



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
January 12, 2022**

Marin County Health & Wellness Campus

Meeting conducted via Zoom

3:00 – 5:00 pm

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I. Call to Order

CM Esmeralda Garcia called the meeting to order at 3:06 pm.

II. Roll Call

Council Members Present at Roll Call: Bobby Moske, Elaine Flores, Wade Flores, Lydia Arellano, Linda Dobra, Esmeralda Garcia, James Frazier, Jodie Campbell, Julie Dowling

Council Members Arriving Late: Leslie Gallen

Council Members Absent: Alexy Nizovskikh

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

Public Present: Jimi Amos, Julie Case, Andy Fyne (Spahr Center), Racquel Beltran (MCC), Connie Kadera (MCC)

III. Review and approval of Agenda – VOTE

CM Esmeralda Garcia asked members to review and approve the draft agenda. CM Elaine Flores moved to approve the agenda. CM James Frazier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes – VOTE

a. November 3, 2021 meeting minutes – CM Esmeralda Garcia asked members to review the November 3, 2021 meeting minutes. CM Linda Dobra moved to approve the minutes. CM Bobby Moske seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. General Announcements: CM Esmeralda Garcia asked for any announcements.

a. CM Bobby Moske announced that Dana Van Gorder was retiring as Executive Director of the Spahr Center. CM Leslie Gallen, Deputy Director, will fill in for the next two months while a new executive

director is recruited. Otherwise, everything is operating the same and Dana Van Gorder will still be working for the Spahr Center as an independent contractor. He is retired but not gone.

- b. CM Wade Flores announced that home COVID tests are available at the Spahr Center.
- c. CM Jodie Campbell announced that Jonathan Barron is the new campus clinic manager at MCC Campus Clinic. Also, MCC does have test kits which they are distributing to patients, two per patient, provided at appointments.

VI. Public Comment: None.

VII. Co-Chair Report: CM Wade Flores acknowledged the work of all Council members and thanked them. He hoped that 2022 will be better than 2021. He urged all members to focus on what is needed by the community. CM Esmeralda Garcia stated that it was good to see members in person at the Community Forum. There were very good speakers at the Forum. She appreciated being able to have the Forum at the Wellness Center and thanked all members who were involved in organizing the event.

VIII. Prevention Program Report: CM Linda Dobra reported the following:

- a. MCC dental staff completed staff training around sensitivity.
- b. More MCC staff are interested in HIV testing so they are getting enrolled in training, particularly training in motivational interviewing and HIV prevention.
- c. She has learned that statewide there is a shortage of HIV / STD testing supplies due to supply chain issues. However, this county is well supplied for now.
- d. The meeting with the Jail health management was postponed due to circumstances at the Jail. The meeting will now be held at the beginning of February and after that she will be able to report on Hepatitis C testing and the status of prevention measures in general at the Jail. It does not appear that HIV testing has occurred in the Jail in the last month as staff has been occupied with other matters.
- e. There is some federal money coming for the STD program and staff is considering how best to use the money. They are considering hiring another disease investigation specialist. However, everything is still in the early planning stages.

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

- a. The county is in the midst of the Omicron surge. Testing and vaccination continue to be encouraged, particularly for the immunocompromised who should receive their booster shot after five months. This now includes the Moderna vaccine.
- b. Nga Le reported that the RWPA grant ends at the end of February and RWPB ends at the end of March. The county will be on RWPA

extension until the new grant comes through. There will be monitoring meetings with MCC and the Spahr Center regarding how they have dispensed the funds in FY 2020-2021. A lot of reports are due for the various programs.

- c. In early March Nga Le will be sending out the Client Satisfaction Survey.
- d. CM Wade Flores asked if a fourth shot is now needed. CM Linda Dobra stated that the third shot was not a booster, so a fourth shot is needed as a booster. People are urged to contact their provider and follow their recommendation as to where to get the fourth shot. The third shot for immunocompromised individuals was offered through a special clinic, but the booster shot (fourth shot) can be obtained at the various vaccination clinics. The shots are free. Cicily Emerson recommended the clinic at the Northgate Mall or the Saturday clinic at the Kerner Campus. There is a vaccine finder. The pharmacies are still offering them, but she recommends the Northgate Clinic.

X. Syringe Access Services: Andy Fyne (Harm Reduction Director - Spahr Center) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Spahr Center's Syringe Access Services program.

- a. He reviewed the purpose of the Syringe Access program which is ultimately harm reduction. Its goal is to reduce the negative health consequences of illegal drug use by providing clean needles and encouraging safer practices. The long-term goal is abstinence. They also want to reduce the number of new HIV infections, overdose deaths and new Hepatitis C infections.
- b. The program includes education, access to condoms and clean syringes. They encourage routine testing as early detection of HIV is vital. They also make PrEP and PEP more widely available.
- c. The program provides syringes on an as-needed basis and is not an exchange which provides one new needle for a used one. They provide a wide variety of syringes and supplies, safer smoking supplies, naloxone kits and instructions, HIV / HCV rapid testing, connection to social services and safe disposal of used syringes.
- d. He reviewed the funding for this program which comes from the California Harm Reduction Institute grant. It pays for Chris Brown's salary. In addition to supplies, the program offers safer use support groups, advisory groups, peer-to-peer internships, outreach to communities of color and MAT navigation.
- e. This program has a good relationship with the various police departments.
- f. They work in collaboration with RxSafe Marin which is a coalition of various stakeholders. RxSafe Marin has been involved with Naloxone distribution, harm reduction outreach and education in the county at large as well as in treatment facilities and the Jail. RxSafe Marin also provides some funds from CDPH.

- g. He reviewed other sources of supplies and funds, including the California Office of AIDS, the HCV grant and the HIV Prevention grant.
- h. He reviewed the various homeless encampment sites where their services are offered. There is a different site for each workday where the services are offered for about two to four hours at each site for a total of 14 hours per week. All services are offered outside. Deliveries of supplies are also offered. CM Bobby Moske pointed out that new sites have been discovered. Andy Fyne responded that this is why their sites can change. It is a very dynamic situation.
- i. Finally, he reviewed trends, noting that fentanyl overdose deaths have increased in Marin, smoking appears to be replacing injection, and demand for naloxone kits has increased. More housing was available this past year which meant that people were getting out of the elements but also were becoming more isolated.

XI. Support Services Area also known as SSA: Lynn Murphy, Mental Health Liaison for the San Rafael Police Department (SRPD), reported the following:

- a. Lynn Murphy defined the Support Service Area as an organized campsite underneath the freeway, between Mission and Fifth Avenues in San Rafael, between Irwin and Heatherston, running north to south.
- b. This site was started in July of 2021 in response to three things:
 - i. COVID protocols for the state of California stated that no campsite could be moved to prevent the spread of COVID;
 - ii. CalTrans is the owner of that property beneath the freeway, running about seven blocks; in that space there were 60 – 70 people camping in completely unmanaged state. CalTrans had decided in late spring 2021 that they were not going to allow camping in that area anymore. In response, the City of San Rafael was able to negotiate a compromise with CalTrans, the only one to our knowledge in the state of California. The compromise was that the City of San Rafael would lease all of the parking lots in that area except for one. That one parking lot would be retained by CalTrans. This one parking lot is now the Support Service Area (SSA). The campers in the other seven sites were asked to leave and they were offered a spot in the SSA. In the SSA, the City of San Rafael marked out squares 18' x 15', each of which was numbered and could be assigned to a camper. Each camper was given a tent, a cot and a sleeping bag. Port-a-Potties and hand-washing stations were set up. Electrical charging stations were also set up. There was an extremely low barrier to get assigned a space; there was only a code of conduct designed to keep everyone safe. There is no curfew and no restrictions on drug or alcohol use as long as this was done

inside the tent. Pets were allowed but residents were responsible to clean up after them. The code of conduct required that all residents respect others and keep their belongings within their square. Finally, if a resident decided to leave, they could not give away their tent, cot and sleeping bag. There is 24/7 security, needed mainly to keep those who are not assigned a spot out of the area. The mobile showers come in once a week.

- c. Within a few days, about 48 people requested a spot and later more people ask to be allowed a spot. Given the area, the City of San Rafael decided to cap the number of residents in the SSA at 48. The site was created with the intent that it would be temporary.
- d. One of the challenges in the past was getting people documented for services and then locating them to complete the paperwork. At the SSA, there is a modular office where people can come to a quiet and confidential space to get paperwork done.
- e. While all of this was being set up, the City of San Rafael never knew when CalTrans would pull the plug on this arrangement. The general understanding was that it would last through the holidays. However, in November, CalTrans discovered that other counties had heard about this arrangement which they did not like. So, CalTrans informed the City of San Rafael that the SSA had to be wrapped up. There is a meeting with CalTrans tomorrow to discuss. It is projected that the SSA will be extended to the end of March or to the end of a year.
- f. The SSA was set up under a freeway because that's where people were. It is recognized that this situation is far from ideal. The positive outcome is that 11 people have been moved into housing. Four people have housing vouchers, two are looking for an apartment and ten are anticipated to receive vouchers. So, the purpose of the SSA was served. It was to get people documented and connected to services on a regular basis and get them on the path if not complete the path to housing. There are now empty spots in the SSA, but they cannot fill them as CalTrans definitely does not want to see the census at the SSA go up. They only want to see the numbers go down.
- g. The City of San Rafael does try to supply the homeless with supplies to protect them from the elements. At this point, there is more demand than supply. The other value of the SSA is that it has given a known location for service providers like the Spahr Center to come out and meet with clients. Salvation Army comes out to bring food and water. The New Beginnings Law Center comes in once a week; they help clear up people's records and clear up any lingering court cases. There was also a medication workshop. A local caterer came in and provided food for free once a week plus provided Thanksgiving dinner.

- h. San Rafael Police Department have no problem with the Syringe Access program and other support services. They have on staff a psychologist as well as Lynn Murphy.
- i. CM Bobby Moske asked if the people who chose not to go into the SSA were tracked. What happened to them? Lynn Murphy stated that these people were generally those who did not want to be close to a lot of people; they mainly went up into the hills. CM Bobby Moske stated that there was a lot of rain during November and December and he understood that the homeless were not allowed to put a tarp over their tent. Lynn Murphy stated that this was not true. In fact, the City provided 12' x 12' wooden platforms that were 4" off the ground for the tents. Julie Case said she had an idea about a place for homeless and wanted to know who to discuss it with. Lynn Murphy said Julie can contact her.

XII. Break – None.

XIII. Oral Health Update: Racquel Beltran of Marin Community Clinics (MCC) reported the following:

- a. The MCC staff are taking extra infection control precautions in light of the Omicron surge. 98% of MCC staff are fully vaccinated and are in the process of getting their booster shots. This week, MCC has instituted rapid testing of staff every Monday. The results are reported to Human Resources.
- b. Starting yesterday, MCC is giving away in-home COVID tests to patients, as needed.
- c. Today, MCC started testing patients as they come into the clinic even if they are asymptomatic. The patients that are tested are only the ones that are getting procedures as well as those who are symptomatic. Patients are being asked to come in a little early for their appointments in order to allow time for this testing. This is for added safety. MCC gives patients appropriate instructions if they test positive.
- d. Adult dentistry for Ryan White patients is at the 4th Street location and has now been expanded into another building. MCC's biggest challenge has been staffing as there is a competitive market for dental assistants and other staff.
- e. Connie Kadera reported that MCC is working on improving their dental referral process. Also, she described a training.
- f. Questions: CM Wade Flores stated that he would like to see more HIV positive people involved in that training. He also reported that the referral system is still troublesome. For example, he received a referral, but it was to a provider in Alameda County, which is problematic for people who have transportation challenges. Racquel reported that she has a meeting set up to provide more transportation support to dental patients for out-of-county dental specialty care. CM Bobby Moske reported that a County administrator called him about a

patient who has to have six dental appointments before he can have a tooth extracted. He has Medi-Cal. The first appointment he could get was after his Medi-Cal expired. It is 2.5 months before he can get in for even the first of the six appointments. He cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket. Another County administrator called about another patient who needs a root canal done but referrals to UCSF and UOP are not accepted. Eventually, he got his procedure done by a dentist on Geary St. in San Francisco that he found which MCC did pay for, but when is this referral problem going to be solved? It has been two years. There was brief discussion.

- XIV. Budget Review:** Nga Le shared her screen and reported the following:
- a. \$20,000 of RWPB funds is being reallocated to fund Oral Health Specialty Care for FY 2022/23.
 - b. This change leaves the food voucher program short so funds from another service category in RWPA will be reallocated to cover the shortfall.
 - c. The allocation for FY 2022/23 has not yet been received so the amount may change.
 - d. CM Linda Dobra made a motion to re-allocate FY 2021/22 \$1,000 council support funds to food vouchers for Ryan White clients. The motion was seconded by CM Leslie Gallen. The motion was approved unanimously by the Council.

- XV. Membership – Interviews**
- a. The council interviewed Julie Case and James Amos for membership to the council.
 - b. CM Bobby Moske made a motion to approve Julie Case for membership to the Council. The motion was seconded by CM Julie Dowling. The motion was approved unanimously by the Council.
 - c. CM Linda Dobra made a motion to approve James Amos for membership to the Council. The motion was seconded by CM James Frazier. The motion was approved unanimously by the Council.

XVI. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 pm.

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 3:00 to 5:00 pm**
Location: Via Zoom