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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Care Taskforce Established to Lead Transition

April 23, 2024, Fosston, MN—Quality healthcare is essential to the quality of life in Fosston and surrounding communities. Over the years the local healthcare system has been foundational to providing high-quality, core healthcare services within the Greater Fosston Area, including Bagley, Bejou, Clearbrook, Erskine, Fertile, Fosston, Gonvick, Gully, Lengby, Leonard, Mahnomen, McIntosh, Mentor, Oklee, Shevlin, Trail, and Winger.

The local medical campus, including the clinic, hospital, nursing home, and assisted living, has been owned by First Care Medical Services since 1993.

Although the medical campus is locally owned, healthcare services have been provided through an affiliation agreement with Essentia Health since 2009. Services provided at the local healthcare campus are highly rated; however, local healthcare staff are trusted and receive high ratings because of the care they give, not because of the brand they wear.

Nevertheless, a recent pattern of delays and unfulfilled commitments on the part of Essentia Health corporation have raised serious concerns among local stakeholders.

Issues began to surface in 2022 when Essentia corporate leadership decided to divert Obstetrical (OB) services to their Detroit Lakes facility due to a shortage of nursing staff. At that time, a local OB taskforce was established, in partnership with Essentia Health, for the purpose of bringing OB services back to Fosston.

An arduous two-year journey ensued—one in which local stakeholders were working to bring OB back to Fosston and Essentia corporate was working to keep OB out of Fosston. (A timeline, detailing actions of both parties during this period, may be found at [Fosston.com](https://fosston.com).)

What began as a partnership devolved into the need for legal mediation and arbitration.

On April 22, 2024, local leaders established the First Care Taskforce, whose purpose is to lead the transition for uninterrupted high-quality, core healthcare services in the Greater Fosston area, engaging members of the Fosston community and nearby communities, assessing solutions and partners, and keeping the public informed throughout the arbitration and subsequent transition periods.

The likely transition is complex and multi-faceted. Additional steps which have been taken in preparation are the engagement of Eide Bailly, a certified public accounting and business advisory

firm, establishment of small working groups who will focus on specific items relating to the transition, and inviting neighboring communities to be part of the planning process.

Taskforce members include Bob Overmoe (Chairman), Mark Finstad (Vice Chairman), Michelle Landsverk (Secretary), Jim Aagnes, Dean Anderson, Dawn Skeie Crane, Evan Fonder, Cassie Heide, Jim Offerdahl, Dr. Wes Ofstedal, Mike Mulry, Julie Sundquist, Pat Wangler, and Dr. Chuck Winjum.

The Taskforce is committed to full transparency in this process and encourages members of the public to sign up for email updates by sending an email to information@fosston.com and putting “First Care Taskforce” in the subject line.

About First Care Taskforce

The First Care Taskforce is dedicated to ensuring the uninterrupted provision of high-quality healthcare services in the Greater Fosston area. Established in response to recent challenges, the taskforce brings together a diverse group of community leaders and healthcare professionals committed to overseeing a smooth transition process. With a focus on transparency and community engagement, the taskforce aims to address concerns, assess solutions, and guide the community through this period of change. For more information, visit www.fosston.com.

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