



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



**MARIN HIV/AIDS CARE COUNCIL  
DRAFT MINUTES**

**March 10, 2021**

**Marin County Health & Wellness Campus**

Meeting conducted via Zoom

3:00 – 5:00 pm

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**I. Call to Order**

CM Wade Flores called meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

**II. Roll Call**

Council Members Present at Roll Call: Elaine Flores, Wade Flores, Esmeralda Garcia, Linda Dobra, Jodie Campbell, Lydia Arellano, Leslie Gallen, Alex Nizovskikh

Council Members Arriving Late: Bobby Moske

Council Members Absent: Julie Dowling

Staff Present: Nga Le, Cicily Emerson, Loretta Rogers (HHS)

Public Present: Connie Kadera (MCC), Dana Van Gorder (Spahr Center), Raquel Beltran (MCC)

**III. Review and approval of Agenda – VOTE**

CM Wade Flores requested that members review the draft agenda. CM Linda Dobra moved to approve the draft agenda. The motion was seconded by CM Esmeralda Garcia. The motion was approved unanimously by the Council.

**IV. Review and Approval of Minutes – VOTE**

a. January 13, 2021 meeting minutes – CM Wade Flores asked that the Council members review the January 13, 2021 meeting minutes. CM Leslie Gallen requested that the name of their new Bi-lingual Prevention Navigator be corrected in the minutes. His name is Jay Campos, not David Campos. Nga Le made the correction. CM Lydia Arellano moved to approve the minutes with the amendment. CM Leslie Gallen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. General Announcements: None**

**VI. Public Comment:** Dana Van Gorder announced the following:

- a. The Spahr Center has a new position for a case manager for which they are recruiting until March 22, 2021. He asked the Council members to help spread the word.
- b. The first two installments of their retreat for HIV Positive people have been very successful. The last is scheduled for Saturday, March 27, 2021, at 11:00 am. He asked the Council members to let others know about this opportunity.

**VII. Co-Chair Report:** CM Wade Flores announced that Nga Le is expecting a child in June. He and all Council members congratulated her.

**VIII. Prevention Program Report:** CM Linda Dobra reported that she has not been heavily involved in Prevention since the last meeting as most of her efforts have been devoted to the vaccination effort. Cicily Emerson and Nga Le have been more involved in the execution of our Hep C grants, allocating funds to our various providers around Hep C education, prevention, testing and treatment. We have hired a new health care investigator to help us with patients who are out of care plus Hep B testing and education. Hep C groups have been organized and last month a presentation was done by a staff member from Ritter Center about “loving your liver.” In general, however, Prevention has been rather stagnant and quiet. Juan Jimenez and Adrian Acosta have been doing most of the following up on HIV positive patients. Overall, there have not been a lot of new HIV infections; there have been a few STDs here and there.

- a. Dana Van Gorder reported that based on information he has received from Deborah; he does not think that we can say that new infections have been flat. He has heard that there were 12 new infections in 2019 and 17 or 18 in 2020.

**IX. Presentation – Ryan White Oral Health Services at Marin Community Clinics (MCC) by Dr. Connie Kadera, Chief Dental Officer, and Raquel Beltran, Senior Dental Operations Director:** The purpose is to present an overview of MCC dental services and answer questions.

- a. Raquel Beltran reviewed MCC’s mission statement for dental services.
- b. She stated that Marin County Dental Services closed its doors on November 14, 2017, and all patients were transferred to MCC, including Ryan White (RW) patients. She noted that MCC Dental Services has been impacted by COVID-19 from March to September 2020 and ADA guidelines for dentistry were followed. Since then, MCC has been offering the full range of dental services. Over the three years since taking over RW patients, the number of RW patients has steadily increased:
  - i. 2017-18 had 24 RW patients averaging 2 visits per year

- ii. 2018-19 had 66 RW patients averaging 3.8 visits per year.
  - iii. 2019-20 had 73 RW patients averaging 4.2 visits per year
  - iv. 2020-21 so far has 44 RW patients averaging 2.6 visits
- c. MCC is working to expand access to services. MCC has added evening hours of operation to their 4<sup>th</sup> Street location and are planning to expand hours at all sites.
- d. Dr. Connie Kadera stated that the overall goal of MCC Dental Services is to establish a dental home for all their patients. She reviewed the services offered at MCC. It includes emergency care, prevention services, basic treatment and advanced treatment. For emergency care, appointments are offered while extreme cases are seen on a walk-in basis. All patients are pre-screened for COVID-19 and all ADA guidelines for protecting patients and staff from infection are followed. For emergency patients, they are triaged, examined, diagnosed and a treatment plan is prepared. At that point, MCC may need to refer out, prescribe or schedule a follow-up appointment. For patients who cannot come in for any reason, we can set up video appointments. MCC discourages patients from coming in only when they have an emergency.
- e. MCC encourages patients to come in on a regular basis for check-ups and cleaning so that all their teeth, gums, etc. can be examined for any infection, decay or damage. The point is to avoid future problems.
- f. Regarding RW patients, 90% have at least one major chronic condition. 42 – 46% have major problems with their mouth. 58 – 68% do not receive oral health care.
- g. MCC bases their treatment on the needs of the patient, staying away from aesthetics. Basic treatment is assuring that patients are pain-free and infection-free, that they are able to chew, to smile. MCC does exams, cleaning, diagnostics, fillings, dentures, some crowns. Some oral surgery, root canals, molars and other more advanced services are referred out. MCC and patients are lucky that we have schools around us to take these referrals, such as, University of the Pacific (UOP) and UCSF. In all cases, MCC helps patients find referrals.
  - i. CM Wade Flores stated that if a patient is referred out to a school, they have to start all over again with examination, diagnosis, i.e. the school's whole process which seems like a waste of time. We need referrals where you don't have to start from scratch. Also, some referrals involve long drives. He has also heard that there was reluctance to accept HIV positive patients. Raquel stated that MCC is looking for solutions. About the reluctance to accept HIV positive patients, she would like to hear details from Wade off-line.
  - ii. CM Alex Nizovskikh stated that he needs the extraction of a wisdom tooth which causes him pain. He has received no referral that he can reach. Connie said that if Alex has pain,

he can contact MCC Dental to address that. Also, transportation can be arranged. She asked him to call separately to address these issues. She also stated that referrals are an on-going problem.

- iii. Nga Le asked to get brochures from MCC Dental so that she can include them in her up-coming mailing to all RW patients. The brochure should include a number to call and email.
- iv. CM Bobby Moske stated that referrals to UOP and UCSF are worthless as they are not accepting RW patients since February 2020. There is no one else. Even today, patients cannot use them. MCC should have made contracts with other providers. They state that there have been problems with payments. Raquel explained the procedure for paying UCSF and UOP which was to provide a check in advance of the treatment. She will look into this situation to correct.
- v. CM Jodie Campbell thanked MCC for receiving so many patients so promptly, especially for initial examinations and cleanings. Most clinics shy away from Medi-Cal patients and this is a state-wide problem. RW patients are often seen the same way. The Medi-Cal rates are out-of-date and too low; we need to contact our state representatives to have the rates increased. Lydia Arellano also observed that the problem with dentistry is that not enough people are entering that profession so there is a dearth of professionals to attend to people's needs. With UOP the wait can be 28 months.
- vi. CM Leslie Gallen stated that Spahr Center may have some funds to help buy health insurance for patients. Also, we can appeal to Cicily Emerson to see if some funds at the County might be available. There are no easy solutions. A lot of Spahr funds are specifically targeted at certain needs such as rent assistance and cannot be used for other purposes.
- h. RW patients have two financial options: (1) Medi-Cal Dental as their primary and RW as secondary; (2) RW as the only source.
- i. Connie stated that she can explore options with Spahr Center outside this meeting.

**X. Division of Public Health Report:** Cicily Emerson reported the following:

- a. She and her team met last week with the state and they are okay with our progress. We will have a new program to provide more comprehensive preventative services for HIV clients.
- b. We are in the process of making sure that all the new contracts are executed for the new fiscal year. Funding looks stable. We look forward to getting back to in-person services.
- c. COVID: We had a huge surge in cases after the holidays but now we clearly are at the end of this second wave. We have seen great improvement because of the vaccine. We are keeping an eye on

variants, but so far, we are doing well. With the better numbers, we are now in the Red Tier. We may be in the Orange Tier as soon as next week. We have reached over a quarter of our population with at least one dose of vaccine. The County's vaccination web page shows all the options for residents to obtain vaccine. Next week, the County will add those adults who have medical conditions as a category to receive vaccine at this time. She reviewed the conditions that are eligible. HIV/AIDS are not included in eligible conditions, unfortunately, following CDC guidance. Vaccinations are by appointment only, no walk-ins, and new appointments for the following week are uploaded on Fridays. Appointments fill up fast. People 50 years old and older will be added as a category probably by the end of the month. She is also hearing that specific ethnic groups may be prioritized in future. She estimates that at current vaccine supply levels, it will take until September to get all county adults vaccinated. At this time, there is no vaccine for children.

- i. CM Wade Flores suggested that people who are HIV positive and want to be vaccinated can talk to their doctor to see if they have another medical condition that would make them eligible to receive vaccine now.
- ii. CM Elaine Flores stated that she has received her shot and she had a great experience. There were no long lines at the Marin Center. Everything went very smoothly and quickly.
- iii. CM Linda Dobra reported that she is working on mobile vaccination units which is a big effort. These are targeted at the homeless, shut-ins, senior living facilities, etc. More mobile units are being organized for next week.
- iv. CM Bobby Moske reported that he is currently in the hospital due to severe side effects of the vaccine. He wanted to make sure that this was recorded. Cicily Emerson said that there is an adverse reaction registry and certainly his physicians would have reported it.
- v. CM Wade Flores asked if people are given a choice as to which vaccine they want to receive. Cicily reported that at this point there is no choice, but the team is in conversation about this.

**XI. Presentation – ARIES Data:** Nga Le reported that the allocation process for the next grant year is beginning. She reported that the report was on clients listed in ARIES. There are 281 clients for RW Part A, with 23 new or re-enrolled clients for the FY 2020-21 grant year (March 1, 2020 to Feb. 28, 2021). No client deaths were reported. The demographics have not changed much, slightly more females than last year as females were 19% last year and this year are 21%. She also noted poverty levels of RW clients, 65% of whom are under 138% of the federal poverty level. Only 2% were not eligible for RW services. She then reviewed their insurance status (not much change) and HIV status. Those without insurance rely exclusively on RW grant services.

- a. CM Leslie Gallen stated that at Spahr Center they had six deaths last year. These were unrelated to COVID-19. Nga Le said that she would look into this discrepancy.
- b. CM Wade Flores asked the ethnicity of those RW clients who have no insurance. Nga Le stated she did not pull that information. CM Jodie Campbell stated that it is her experience that most people who do not have insurance are undocumented.
- c. CM Lydia Arellano wanted to know if the ethnic distribution was the same as the overall ethnic distribution of the county. Nga Le and other Council members stated that among RW clients, 30% are Hispanic while the county is 16% Hispanic.

**XII. Review Ryan White Budget:** Nga Le went over the budget for the last grant year and how funds were allocated and how they were reallocated by the Council. Allocations for the coming grant year will need to be decided at the May and June meetings. She noted that the \$1,000 set aside for food at Council meetings has not been used because all meetings have been conducted via Zoom. Therefore, she has ordered Safeway gift cards for all Council members using these funds; this amounts to about \$91.00 per card. These will be mailed out to all Council members. She noted that all RW grant funds will be spent in this grant year; there will be no carry-over.

- a. CM Leslie Gallen stated that in the last grant year, the Spahr Center has spent an additional \$28,000 over and above the \$28,532.91 shown in the allocation for housing. The additional money was from the state for COVID-19 assistance. She noted that a lot of people will be in trouble once the eviction prohibition is lifted.
- b. CM Bobby Moske asked if the Council will continue to meet via Zoom after the pandemic restrictions have been lifted. Nga Le stated that this would have to be decided by the Council, but also noted that some may have to be in person to allow members of the public to attend on a walk-in basis.
- c. CM Bobby Moske stated that more outreach to clients for mental health services needs to be done. Many clients have suffered greatly during this isolation period.

**XIII. Membership Discussion:** Nga Le reported the following:

- a. VOTE: CM Alex Nizovskikh's membership is up for renewal. He has answered all the required questions and he is a member in good standing. CM Bobby Moske moved to renew Alex's membership for another two-year term. CM Linda Dobra seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. The application form has been changed to ask availability, but otherwise it is the same.

**XIV. Bylaws/Policies Review:** Nga Le reviewed the membership process. She encouraged Council members to invite new members.

- a. CM Wade Flores stated that the membership process needs to be shortened. We risk losing people who are interested because of the delays. This will be discussed at a future meeting. Council members

are requested to think about this issue for future discussion. Nga Le stated that any changes would need to be approved by the whole Council.

- b. Nga Le reported that the Client Satisfaction Survey will be mailed out this month. It will include a flyer, inviting clients to join the Council. Respondents will receive a \$20.00 Safeway gift card as a reward for responding.
- c. Nga Le reviewed the meeting calendar. She noted that the May and June meetings will be 2.5 hours long. She also noted that Community Forum planning will be on the agenda.

**XV. Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 pm

**Next Meeting:**            **Wednesday, May 12, 2021**  
   **Location: Via Zoom**  
   **3:00 – 5:30 pm**