



**Board of Directors Meeting
2.18.26
MINUTES**

Location: 120 Bristlecone Dr., Fort Collins, CO 80524 or [Zoom](#)

Date: Wednesday February 18, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM

Board Members Present:	Also Present:
Erin Hottenstein, Board President	Elizabeth Lebuhn- Hoffman, Parker, Wilson & Carberry, P.C
Lee Thielen, Board Vice President	Courtney Green-Interim Executive Director
Julie Kunce Field, Treasurer	Misty Manchester -Director of People and Business Operations
Sarah Hathcock, Secretary	Jacque Ferrero-Executive Assistant/Board Clerk
John McKay, Liaison to UCHealth	Dana Turner- VP of Client Experience
	Alyson Williams-VP of Strategy and Impact
	Mike Lynch-Director of Infrastructure Operations
	Rosie Duran-Health Care Access Manager
	Janina Farinas-La Cocina
	Meredith Towle-Data and Analytic Manager
	Jessica Holmes-Controller/Finance Officer

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Board President Erin Hottenstein, with a quorum present. Guests and attendees were welcomed, and no conflicts of interest were reported.

The agenda was approved unanimously upon motion by Director Thielen, seconded by Director Hathcock.

II. Public Comment

No public comment was received, either online or in person.

III. Presentations

a. La Cocina — Janina Farinas, CEO & Founder

Janina Farinas, CEO and Founder of La Cocina, presented on the organization's ten-year history of serving the Latino/Latine community with mental health care services since 2016. La Cocina began in community kitchens as a way to have accessible conversations about mental health with Spanish-speaking families. The organization focuses on three core areas: clinician credentialing and supervision, multilingual tools available in up to eight languages, and building long-term sustainability within the community.

Farinas shared significant data on the mental health gap facing Colorado's growing Latine community. Only approximately 5.5% of providers in the state speak some Spanish, only 7 are fully fluent enough to provide clinical care in Spanish, and just 50% of Latine community members feel comfortable discussing mental health — a number that is declining. La Cocina operates as a training clinic to address this gap and grew its workforce model by 784% between 2021 and 2025, now exceeding state averages.

Growing need in the community is being driven by fear, immigration pressures, declining bilingual services, and discrimination within health systems. Waitlists exist, particularly in Fort Collins, where the organization triages clients by urgency. Despite significant investment in the community, La Cocina receives less philanthropic funding than comparable organizations. It took seven years to achieve Medicaid approval, and the organization is now seeking a two-year focus on child protection services. Farinas requested a formal partnership with the board. While referral relationships with other MHC providers exist, deeper collaboration has not yet been achieved due to a lack of integrated models and insufficient shared vision. Board members expressed enthusiasm and noted their hope to continue the conversation.

b. Larimer Health Connect (LHC) — Rosie Duran & Dana Turner

Duran and Turner presented on Open Enrollment trends and broader health insurance marketplace changes. The presentation highlighted a 2% decline in marketplace enrollment this year, alongside a 63% increase in premiums that is driving coverage losses and making it increasingly difficult for families to maintain insurance. High rates of plan cancellations, terminations, and declined enrollment appointments were reported. Personal client stories were shared to illustrate the human impact, including an 80-year-old who was unable to afford health insurance this year.

LHC responded to these trends by launching a community marketing campaign using personal stories to raise awareness. The board discussed potential responses, with Turner recommending going out into the community to educate people and leveraging existing organizational connections.

IV. Consent Agenda

The consent agenda was approved as presented, including the meeting minutes from January 21, 2026, and Board Public Policy Advocacy items.

The motion was made by Director Thielen and seconded by Director McKay.

V. Action Items

c. Approval of ED/CEO Contract — Resolution 2026-02

The board received a report on the ED/CEO search process: 124 resumes were submitted, three finalists were interviewed by the hiring committee, and the full board conducted a final round of interviews. Brian Ferrans was selected as the new Executive Director/CEO, with a start date of March 23, 2026. Board members shared positive feedback received from the community about the selection, and all finalists were recognized for their participation.

Director Field requested discussion on how the salary was determined before the vote was called. Green explained that HR used an established compensation matrix to arrive at the figure. A minor typo on page 15 of the contract was noted by Director Thielen and will be corrected.

The motion to approve the contract was made by Director Thielen, seconded by Director McKay, and passed unanimously.

VI. Reports & Discussions

d. Financial Report — Jessica Holmes (December 2025 Financials)

Holmes presented the December 2025 financial report, noting that projections were off by only 0.5%, which was considered very minimal. Savings in personnel compensation resulted from vacancies, but those positions are being filled and are not expected to negatively affect 2026. The biggest variance was a shortfall in Medicaid billing, which was offset by a retroactive Dental billing to Medicaid. Professional development funds were underspent, and staff are being encouraged to use those dollars in 2026. The organization is entering 2026 in a strong financial position, consistent with conservative budget projections. Current headcount stands at 77, with 73.1 FTEs and 19.3 FTE vacancies (including the ED position); 4 positions are currently posted with others in progress. The financials are unaudited, with only approximately \$2,000 in 2025 invoices remaining to close the books.

A discussion followed regarding Medicaid billing issues. The fee schedule contracted with Medicaid was not up to date, and the organization will not back-bill for 2025. Systems, including Open Minds, are being put in place to support proper billing going forward. Board members raised questions about credentialing and vacancy rates, which were addressed by staff.

e. HR1 Update — Dana Turner

Turner provided a brief update on HR1, noting continued waiting on guidance from the federal level. Discussion focused on the goal of centralizing the entry point for services in order to maximize community reach.

f. CHAS Survey Results — Alyson Williams

Williams presented results from the CHAS Survey, clarifying that this is not a behavioral health survey. Cost was identified as a primary barrier to care, with data covering oral health, mental health, and primary care access. Board members expressed interest in breaking down the data further by demographic subgroup and exploring where disconnects exist between attempts to seek care and actual access. Discussion connected the survey findings to the earlier La Cocina presentation, particularly around the pressures facing the Latine community. Limited PCP availability — with few providers taking new patients — was also raised as a concern. Future updates will be provided by Meredith Towle.

Board Member Reports

Director Hathcock reported attending continuing education with medical colleagues on supporting mental health and how providers are experiencing the current healthcare landscape.

Director Field had nothing to report.

Director McKay acknowledged Black History Month, Ash Wednesday, and Ramadan, expressed appreciation for the La Cocina and La Familia presentations, and voiced hope for a future partnership with La Cocina.

Director Hottenstein shared that she met with State Senator Janice M. regarding proposed cuts to dental funding and communicated the board's concerns directly.

Director Thielen reported attending several elected officials' meetings, where topics included cell phone policy, prepaid services for behavioral health, and equity legislation, and expressed excitement about the incoming ED.

ED Report

Courtney Green presented the Executive Director report with several upcoming activities and organizational updates. The second annual Health Equity Survey has been completed. Fire drills have been conducted and will continue on a quarterly basis. A communications campaign featuring artwork on barriers to healthcare access is being placed at bus stops throughout Northern Colorado. A partnership with a Fresno State basketball coach has been established to help spread mental health awareness messaging, with branded headbands available at the March 24 game.

The Day of Service is scheduled for April 23, 2026, with staff able to sign up for volunteer opportunities in partnership with community organizations, focused on building relationships and culture. A Town Hall was held on February 20, 2026. Stay interview results will be reported at a future meeting. Director Field requested that announcements and future meeting items be added to the end of the next board meeting agenda, which Ferrero will provide.

VII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Director McKay. and seconded by Director Field. Passed Unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.