The past 12 months have been a very productive time for the District. We have made great strides in meeting our goals of improved patient satisfaction and an improved workforce experience.

With these successes under our belt the District is setting its sights high on goals for the next 12 months. With a new management structure in place and a combination of new leaders mixed with developing our own staff into new leadership positions we look forward to investing in the professional growth of our staff through career ladder development and expanded educational opportunities. Tied to the goal of developing our staff into leaders is a goal of reaching out to our local students and expanding their opportunities for employment first as students who through demonstrated commitment can earn the opportunity to join us full-time.

Our Mission is- to improve our communities one life at a time; One Team One Goal Your Health. We do not view this Mission as exclusive to healthcare but to the community as a whole, which includes our role as a leading employer.

Kevin S. Flanigan, MD MBA
Chief Executive Officer, NIHD

Patient Experience

Today many patients have a very different experience than they did just a couple of years ago. On the outpatient side, in the Rural Health Clinic and Northern Inyo Associates Outpatient Clinics, the District has focused on making sure that every patient feels the same no matter what office he or she comes to for care. Staff in all of our outpatient clinics have worked hard to function as a single team instead of a staff member at this office or that office.

With a focus on creating a singular experience, our staff is now able to cover each other when someone is not able to come to work, or if we have a gap between when one person leaves and another person joins our team.

Another area of clear frustration for patients had been the way the District managed incoming phone calls at the RHC. By focusing our efforts on resolving this problem we now can handle more than 90 percent of the nearly 300 calls we get every day before they go to a voice message machine. This resulted in a reduction of calls, happier staff, and patients who report being happier with the staff as a result of this process.
Workforce Experience

Perhaps one of the biggest indicators of a bright future for NIHD was this year’s employee engagement survey. Last year leadership was thrilled to have 80 percent of the staff complete the survey.

With that information in hand, leaders went about addressing several key findings and concerns described in the report. This year 91 percent of the staff completed the survey, and across the board, the score for every question was improved from last year. What this means is that on a scale of 1 to 4, more staff rated their satisfaction at NIHD a 4 than those rating it 1, 2 or 3 combined. While it is clear that there are some areas where there is lots of work to do, the bright side is that staff is genuinely sharing with leadership their impressions and concerns and thus challenging leadership to address them successfully.

Other big changes include empowering a committee of staff members to review ideas and develop new initiatives to improve the workplace. Some significant changes have already been developed, and we look forward to seeing their impact on next year’s survey.

Fiscal Health

To understand our most recent fiscal year it has to be viewed from the context of the previous fiscal year. Last fiscal year saw NIHD receive an audit report showing the District to be in the red for the first time in well over ten years.

A number of contributing factors were at play most notably the District commitment to parity in staff compensation and a need to properly fund an underfunded pension plan.

Step one, parity in staff compensation is partly complete. Following a union contract that dominated employee investment the year prior, the District was finally able to address the California minimum wage law. The District is now compliant with that law’s requirements through 2020. The next phase will see the District focus on those staff members who saw their wage scale range change but did not see their actual pay change.

Step two involves getting the pension plan fully funded. Every year there is a calculation of the minimum amount that must be contributed. Last year the District contributed more than the minimum so that we can ensure the pension plan meets its obligations – another example of leadership dedication to the District employees. The District has kept its commitment to its past employees with this year’s budget and will continue to work to ensure we keep our promises to them.

Patients are beginning to realize the impact of efforts focused on them and on staff. This is apparent with the increased utilization of the District services.

This year the District looks to be in the black and to meet the Board approved goal that the District have 90 days cash on hand by the time we implement our new Health Information System.

If the fiscal year ended today, we would have a net margin of nearly double the budgeted amount. This is a tremendous turnaround from a year ago and is unquestionably due to the staff embracing our Mission – Improving Our Communities One Life at a Time. One Team. One Goal. Your Health.

It is also due to the members of our community returning to the District and entrusting the District to be there for them.


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