

## The Health Council of Marin

Minutes of Regular Meeting: Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Meeting via Zoom; the meeting was recorded

**Members Present:** Ginger Souders-Mason (President), Roberta Anthes, Connie Barker, Kevin Hogan, Bobby Moske, Jennifer Rienks, Sandy Ross, Barbara Wientjes, Christopher Murphy, Derice Seid Tao

**Members Absent:** None

**Guests:** Mary Beth Brangan, Monique Bricca, Rusty Cady, Mary Fraser, Teryl George, Valeri Hood, Glen Kohler, Jeffrey Pickerill, Michelle Pirro, Vicki Sievers, Loretta Rogers (Secretary)

**Handouts:** *Agenda*

1. **Call to Order:** President Ginger Souders-Mason called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.
2. **Public Comment Time:** President Souders-Mason asked members of the public if they had any comment. These individuals were each given three minutes to make their comment: Mary Beth Brangan, Monique Bricca, Rusty Cady, Mary Fraser, Teryl George, Valeri Hood, Glen Kohler, Jeffrey Pckerill, Michelle Pirro, Vicki Sievers. They all expressed their concern about COVID-19 vaccination, particularly for children. Teryl George recommended all members listen to the Sen. Ron Johnson hearings on the vaccine; the recording is available online. Mary Fraser reported that 500 Canadian doctors published a statement of concern that the Pfizer vaccine was doing more harm than good and that Pfizer had asked the courts to keep their study findings secret for 55 years. Dr. Pirro reported that many of her child patients were showing up with significant adverse reactions to the COVID-19 vaccines.
3. **Resolution regarding Tele/Video Conference Meetings during the COVID-19 State of Emergency:** Sandra Ross moved to pass the resolution. Roberta Anthes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** President Souders-Mason asked the members to review the agenda. Roberta Anthes moved to approve the agenda. Bobby Moske seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **Approval of Minutes of the November 30, 2021, Health Council of Marin Meeting.** President Souders-Mason asked members to review the November 30, 2021, Health Council of Marin meeting minutes. Sandra Ross moved to approve the minutes. Roberta Anthes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **County HHS Update – Loretta Rogers:** Loretta Rogers shared her screen and gave a PowerPoint presentation, reporting the following:
  1. The Omicron variant of COVID-19 is now the dominant variant circulation in Marin County at this time, replacing the Delta variant. It is estimated that 5% of the population of Marin County are infected.
  2. The Omicron variant is much more infectious than previous variants but much less deadly. It causes milder, upper respiratory illness. The peak of the Omicron surge was about two weeks ago. Daily case numbers have been declining. At the peak of the surge, Marin was experiencing about 420 new cases per day. That number has now declined to about 237 cases per day. The decline is predicted to continue. Hospitalizations remain manageable. It is predicted that this will be the last variant of this pandemic.
  3. The amount of infection currently circulating in Marin County is also measured by wastewater sampling and testing, done twice a week. Sampling may move to daily. These samples cover about 75% of Marin residents so it is a pretty accurate measure.
  4. Marin will be moving soon from community level policies to endemic response. This will focus on harm reduction and individual risk management. Schools and school districts may implement stricter policies as they manage this transition.

5. There was a brief question and answer period.
7. **Presentation: “Pesticide Exposure Impairs Wild Bee Reproduction” by Clara Stuligross, PhD candidate at UC Davis**– Roberta Anthes introduced Clara Stuligross and her topic. Clara Stuligross shared her screen and presented a PowerPoint presentation which was later distributed to all Health Council of Marin members. She reported the following:
  1. There are over 20,000 species of bees worldwide; 3,500 species of bees native to the United States and 1,600 species native to California. The Valley Carpenter Bee is the largest bee in California; the *Perdita minima* is the smallest bee.
  2. Bees provide essential pollination services for crops and wild plants. It is impossible to overstate their importance.
  3. She reviewed the various risks to bee well-being and survival. These included insufficient food supplies, lack of suitable sites for hives, hostile environment, invasion by hostile species, parasites and pathogens and finally pesticides. These stressors can affect bees at all stages of their life cycle i.e. egg, larva, pupa and adult.
  4. She reviewed the various ways bees can be exposed to pesticides: (1) direct exposure by being sprayed directly with a pesticide; (2) collecting pollen from a plant that had been contaminated with a pesticide; (3) building a hive in a contaminated site; (4) using contaminated materials to build a hive.
  5. Neonicotinoid insecticides are widely used and are toxic to most insects, including bees. When used, they contaminate all parts of a plant including the pollen and nectar, and they have a long lifespan in the environment. These insecticides are used in 81% of landscape maintenance in Marin County and in 4.7% of greenhouses. They can be applied to grass only but inevitably end up in ornamental flowers and good plants.
  6. She reviewed the bee life cycle and the various times of year for each phase. She then reviewed how pesticides affect bees at each stage in the life cycle and how exposure to a pesticide in one stage can affect the others and affect bee population growth across multiple years.
  7. She then reviewed the studies which showed that pesticide exposure can reduce bee reproduction by 72% over several years. This can have lasting negative effects. Past and present exposure caused the negative effects with combined exposure having the greatest impact.
  8. The results of the studies by Clara and her team inform their recommendations for land use, with the intent of minimizing pesticide exposure and harm to bees. They recommend the banning of certain pesticides in their recommendations to farmers, et al. The team is now considering how much science is enough to make a good decision regarding use of a particular pesticide and to assure that the effect of a pesticide on pollinators is included in the decision making.
9. **Questions / Comments:**
  1. Bobby Moske asked if there were any pesticides that do not affect bees. Clara said that there are some, but they are not as effective.
  2. Roberta Anthes asked what an individual can do to improve this situation. Clara said that it would help to plan wildflowers and flowers in general to give a food source to bees.
  3. Michelle Pirro asked about the effect of fungicides. Clara said that this is the object of study for other groups.
  4. Mary Fraser said she had a dead tree in her yard that she is keeping as a possible site for a hive. Clara said that keeping such sites need to be balanced with fire prevention.
  5. Roberta Anthes asked what is necessary to attract bees. Clara said it takes a lot of flowers and could take a lot of years.
  6. Vicki Hood asked about the effect of wireless radiation on pollinators. Clara said that the risk is small in comparison to pesticides.
  7. Connie Barker commented that companies put out modified bees without any studies or even modeling of long-term effects on the environment. Also, even if all the bad pesticides, insecticides, etc. were gotten rid of now, how long would it take for the environment to recover? In the scientific culture that we have

now, nothing exists until numbers can be presented so environmental activists need to be thinking about how to produce those. This is necessary to communicate to people how big and systematic the problem is. Clara agreed. It is necessary to do long-term studies before these pesticides and herbicides are put out to market, certainly longer than a few generations.

8. Roberta Anthes stated that she had read that wild bees need range land to thrive. She asked where range land exists that has not been affected by pesticides, etc. Clara said that there are a lot of efforts to incorporate a lot of these natural areas into the agricultural plan, but the problem of contamination is big. In California, while there are large agricultural areas, there are also large natural areas.
9. Mary Fraser seconded Connie's suggestion that longer term studies be done over multiple generations because damage has been found in mammals in the third generation that does not show up in the first and second generations. As an example, there is a risk of obesity in the third generation of humans with the use of thalidomide. She stated that she grew up in a wild area of Minnesota and as of 2012, she is seeing insects, birds and small mammals disappear in that area. In Marin County, she is seeing deer disappear. She thanked Clara for her presentation.

**8. Updates from Council President:**

1. Ginger Souders-Mason asked Kevin Hogan about the planned presentation for the February 2022 meeting. Kevin Hogan reported that Patrick Hogan had agreed to present on climate change via Zoom. He will review the work he has been doing, the changes he is observing, the speed at which the changes are occurring, etc. The meeting is likely to be a hybrid meeting, i.e. allowing for in-person attendance at the MarinHealth Medical Center in the Larkspur Room as well as attendance via Zoom.
2. President Souders-Mason reported that the HCM is scheduled to meet in person at the MarinHealth Medical Center in the Larkspur Room next month. Kevin Hogan asked if there will be a remote option as Patrick Hogan will be giving his presentation remotely. President Souders-Mason confirmed that there would be a remote option.
3. President Souders-Mason reported that she received a letter from her cousin in Texas who reported that her whole family got COVID. They were told to stay home and treat the symptoms; they received no other help from the doctors. They did fine until one morning she could not awaken her husband. He was taken by ambulance to the hospital at 10:00 am but was not able to be admitted until 1:00 am the next day due to lack of a bed. She stressed that the family was given no treatment, but it is known that there are treatments. That was the subject of the Ron Johnson hearings in the Senate today.
4. She also brought to the attention of the HCM the book by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. entitled, "The Real Anthony Fauci." She highly recommended the book, while cautioning that the subject matter is disturbing.
5. She thanked all the members of the public who attended this meeting and stated their views.

**9. Updates from Council Members:**

1. Barbara Wientjes drew the Council's attention to a recent article about 5G, stating that a number of airline flights were canceled even after the 5G roll-out was suspended. The FAA has stated that the 5G roll-out has been more of a challenge for airlines than anticipated in the U.S. and other countries. 5G operates on wave lengths closer to those of altimeters. They also said that the cell towers signals are more powerful than in other countries. Roberta Anthes wondered why the U.S. cannot use lower level power as do other countries. Vicki Sievers reported that the U.S. and Canada have the least restrictions on power in the world.
2. Connie Barker gave an update on the status at the federal level of EVV for Medicaid / MediCal services. This concerns people who care for poor elderly and disabled people in their homes who would be required to carry a cell phone with them to do an electronic check-in every time they go to a doctor's appointment to verify that we are where we say we are. Connie, her union and her colleagues have been fighting this for a long time and have taken multiple hits on their funding because of their refusal to comply. A new CURES 2.0 bill has been introduced that is part of an omnibus bill that, if passed, would

allow caregivers to keep their California system as is. This has caused her to get involved with privacy issues regarding health care; she is preparing a presentation for the HCM for April on this issue.

- 10. Adjournment:** Bobby Moske moved to adjourn the meeting. Roberta Anthes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03pm. The next meeting will be on February 22, 2022.