

Medical SSMID Commission Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2024, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., Physician’s Clinic of Iowa

Present: Gordon Epping, Casey Greene, Pauline Herb, Suzy McGrane-Hop, Russ Nieland, Okpara Rice, Nathan Van Genderen, Amanda Zhorne

Absent: Eric Dalton, Eric Griggs, Michelle Jensen, Brian Steffen

Guests: Dorothy DeSouza, Oakhill Jackson Neighborhood Association; Pr. Steve Knudson, First Lutheran Church; Lt. Michelle Omar, CRPD; Alejandro Pino, YPN (Young Parents Network); Noah Zeker, City Development

Staff: Jennifar Bassett, Peggy Degnan, Phil Wasta

Welcome & Call to Order

McGrane-Hop called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

Wasta introduced Lieutenant Omar who manages this district. Omar shared she’s been with the Police Department for 21 years. She has been in her current position for two months and oversees mental health and outreach. Their goals are focused on finding resources to help the homeless rather than jail time. Wasta thanked her for the great response time on some issues and for working together. Greene said he appreciates the support the police give to the hospitals.

Consent Agenda

Epping moved to approve the minutes, financials and reports with Greene seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Recap 3rd Annual Mental Health Summit and Potential New Direction for Faith & Medicine Task Force.

Wasta introduced Pastor Steve Knudson, who is proposing a co-sponsored event with the Faith and Medicine Task Force and Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center on May 5-6, 2025. Knudson stated the Faith and Medicine Task Force was conceived as a collaboration of the faith and medical communities and to be a catalyst for community interest.

Knudson shared that Prairiewoods approached him about a partnership. Pros of partnering would be: cost-sharing (Prairiewoods=\$10K; SSMID=\$15K), a speaker and topic for a wider community, and the event could be held in the Medical District. Knudson said First Lutheran Church can accommodate the conference with break-out sessions, thus, bringing energy into the district. A new task force would be created.

The 3rd Annual Mental Health Summit was held the 23rd at Hotel Kirkwood. The majority of attendees at the Summit consist of health care providers and EMTs, so this would be a wider audience but still have the ability to offer CEUs. Nieland feels the two events would complement each other and be an opportunity for eastern and western medicine to come together.

Wasta’s recommendation would be to continue to support the Summit, and add the partnership with Prairiewoods. We would be a financial partner/sponsor of the event. Wasta will send the Knudson’s proposal and information electronically to this group.

Welcome Amanda Zhorne to the Medical SSMID Commission (7/1/24 – 6/30/27)

McGrane-Hop welcomed Zhorne to the commission and everyone went around the table introducing themselves to Zhorne. Zhorne said she is excited to be a part of this commission.

Nominate Alejandro Pino to Serve on the Medical SSMID Commission to Complete Russ Nieland's term (6/30/25)

McGrane-Hop introduced Pino who said he is looking forward to contributing to this commission. Wasta thanked Nieland for his service.

Rice moved to approve Pino to serve on the commission with Greene seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discuss/Approve FY'25 Operating Budget (7/1/24–6/30/25) & FY'26 & FY'27 Projections

Wasta explained the City doesn't send bills for road construction until the entire project is completed, but we do have other projects happening that are outside the City contracts, so moving \$139K from 2026 to 2025. Thus, moving funds to the same year they will be spent, as to not show a negative at the end of the year. Construction should be done after 2026. Wasta reported we underspent a total of \$143K in FY'24 with the largest underspend being on maintenance and beautification.

Herb approved the 2025 budget and 2026-2027 projections with Rice seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discuss Next Steps on MedQuarter Improvement Foundation

It is recommended members of the Board of Directors must also be members of the Cedar Rapids Medical SSMID Commission. Terms will be for two (2) years, staggered, without term limits. The Board will elect its own replacements. Wasta mentioned if a Board member rolls off the SSMID, they can complete their term on the Foundation. The Foundation can register with the IRS for tax exempt status.

Functionally, MedQuarter Improvement Foundation, MedQuarter, Inc., and the Cedar Rapids Medical SSMID will operate separately but related through collaboration, resource sharing, and funding as approved.

Rice moved to approve Board of Directors and Actions with Epping seconding. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discuss Next Steps of Implementation of Pillar 3: Appearance & Identity

Initiative 3: Create and Program Interactive Community Green Spaces

Wasta met with Dr. Vander Zee about using part of his parking lot as green space at 4th Avenue & 10th Street. Dr. Vander Zee is very excited about this so he would like this done sooner rather than later. Wasta sent an aerial photo to the City's Development Services and determined it is okay to use those parking spaces without compromising the parking requirement for the building. A legal agreement is needed, so Wasta met with a real estate attorney to develop "license for property" draft. Parameters would be set up to use the property and then it goes back to the owner after a specified time period. Greene asked what would happen if the property would ever change hands with Wasta saying the new owner has to honor the agreement and/or implement a descending value reimbursement strategy. Rice asked if Dr. Vander Zee would be interested in donating the property or if we have the option to purchase it, as either would eliminate complications in the future. Wasta said Dr. Vander Zee did not offer to donate or sell, but he will mention both alternatives to him. It was mentioned there could be drainage issues on this property.

Other decisions to be made regarding this project:

- Guidance: Should the SSMID, the Standards Committee, or the Economic Development Committee oversee this project?
- Timing: McGrane-Hop suggested to plan this year and implement next Spring.
- Budget source: We have funds to cover \$150K to create park with pavers, seating, etc.
- Design: Hire a landscape architect or conduct an RFP for design proposals?

All of this will be discussed further at the September meeting.

Committee Updates

Branding & Marketing, Economic Development, Finance & Operations, and Standards reports were provided in the agenda packet.

Executive Director's Updates

Executive Director's update was included in agenda packet. Wasta highlighted a few items as follows:

- Update on 8th Avenue / 10th Street / Mt. Vernon Road SE Roundabout Project
Herb and Wasta will visit the job site on July 11th. This SSMID is paying to stain and seal the retaining wall blocks. Wasta said the contractors are well engaged and the project is on schedule. Wasta does send out traffic shift communications when needed.
- Update on 3rd Avenue & 10th Street SE ADA Ramp Replacement Project
All eight ramps are no longer ADA compliant because the cast domes have become trip hazards. The City will try to get them fixed this Fall. Wasta is making sure the City has a sense of urgency because it is a safety hazard. Maintenance is the City's responsibility and will come out of their budget.
- Update on A Avenue from 7th to 10th Street NE Roadway/Parkway Project Design
This project has been pushed to 2026 due to the project load that the City is dealing with, and funding. This project spurred the need for the City to address traffic flow issues and to seek to convert Coe Road to a 2-way traffic from A Avenue NE to Center Point Road NE. Therefore, we are now waiting for the planning of the two-way conversion before any work can start on A Avenue.

Other Business

Wasta to bring the Investment Policy that is in effect with CRBT to the September Commission meeting in order to address Pillar 1 (Policy), Initiative 3 – Develop and implement policies to guide the effective management of surplus funds.

Adjournment

Epping moved to adjourn with Greene seconding. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

/pd

Faith and Medicine Task Force

Dr. Lisa Miller, *The Awakened Brain*, May 5-6, 2025

Proposal for a cosponsored event with Faith and Medicine Task Force and Prairie Woods Spirituality Center for event, May 5-6, 2025

Speaker: Dr. Lisa Miller, Professor of Psychology at Columbia University. Author: *The Awakened Brain: The new Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life.*

Event: This would be a two-day event with multiple engagements for the community at large, medical community, and school system.

Cost: \$25,000 for two days. Prairiewoods--\$10,000. MedQ--\$15,000. First Lutheran would provide site and technical support.

Why: This fits into the essence of the relationship between medicine and faith/spirituality, providing a scientifically documented exploration of spiritual/faith practices that contribute to well-being. This is a non-sectarian exploration of issues that speaks to a wider audience. Co-hosting with Prairie Woods expands the reach and shares in the expense.

Why: This could be a signature kind of event that focuses attention on the medical community and the well-being of the wider community. Dr. Miller is becoming a bigger name, and we have the chance to book her now. This is the kind of larger outreach event that the Medical District looks for.

Why: The Brain Summit that the Faith and Medicine Task Force has co-sponsored with Kirkwood Community College is now self-sustaining and does not need the Task Force to keep on. The Task Force was initially conceived as creating new engagements, rather than being fixed on only one engagement. It is time for a new area of focus.

Why: The other topics surfaced have more of a policy focus, or a reprise of work on End of Life. These topics don't have the same community wide impact that this speaker could have. A representative list was generated at the Branding and Marketing Committee:

- Homelessness
- Violence
- Aging / Optimal Aging
- Caregivers – Resources For
- Social Determinants of Health (Linn County Public Health Study)
- Palliative and Hospice Care
- Dementia Care
- Uninsured Patients

The Awakened Brain: A Spirituality in the 21st Century Event

For 24 years, Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center has hosted speakers focusing on the intersection of science and spirituality in our annual Spirituality in the 21st Century event.

With the mental health and loneliness epidemic raging in our country, the work of Lisa Miller, PhD, has captured our attention. Dr. Miller is a professor of clinical psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. She is the founder and director of the Spirituality Mind Body Institute, the first Ivy League graduate program in Spirituality and Psychology. For over a decade, she has held joint appointments in the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University Medical School. Dr. Miller has worked closely with the United States Army, assisting them in educating soldiers about the importance of spiritual fitness. Author of the New York Times best-selling book *The Spiritual Child*, Dr. Miller released a second evidence-based book based on her research in 2021 called *The Awakened Brain*.

Prairiewoods will bring Dr. Miller to the corridor in the spring of 2025. Due to the intersectionality of the content and the targeted audiences involved, we are seeking partners to co-produce a community conversation on the benefits of cultivating personal spirituality.

Why is this important?

Under the leadership of Dr. Lisa Miller, MRI studies have demonstrated that all humans are born with an innate spiritual capacity. Within the spiritual network of the brain, enhanced cortical thickness is present in those for whom spirituality and religion are essential. Highly spiritual people's brains reflect a healthier neural structure than those for whom spirituality and religion hold medium, low or no importance. Dr. Miller's work has shown that the brain is wired for a connection to something greater than ourselves. Cortical thickness is structural protection against depression and other diseases of despair.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration within the Department of Health and Human Services has identified spirituality as one of the eight key components of overall wellness.



Why does this matter?

If the spiritual core of a person is developed, studies reflect that there is nothing as profoundly effective for reducing depression, reducing inner suffering or combating the diseases of despair.

According to Dr. Miller's research, those reporting a moderate to high level of spirituality are:

- 80% less likely to become addicted to alcohol and drugs
- 60% less likely to have significant depression
- 70% less likely to engage in risky behaviors

Data has not yet revealed that spirituality **causes** better mental health; however, it does reveal that spirituality strongly correlates with a reduced rate of suffering. Research suggests that if you are spiritual, you are protected and inured from otherwise increased risk. In a nationally representative sample of teens, adolescents with a solid personal spirituality were 35 to 75 percent less likely to experience clinical depression.

Why would bringing Dr. Miller to the corridor add value?

According to National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) 2021 data, 473,000 adults in Iowa have a mental health condition. That's more than three times the population of Cedar Rapids.

What if an enhanced focus on spiritual development provided another tool in the toolkit to support those struggling with depression or anxiety? **What if** cultivating the innate spiritual core could add another level of support for people? Why wouldn't we work to raise awareness of this?

According to the Fetzer spirituality study, a more expansive spiritual life is related to several positive indicators of functioning during times when society is facing a generalized climate of stress.

Audience: Healthcare professionals, social workers, clergy, educators, spiritual but not religious, those struggling with mental health issues, their families and the community at large.

Goal: To create awareness and educate healthcare professionals, educators, and those struggling with mental health issues or their families of the clinical benefits of spirituality.

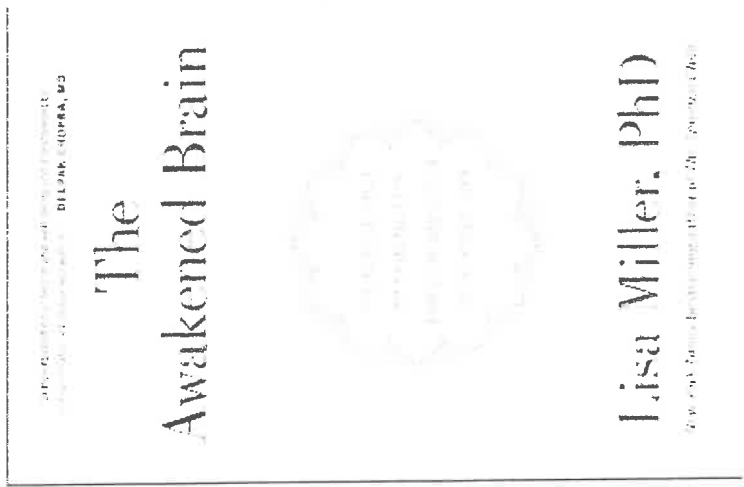
Prairiewoods is in discussion with Lisa Miller's team regarding her upcoming trip. This information will assist in considerations such as timing, location and other structural components of the event. A formal steering committee for this event will be created upon the completion of sponsorship commitments.



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The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life: Miller, Lisa: 9781984855626: Amazon.com: Books



The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life Hardcover – August 17, 2021

by Lisa Miller (Author)

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A groundbreaking exploration of the neuroscience of spirituality and a bold new paradigm for health, healing, and resilience—from a *New York Times* bestselling author and award-winning researcher

“A new revolution of health and well-being and a testament to, and celebration of, the power within.”—Deepak Chopra, MD

Whether it's meditation or a walk in nature, reading a sacred text or saying a prayer, there are many ways to tap into a heightened awareness of the world around you and your place in it. In *The Awakened Brain*, psychologist Dr. Lisa Miller shows you how.

Weaving her own deeply personal journey of awakening with her groundbreaking research, Dr. Miller's book reveals that humans are universally equipped with a capacity for spirituality, and that our brains become more resilient and robust as a result. *The Awakened Brain* is a powerful and accessible guide to the science of spirituality and the power of the human mind.

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