass Public Health employees employed in the jail nursing unit become Cass County employees and Cass County assumes all administrative, medical record keeping, human resources, DOCR compliance, prescription drug and legal & licensing responsibilities related to providing inmate nursing services.

Option #2: Fargo Cass Public Health employees employed in the jail nursing unit become Cass County employees and Cass County contracts with Family Healthcare for administrative, medical record keeping, DOCR compliance, prescription drug and licensing responsibilities related to providing inmate nursing services.

Cass County already has an existing relationship with Family HealthCare for Medical Director Services at the jail. A physician employed by FHC serves as the Medical Director. That relationship would continue if the Commission adopts Option #2. An outline of Family HealthCare's proposal and a cost comparison are attached to this memo.

My recommendation is that it is in the best interest of Cass County to pursue option #2.

Regardless of the option selected, this will be a significant change in how inmate nursing services are delivered in the Cass County Jail. To provide Commissioners the opportunity to review the information developed and ask questions, we are scheduling this item as a discussion topic for the March 18th agenda with an action item tentatively scheduled for May 6th.

Several items will need to be finalized prior to Commission action. The exact transition timeline is yet to be determined. FCPH would like to have the next service structure identified and implemented sometime between July and December of this year. A formal agreement must also be drafted and reviewed by counsel for both parties.

Finance Director Brandy Madrigga has prepared the attached spreadsheet detailing 2024 budgeted Cass County jail nursing expenses vs. an estimated 2025 budget if the County administers jail nursing service and estimated costs if Family HealthCare administers the service. All information developed and gathered indicates the Family HealthCare partnership offers Cass County the ability to realize substantial savings on prescription drug costs and significant efficiencies in obtaining medical records compared to Cass County self-administering the service.

We look forward to a robust discussion on the 18th.

	2024 Budget (FCPH)	2025 Family Health	2025 Cass	Increase/ (Decrease)	Notes
IT EMR & Equipment	-	45,000	400,000	(355,000)	
EMR Training	-	3,000	3,000	-	
Total 1x Costs	-	48,000	403,000	(355,000)	
Mgmt & Admin	11,520	72,001	15,000	57,001	10% of Nursing Staff Wages
Onsite & Oncall Provider	70,000	180,000	180,000	-	Current contract rate will be updated
	81,520	252,001	195,000	57,001	
Staffing					
Staff	558,056	594,998	594,998	-	
Additional 2 Nurses		125,010	125,010	-	Additional Staffing recommendation
Total Salaries	558,056	720,008	720,008	-	
Total Benefits	158,736	194,402	194,402	-	
Total Salary & benefits	716,792	914,410	914,410	-	
Annual EMR Licensing		14,400	24,000	(9,600)	
Pharmacy (\$727k Actual 2023)	748,997	462,880	771,467	(308,587)	Access to 340B pharmacy pricing
Expenses	14,142	23,150	23,150	-	Increase conference and training budget
Total Contract	763,139	500,430	818,617	(308,587)	
Total Costs	1,561,451	1,666,841	1,928,027	(251,586)	

Cass County Jail Proposal – DRAFT 2/28/24

Purpose: To broaden services that Family HealthCare (FHC) is currently providing to the Cass County Jail (Jail) by assuming managerial/administrative responsibilities for nursing services, increasing clinical staffing, transitioning to a new electronic medical record (EMR) that allows for better coordination of care, and transitioning to FHC's pharmacy to leverage savings under the federal 340B Drug Discount program.

The Jail desires to collaborate with a provider of high quality medical and support services that will ensure a seamless continuation of medical care for its inmate population. As the current medical provider to the Jail, FHC offers this proposal in fulfillment of several clinical and financial objectives. Key objectives include:

Staffing – Retain nursing staff that currently support the Jail, as well as expand staffing levels to alleviate current staffing shortages while expanding coverage hours and more quickly addressing acute issues.

Administrative and Clinical Oversight – Provide administrative, operational, and clinical oversight to ensure high quality medical care by integrating FHC's management and clinical leadership into the services provided at the Jail.

Electronic medical record (EMR) system (Epic) – Integrate FHC's industry-leading Epic EMR into the clinical environment at the Jail to seamlessly interface with all FHC medical histories, as well as records in both large integrated health systems in the metro region (i.e., Sanford Health, Essentia Health).

Pharmacy savings– Leverage FHC's 340B Pharmacy to obtain substantial savings in medication costs.

Onsite and on-call medical provider – Continue to provide medical services for inmates by scheduling an onsite medical provider and on-call services.

Summary/Background

Current nursing services are being delivered through Fargo Cass Public Health (FCPH). FCPH intends to discontinue providing nursing services to the Jail beginning in 2025. Currently, 8 nursing staff members work full-time at Cass County Jail. They work varying shifts during daytime hours. An LPN provides some coverage each weekend on both Saturday and Sunday, resulting in corresponding time-off during the week.

The Jail currently has approximately 348 inmates with 8 FTEs for nursing, a ratio of 43.5 to 1. In past years, the Jail housed 180 inmates while 7.5 FTEs provided them with medical care at a ratio of 24 to 1. The current increase in responsibility and expectation for each member of the medical team has **nearly doubled** as inmate capacity has increased over the years. Additionally, and as has been observed in FHC's current clinical and medical experience, the complexity of medical conditions seen has also increased.

Brief History of Family HealthCare

Family Healthcare is a non-profit Federally Qualified Community Health Center (FQHC) that has a rich history of providing exceptional medical, dental, behavioral health, and optometric care to all individuals, regardless of age,

nationality, or ability to pay. Family HealthCare originated in 1990, when a clinic was opened under a Homeless Health grant. Three years later, and with a growing community need for access to primary care, our non-profit community health center was granted. Over the past 25 years, Family HealthCare has expanded beyond primary medical care by offering numerous integrated care services.

As a federally qualified health center, FHC's mission is to provide high quality healthcare to every person. FHC's target population includes low-income, uninsured, underinsured, and racial and ethnic minorities. FHC is also North Dakota and western Minnesota's only homeless health services provider. Historically, over 75% of our patients live under 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

The FHC Difference

The staff and providers at Family HealthCare have significant experience working with vulnerable and underserved populations. These individuals often have more complex physical and mental health needs. Jail inmates often fall into these categories. For this reason, we feel that we are well-equipped to provide the medical oversight and services at the Jail.

Strategy

Staffing

There is a critical staffing shortage based on the current number of inmates. To provide appropriate care, it would require a minimum of 2 additional Registered Nurses (RNs) and 2 additional nursing support staff such as Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN's), Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), etc. This additional staff will allow a nurse to be located in the booking area and provide coverage for extended hours. The inmates entering the Jail through booking provides a unique opportunity to begin the assessment or discover acute issues that can be addressed promptly before they become larger medical problems and require transport to the emergency room or hospital. The addition of this staff will allow the Correctional Nursing Manager the opportunity to minimize the "on the floor" clinical time and to focus more on the team members and more effectively lead the team.

Administrative and Clinical Oversight

Cass County will now employ the current FCPH nursing staff. At the same time, Family HealthCare (FHC) will provide clinical management, site management, and administrative services. Retention of the current nursing is key to success and through employment as County employees, this arrangement will strive to meet the current staffs' wage and benefit expectations. With a stable staff generally comes institutional knowledge along with familiarity with processes and procedures. Having a fully functioning team is advantageous to all parties involved including the inmates, Jail staff, and Family HealthCare. Correctional nursing staff and FHC nursing staff will not be cross-trained in each other's area of expertise.

Implementation of the industry-leading electronic medical record (EMR) system (Epic)

Family HealthCare will extend the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system called Epic to the Jail as an additional site. Epic is a widely used EMR platform (used at both Sanford & Essentia) that provides a secure method of documenting and maintaining medical records. This will allow the contracted nurses and the providers to document within the same system with FHC owning the patient record. Family HealthCare's IT will support this HIPAA-compliant software in coordination with Sanford Health. Only FHC staff and those contracted with FHC can access to the program. The patient record must be owned by FHC as a requirement of having access to the 340B drug program savings.

Leverage FHC's Pharmacy to obtain substantial savings in medication costs

Family HealthCare's Pharmacy has access to the 340B Drug Program. The 340B program offers some medications at reduced prices so that more eligible patients can afford medications, thereby providing better and more comprehensive care. The program recognizes the Jail as a grandfathered site and therefore, this program can be utilized only if the nurses & providers document within our EMR (Epic). Our South Fargo Pharmacy is located near the Jail which allows for the ease of timely medication deliveries. The pharmacy dispensing can replicate the current

service setup including Monday through Friday 9-5 availability and 30-day blister packs.

FHC to continue providing an onsite and on-call medical provider

An FHC medical provider will continue to provide onsite services to the Jail two half-days per week (8 hours). FHC intends to utilize one provider as the primary caregiver to ensure consistent care for patients. A correctional nurse will assist the provider and maintain processes as done today. An on-call medical provider will be available 24/7 via phone when the provider is not on site.

Proposal Options

Option 1 (Recommended): Agree to accept all objectives stated in this proposal. FHC to provide the full scope of previously listed services.

Option 2: Agree to continue the current arrangement with FHC that provides for a medical provider to be onsite at the Jail and provide on-call provider services at the fee noted below.

FHC can support either option above but strongly recommends Option 1. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other appropriate contract will be drawn up to reflect the agreed-upon terms of this proposal. The contract and business contact will be Lori Kinn (Director of Business & Patient Development) from Family HealthCare.

Budget

	Start-up Costs	Pre-expansion annualized costs	Post-expansion annualized costs
Paid by County to FHC or FHC Pharmacy			
Information Technology (IT) Equipment replacement & network setup	\$45,000		
Initial Epic (EMR) training (2 sessions)	\$ 3,000		
Site Management & Administrative Services at 10% of nursing staff wages		Est. \$70,000 (based on the addition of 2 RNs to the current staffing)	Est. \$82,500 (based on the addition of 2 RNs and 2 LPNs to the current staffing)
Phone & Internet (\$550 per month)		\$6,600	\$6,600
Epic (EMR) (\$1,200 per month)		\$14,400	\$14,400
Provider onsite & on-call services (details below)		\$180,000	\$270,000
Prescriptions (courier service included) (details below)		Cost will vary depending on usage	Cost will vary depending on usage
Paid by County to staff and other vendors			
Nursing staff wages		Est \$700,000	Est \$825,000
Nursing staff benefits		Est \$200,000	Est \$230,000
Medical supplies		Cost will vary depending on usage	Cost will vary depending on usage

Budget Justification

IT Equipment Replacement & Network Setup/Phone & Internet

Computers and equipment are due to be replaced at the Jail as confirmed through the County IT department. Family HealthCare will also have to set up a network for the medical staff to be able to utilize the electronic medical record system. The Jail will provide the necessary wiring, outlets, and workspace for the technology setup. This setup is a one-time fee for startup. Phone and internet will be a re-occurring monthly fee charged to the Jail.

Site Management & Administrative Services

FHC will provide nursing supervision services to help manage the site and medical administrative support services. A fee of 10% of nursing staff wages will initially be based on budgeted 2025 wages and will be billed monthly. At least annually, the cost of wages will be reviewed (cost amount provided by the County) and the fee will be adjusted as needed based on actual cost.

The correctional nurse manager and team will gain access to the full scope of our services and oversight. Management support will be provided by the Director of Operations and he will convene others as needed such as clinical support from our Chief Medical Officer, providers, members of the nursing team, or other management assistance. IT will set up new equipment, troubleshoot issues, and maintain the network. The Quality Improvement Manager and Compliance Manager will conduct quality checks to ensure proper access and safeguards are in place to maintain privacy and adhere to all applicable laws. Human Resources will verify the credentials of nursing staff. Our team will also be utilized for patient concerns when they need to be escalated outside of the nursing team.

Other expenses FHC will absorb as part of this fee include lab coat cleaning, uniform reimbursement, necessary cell phone costs, nursing licensing fees, reasonable conference costs and travel to a national correctional care conference for the correctional nursing manager. Medical supplies will be fully assumed by the Jail.

Epic (EMR)

As a Sanford Epic Community Connect partner, FHC will provide access to the industry-leading Epic electronic medical record system for use in the Jail for a monthly fee. Epic is the software used by the major local health systems, creating access to patient records across the systems for providers and nursing staff, driving more efficiency. Typically, implementing an EMR involves significant one-time implementation costs, however FHC will charge only for the time of our trainer to conduct the initial training sessions of the current staff. The monthly fee proposed is for access and support of the system on an ongoing basis.

Provider

Family HealthCare will bill the Jail \$15,000 per month for onsite medical provider services consisting of 8 hours per week. If additional time is requested to have the providers 12 hours per week, the monthly rate would increase to \$22,500. This also will include on-call provider availability when the provider is not on site.

Pharmacy Expenses

Costs will vary depending on the type of medication and number of prescriptions filled. The Jail will be billed directly from the pharmacy each month. Through the Family HealthCare Pharmacy, 340B medications can be used which will result in access to affordable medications for the inmates. Please see the example below.

Examples of pharmacy savings:

Medication	Quantity	Other Pharmacy Price (Including dispensing fee)	FHC Pharmacy Price (Including dispensing fee)	Total Savings per Month	% Savings
Novolog per box	4	\$1,969.00	\$80.60	\$1,888.40	
Levemir per box	4	\$1,735.96	\$80.60	\$1,655.36	
Abilify Injection	1	\$2,563.60	\$1,224	\$1,339.60	

Invega Injection (156)	4	\$8,342.40	\$3,224	\$5,118.40	
Invega Injection (234)	3	\$9,364.80	\$3,603	\$5,761.80	
Uzedy	1	\$5,440.60	\$2,844	\$2,596.60	
Advair (100-50)	2	\$627.94	\$41.20	\$586.74	
Advair (250-50)	1	\$386.81	\$20.60	\$366.21	
Advair (500-50)	2	\$495.78	\$41.20	\$454.58	
Symbicort	3	\$1,139.52	\$60.30	\$1,079.22	
		\$32,066.41	Total Monthly Savings on these medications alone	\$20,846.91	65% savings

The chart illustrates some of the medications currently being taken by inmates at Cass County Jail, however it is not an all-inclusive list. Utilizing the Family HealthCare Pharmacy, monthly savings would be \$20,846.91 with an annual savings of \$250,162.92 for this group of medications. Substantial savings will be seen on 340B contracted brand name medications. Each medication will be charged at cost to the Jail with a dispensing fee of \$20 per prescription. Family HealthCare will provide a courier service to deliver prescriptions directly to the Jail during FHC business hours. This cost is included in the dispensing fee. For reference, the dispensing fee typically ranges from \$19 - \$46.50 with national pharmacy chains.

Jail Expansion

With the Jail expansion and the expected increase in inmates, clinical services will need to be expanded correspondingly to meet the needs of this expanding population. For nursing staff, as the Jail population increases at a rate of 32 inmates for 30 days, this would warrant the addition of 1 nurse. Family HealthCare will identify any need to increase staff and notify the county for approval to proceed with hiring. The County Human Resources department will post the position, recruit, and onboard the new hire with FHC involved in the interview & hiring decisions as needed.

Pharmacy services will continue to grow as the demand increases. Provider time can increase to 12 hours per week to accommodate the demand. The providers will need to increase to 12 hours per week at least one month before opening the Jail expansion to evaluate processes and make changes as needed. If more provider time is needed to meet the demand, a request can be made to Family HealthCare.

Future Service Expansion

Family HealthCare is open to future expansion of its services. These services can include but are not limited to Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT), continued expansion of nursing hours, addiction counseling, expansion of provider hours, or other services deemed beneficial to the inmates. This initial proposal is a starting point for Family HealthCare's expansion of medical services.

Thank you for the opportunity to expand our services to the Cass County Jail. Please contact Lori Kinn at lkinn@famhealthcare.org if you have any questions.