

# SAC Medical Use Working Group

## Minutes of Meeting

### November 20, 2002

Present at the meeting:

Jim Higgins of Applied Management Systems, Dr. Jim Kolb, Alan McClennen, Dr. Bob Carey, Lynn Lowenstein, Dr. Jerry Slate, Charlie Foskett, Dr. Patricia Worden, Dr. John Berkoben

- The meeting was called to order by Dr. Jerry Slate at 7:05 PM. The minutes of the October 24 meeting were approved.
- Mr. James Higgins, the consultant from the AMS firm (selected by VHB in cooperation with Mr. Charles Foskett and Mr. Roland Chaput) was introduced to the members of the MUWG in attendance. Mr. Higgins described his work plan which included interviewing Town of Arlington officials such as Alan McClennen and John Maher in addition to senior managers of various medical establishments which had already been investigated by MUWG members such as Lahey Clinic, Mount Auburn Hospital, and Winchester Hospital. He did not list additional hospitals or for-profit companies. Some questions were asked about his plan and suggestions made of other groups that should be contacted including Partners and for-profits such as Symbion.
- An extensive discussion (see below) ensued regarding issues which might be helpful for the consultant. That there is an identifiable need for medical services at Symmes is demonstrated by the fact that the Lahey group practice at Symmes has just hired two new doctors. However, Lahey Clinic has been removing services such as mammography from Symmes. In addition they have recently banned patients of independent, non-Lahey doctors at Symmes from use of the blood-drawing lab facility thereby rendering it unlikely that any non-Lahey physicians can practice at Symmes. The desirability of a cooperative arrangement between Mount Auburn Hospital and Lahey Clinic in running the facility was mentioned together with the fact that at one point over a year ago it was expected that their respective presidents, Jeanette Clough and David Barrett, would come to such an agreement. This never happened despite the fact that these two institutions have approximately equal penetration in Arlington. Peaceful coexistence between the two groups would be necessary. Ability of physicians to refer patients for procedures to

various unaffiliated service providers without fear of sanctions would be necessary. The importance of ancillary services and out-patient service dominance was discussed.

- Various allopathic medical services which would be very helpful to the community were mentioned as being listed in previous minutes of the MUWG.
- Lahey physicians present described the gradual elimination of various services and specialties from Symmes by Lahey Clinic regardless of need.
- The importance of providing new services at Symmes was mentioned. The departure of several physicians from Beth Israel Hospital to set up a clinic providing endoscopies on Route 9 was mentioned. The increased efficiency, and capture of the facility fee in addition to the procedure fee make such moves attractive. Other examples of physicians providing services from out-patient facilities separate from hospitals were discussed including new eye surgery techniques.
- The possible utility of the Symmes Trust and the Sanborn Foundation in encouraging a medical facility such as Lahey Clinic to provide cooperation among parties recruited to practice at Symmes and necessary supportive services was described in terms of the leverage that these entities might give. Balkanization of services must be avoided. Agreements between the parties should be defined by a lawyer.
- Dr. Berkoben asked if it made sense to have competing hospitals at the site or if it would be better to have the Town somehow facilitate one hospital, e.g. with reduced rates. (Town officials had informed the MUWG during the summer that, since medical uses were the only uses not requiring capital expenditure, it would be possible to offer reduced rents to physicians as an incentive to practice at Symmes. They also stated that if medical uses at Symmes were approximately doubled then the Symmes facility could be run at essentially no cost to the Town.)
- Lahey physicians present stressed the clear need for expanded practice at Symmes. They described physician applicants as being concerned about the future of the facility at Symmes and about what will be at the site. The uncertainty makes recruitment of new physicians extremely difficult

for the group.

- The fact that the Town of Arlington will not offer more than a month-to-month lease to an independent physician makes it essentially impossible to attract any non-Lahey physicians to practice at Symmes.
- The limited nature or absence of the medical component from the four scenarios of the VHB consultants was discussed in connection with the possibility of a community medical practice component in the so-called wellness center.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted  
Patricia Worden, Ph.D.