

The Health Council of Marin

Minutes of Regular Meeting: Tuesday, May 23, 2023

First Floor Conference Room, MarinHealth Medical Center, 250 Bon Air Rd., Kentfield

Zoom Option was available

Members Present: Roberta Anthes, Pranav Bhanushall, Kawa Chiu (via Zoom), Sandy Ross, Jennifer Rienks, Ginger Souders-Mason, Barbara Wientjes

Members Absent: Kevin Hogan, Connie Barker, Bobby Moske

Guests: Ryan Rodriguez (Manager, Safety and Telecommunications at MarinHealth Medical Center), Loretta Rogers (Secretary)

Handouts: Agenda; Minutes of April 25, 2023, Health Council of Marin monthly meeting; Environmental Sensitivities by Ryan Rodriguez

1. **Call to Order:** Vice President Roberta Anthes called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. She asked each attendee to introduce themselves.
2. **Approval of the Agenda:** Vice President Roberta Anthes asked members to review and approve the agenda. Jennifer Rienks proposed that Mr. Ryan Rodriguez' presentation be moved to immediately after the approval of the agenda. The motion to approve the amended agenda was made by Jennifer Rienks, seconded by Roberta Anthes, and passed unanimously.
3. **Approval of Minutes of the April 25, 2023, Health Council of Marin Meeting.** Vice President Anthes asked members to review and approve the minutes. Barbara Wientjes had two amendments to the minutes and Ginger Souders-Mason had one. Vice President Anthes moved to approve the minutes with the two amendments. Ginger Souders-Mason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Report from the Nominating Committee:** Sandy Ross introduced the new member, Pranav Bhanushall. She announced that Jo Prebhu had resigned from the Council which leaves one provider seat open.
5. **Report from Executive Committee.** Vice President Anthes announced that Sandy Ross had been reappointed to the post of Parliamentarian. It was decided to leave the present meeting format in place for now. She reviewed the presentation topics for all remaining meetings in 2023. Also, the ad hoc committee's report is due on June 20th and the committee will report to the general meeting on June 27th.
6. **HHS Update:** Loretta Rogers shared her screen and gave a PowerPoint presentation. She reported the following:
 1. **COVID:** Marin County Public Health continues to monitor COVID via wastewater testing, outbreaks, hospitalizations, and variants. The current dominant variant is Omicron BA.5/BA.4. There are 7 patients in hospital who test positive for COVID. Three are hospitalized because of COVID. There are zero COVID patients in the ICU. Overall, community infection rates for COVID, flu and RSV are low. The COVID-sniffing dog program is a success and has received funding for another year. Over the pandemic, Marin has had the highest vaccination rates and lowest mortality rates of any US county.
 2. **Opioid Crisis:** OD Free Marin has distributed 4,000 free Narcan Kits via vending machines.
 3. **Other HHS News:** Whole Person Care had made great strides in housing the homeless. Their target is to have zero veteran homeless by mid-2024. Epidemiology has created ten new dashboards, providing the public with updated information on COVID, influenza,

- Hepatitis C, overdoses, life expectancy and reportable communicable diseases. Finally, HHS was named by the Board of Supervisors as the division of the quarter.
7. **Presentations: Environmental Sensitivities:** Mr. Ryan Rodriguez, Manager – Safety and Telecommunications for MarinHealth Medical Center, shared his screen and gave a presentation on “Environmental Sensitivities.” Hard copies of the slides were distributed to all attendees. He reported the following:
1. **Oak Pavilion:** Mr. Rodriguez described the newly built Oak Pavilion which has 327 beds. It has a state-of-the-art ventilation system. All adult private rooms can be converted into positive pressure rooms. It was planned to be “green” and meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. Low-emitting, environmentally friendly materials were used, including sealants, adhesives, paint, flooring, and other materials.
 2. He stated that indoor air quality is monitored by Facilities Engineering, and he detailed the measures taken by the hospital to assure air quality for environmentally sensitive patients, including air scrubbers, close dampers, duct cleaning, and HEPA filtration which can be installed where designed or portable units are required. He also pointed out that the hospital is fragrance free. There were questions from members regarding fragrances from various sources that can cause problems for sensitive patients, particularly pointing out that staff can wear clothing washed in detergents which contain fragrances. Sandy Ross provided Mr. Rodriguez with a document entitled, *Healthier Hospitals: A Comprehensive Guide to Assist in the Medical Care of Patients with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) Disability*, by Toni Temple.
 3. Mr. Rodriguez also discussed that the hospital is able to accommodate food allergies. The hospital also routinely uses nitrile gloves, hypoallergenic soaps and linens and other products to protect sensitive patients. The chemicals used are reviewed annually.
 4. Finally, Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the steps the hospital has taken to shield patients who are sensitive to electromagnetic fields. There was considerable discussion.
 5. Council members shared a number of papers with Mr. Rodriguez for his consideration. Members asked that Ryan add fragranced laundry products to the fragrance-free policy and that he look into using the lowest level of radiation needed for diagnostics, treatment and communication. Members offered to send him information from Canada where they were having success running hospital WiFi’s on 10 power. Members asked if Ryan could accommodate under ADA and turn down the EMF/RFR in the room of a patient who was electro-hypersensitive.
8. **Council President Update** – None.
9. **Updates from Council Members:** Vice President Roberta Anthes asked for updates from Council members.
1. Jennifer Rienks announced that the Marin Healthcare District is holding a seminar on Adolescent Eating Disorders. It will be held on May 24th, beginning at 5:30 pm, at the San Rafael Community Center, 618 B Street in San Rafael. The speaker is Professor Erin Accurso of UCSF.
 2. Ginger Souders-Mason reported that a past member of the Council now lives in the ecology house but is affected by antennae installed right outside her apartment. She detailed steps that this former member has taken to protect herself and that this former member has noted that bees and birds are no longer seen in the house garden.
 3. Barbara Wientjes reported that her husband noted fewer butterflies and insects in Woodacre and speculated on causes. There was brief discussion.
 4. Roberta Anthes reported that Rutgers University was developing a new COVID vaccine that uses a tiny piece of the spike protein that is thought to be more universal to the former and potential variants. This could result in a longer lasting immunity. She also alerted members to the fact that two Assembly bills were being reviewed on Monday that allowed fast-tracking of bundles of 50 wireless applications at the same time, with a very short review period
10. **Public Comment:** None.

11. **Adjournment:** Jennifer Rienks moved that the meeting be adjourned. Roberta Anthes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm. The next meeting will be on June 27, 2023.