

The Health Council of Marin

Minutes of Regular Meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 2015

Marin General Hospital

250 Bon Air Road, Conference Room C

Greenbrae, CA 94904

Members Present: Jennifer Rienks (President), Connie Barker, Allan Blau, Marvin Mars, Sandy Ross, Ann Spake, Derice Tao, Barbara Walter, Barbara Wientjes

Members Absent: Kent Angerbauer

Guests: Essie Blau, Barbara Bogard, Sydney Dent, Elberta Eriksson (ISOJI), Jamie Goetz (Coastal Health Alliance), Karuna Leary, Ricardo Moncrief (ISOJI), Claudia Schimmer, Sparkie Spaeth (HHS), Suzanne Tavano (HHS), Linda Tavaszi (MCC), Loretta Rogers (Secretary)

Handouts: *Agenda; 4-page hand-out providing organization charts for the County of Marin Mental Health & Substance Use Services*

1. **Call to Order:** At 7:05 pm, President Rienks called the meeting to order.
2. **Election of Officers:** Sandy Ross moved that the current officers continue in office for another year. Ann Spake seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Election of new members to the Nominating Committee:** Ann Spake moved that Barbara Walter and Alan Blau be added as members of the Nominating Committee. Sandy Ross seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Approval of the Annual Report:** Sandy Ross moved that the Annual Report be approved. Barbara Walters seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **Approval of the minutes of the March 24, 2015 meeting:** Barbara Walter moved that the minutes of the March 24, 2015 meeting be approved. Ann Spake seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **Introductions of members and guests**
7. **Panel regarding Mental Health Services in Marin. Panel Members: Elberta Eriksson (ISOJI), Jamie Goetz (Coastal Health Alliance), Karuna Leary (Marin City Health & Wellness), Suzanne Tavano (H&HS Mental Health & Substance Use Services Director), Linda Tavaszi (Marin Community Clinics).** The HCM members prepared questions for the panel in advance. Following are the questions and some answers:
 - a. **What is your role in providing or ensuring the provision of mental health services in Marin?**
 - b. **Please describe the mental health services you provide and your patient population. How many patients do you treat with mental health services annually?** Karuna: We have about 160 clients. We have a mental health nurse but no psychiatrist. We do medication management. We have an anxiety group and depression group. We see children at Martin Luther King School and at Willow Creek School. Suzanne: We have about 3,500 patients, 700 of whom are children.
 - c. **What mental health screening do you regularly provide and to whom?** Karuna: A questionnaire is given to all patients which includes two questions regarding depression. If these questions are answered "yes," then we have someone talk to them. This has worked well. Linda: We screen regularly. Jamie: We screen every patient 12 years of age and older on every visit. There is an annual expert screening for substance abuse.

- d. **What is your greatest success in providing mental health services?** Suzanne: Early intervention, identifying underserved members of our community and improving cultural sensitivity. Karuna: Our community has come to trust us more and avail themselves of our mental health services. Linda: We have developed a more integrated approach to treatment and mental health is a part of the treatment plan. Elberta: There is more community engagement. We are going into the home and there is less stigma around using mental health services. Jamie: There is more access to mental health services due to the ACA. CHA has hired a new bilingual provider.
- e. **What is your greatest challenge?** Suzanne: Finding adequate housing; Karuna: Housing / Homelessness; Linda: Homelessness; Elberta: Adequate housing and developing more cultural sensitivity; Jamie: Adequate housing, the high cost of living and the limited space at CHA's facility.
- f. What are the challenges that people in Marin face when accessing mental health services?
- g. **Is there an adequate supply of mental health providers in Marin, and if not, in what areas are there shortages?** Suzanne: There are many therapists in Marin but not enough of them are bilingual. We need therapists who speak Spanish and Vietnamese. We also need psychiatrists. Many psychiatrists won't accept MediCal and many only accept cash. Jamie: I agree with Suzanne. Psychiatry is needed and for people with private insurance the co-pays can be very high.
- h. **Thinking collectively about all of the mental health services and resources in Marin, are they being used as efficiently and effectively as possible? Why or why not?** Karuna: No, they are not being used as efficiently as possible. There are many programs but they are not integrated; however, connections are being made. We do not have a comprehensive directory of all mental health services in Marin. Jamie: 211, which is run by United Way, is the best we have now. Information about mental health programs is hard to access even as a provider. There has been improvement, however.
- i. **What, if any, policies or procedures create barriers to the most effective and efficient use of mental health services and resources?** Suzanne: There are federal regulations which exclude some patients from MediCal coverage. Karuna: We are not able to bill mental health and medical services on the same day. It becomes a game of who can be charged.
- j. **How could mental health services best be improved without increasing resources?** Suzanne: Get rid of the exclusions. Karuna: Allow us to bill two services on the same day. Linda: We have different bosses and different regulatory bodies for various agencies and it's a serious problem as each regulatory body has different priorities and funding. Ricardo: Some things could be done at the local level.
- k. **How would you improve mental health services if there is an increase in resources?** Suzanne: Increase in residential housing; Jamie: I agree with Suzanne but we would also use the funds to build more space at our facilities.

HCM members also asked panel members follow-up questions that were not previously provided.

8. **Planning the presentation at the May 2015 meeting:** President Rienks asked about the presentation for the May 2015 meeting. Barbara Wientjes will contact the Ceres Project of Marin for a representative to come to talk to the Health Council.
9. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.