



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**

April 5, 2023

Marin County Health & Wellness Campus

Meeting conducted via Zoom and in person

3:00 – 5:30 pm

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I. Call to Order

CM Alexey Nizovskikh called the meeting to order at 3:07 pm.

II. Roll Call

Council Members Present at Roll Call: Bobby Moske, Elaine Flores, Wade Flores, Linda Dobra, Alexey Nizovskikh, Julie Dowling

Council Members Arriving Late: Julie Case, Jimi Amos, James Frazier

Council Members Absent: Lydia Arellano (excused)

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

Public Present: Connie Kadera (MCC); Fel Agrelius (Spahr Center); Andy Scheer (SFDPH); David Mon (Spahr Center); Maria Camacho (Spahr Center)

III. Review and approval of Agenda – VOTE: CM Linda Dobra proposed that the agenda be amended to move the interview of Fel Agrelius to the beginning of the agenda as Fel Agrelius had an appointment that required her to leave the Council meeting early. She asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. CM James Frazier so moved. CM Alexey Nizovskikh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Review and approval of Minutes – VOTE: CM Linda Dobra asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2023, HIV/AIDS Care Council meeting. CM Wade Flores so moved. CM Julie Dowling seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Community Forum: CM Linda Dobra reported on the work of the Community Forum subcommittee. The Forum will take place on Tuesday, May 23, 2023, 5:00 – 7:30 pm, at the 3240 Kerner Campus, in Room 109. There will be three topics: (1) substance abuse; (2) mental health post-COVID; (3) community resources. All three speakers have

been confirmed. There will be evaluations of services done as well. The next step is to publicize. Flyers will be sent out with food cards.

- VI. **Membership – Interview Fel Agrelius:** CM Linda Dobra asked different Council members to ask Fel Agrelius each of the six interview questions. Then, several Council members asked follow-up questions. At the end of the interview, Fel Agrelius left the meeting.
- VII. **General Announcements.** None.
- VIII. **Public Comment:** CM Wade Flores asked for clarification regarding the change in the gift card amount provided to Ryan White clients. It was his impression that the amount was increased to \$120.00 per month. Instead, the amount received was \$100.00. Nga Le explained that Ryan White funds were increased from \$60.00 to \$80.00. Initially, the Spahr Center intended to add on another \$40.00 to this allotment from their 340B funds, but later reduced that amount to \$20.00, thus making the total card amount \$100.00.
- IX. **Prevention Program Report:** CM Linda Dobra reported the following:
 - a. Andy Fyne has retired from the Spahr Center as Harm Reduction Program Director. Chris Brown has taken over that position. Spahr Center is recruiting to fill the Executive Director position.
 - b. They continue to do Hepatitis C testing in the jail and are now offering opt-out testing.
 - c. They are doing outreach to providers regarding Hepatitis C testing and treatment.
 - d. They are conducting an ad campaign regarding Hepatitis C.
 - e. Ritter Center is short-staffed now.
 - f. Question: CM Wade Flores asked if there is a need for a second booster shot for monkeypox. Also, he wondered how many people of color have gotten their second shot. CM Linda Dobra said that if a person already has gotten two shots, they are covered. Regarding people of color, only about 50% of people of color who got their first shot then got a second shot. So, outreach is necessary.
- X. **Presentation: Medi-Cal Continuous Coverage Unwinding:** Andy Scheer, LCSW, Community Program Coordinator for SFDPH HIV Health Services, gave a PowerPoint presentation. The slides were sent to all Council members via email. He reported the following:
 - a. The purpose of his talk was (1) to explain how the Medi-Cal Continuous Coverage Unwinding would affect beneficiaries; (2) to provide two ways for beneficiaries to update their information; (3) to name the program that pays private health insurance premiums for people with HIV who do not qualify for Medi-Cal.
 - b. Initially the continuous coverage was linked to the federal Emergency Declaration which ends on May 11, 2023. However, recent federal legislation decoupled the continuous coverage from the Emergency Declaration and as a result, this coverage ended on April 1, 2023. The coverage for beneficiaries will end 60 days after the end of the Emergency Declaration.

- c. There are two kinds of Medi-Cal, traditional and expanded. The unwinding affects both. During the Emergency, no “negative actions” could be taken against Medi-Cal enrollees. The meant no terminations of coverage due to increase of income, ageing out, decrease in household size, etc. “Negative actions” could only be taken if an enrollee died, moved out of state, voluntarily withdrew or other. The focus was on expedited enrollment and keeping people covered.
- d. The “unwinding” means a return to regular Medi-Cal eligibility requirements. This means that clients must reapply annually which will come as a surprise to new enrollees as well as to old enrollees who have not had to reapply since 2020. In Marin, that means almost 58,000 people will need to reapply. Nationally, it is projected that 9.5% will lose coverage as they will no longer be eligible. Another 7.9% will still be eligible, but will lose coverage due to administrative “churning,” i.e. loss of paperwork, improper application, failure to apply, etc. It is projected that Hispanics in particular will lose coverage due to “churning.” People will need a lot of support to re-enroll and keep their coverage. He noted that as of Jan. 1, 2024, undocumented people will be able to apply for Medi-Cal.
- e. He reviewed the timeline. He noted that first Medi-Cal will try to determine eligibility based on income information they already have on a beneficiary due to their enrollment in other programs such as CalFRESH. Applications will be sent to enrollees based on their original application date. If applications are not turned in within 60 days, coverage will be terminated. If an enrollee is no longer qualified, the person will be transferred Covered CA Marketplace which will help the person transition to private insurance.
- f. The redetermination forms will come to the client in a large yellow envelope. The forms will be in large print and available in English and Spanish. He reviewed what the client must do to make sure the transition from Medi-Cal to private insurance is seamless. He went over cost-saving programs for people with HIV.
- g. He answered a few questions from Council members.

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

- a. HHS is now starting the accreditation process which includes documenting all processes.
- b. Regarding the pandemic, PH is working on assuring senior care, skilled nursing facilities, etc. have good infection prevention protocols in place as well as clear procedures to deal with outbreaks. in the facilities, HHS also has a pilot dog COVID-detection project which involves taking trained dogs into facilities to sniff out who has COVID. This is funded through the state.

- c. There are a couple of new dashboards, including those for syphilis, TB, Hepatitis C, etc. She encouraged Council members to explore them.
- d. They are working to improve screening for Hepatitis C in the jail plus linkage to treatment.

XII. BREAK

- XIII. Presentation: ARIES Data:** Nga Le shared her screen and gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding current ARIES data. The slides will be sent to all Council members via email. She reported the following:
- a. In ARIES FY 22/23, there were 258 unduplicated clients, 20% of whom were new or re-enrolled clients. There were 0 reported deaths in that fiscal year and 8 newly diagnosed clients.
 - b. She provided a breakdown of clients by age, ethnicity, gender, poverty level, insurance status and HIV status. She noted that there was a 6% increase in Hispanic clients over last year and a slight decrease in white clients.
 - c. CM Wade Flores noted that there is still a lot of stigma in the Hispanic community around men having sex with men. These individuals are very afraid that someone will find out. This makes outreach and improvements challenging. Maria Camacho reported that there is an event on April 17th which would be a good opportunity for outreach. She will provide Nga Le with the flyer. Nga will forward it to the Council members.

XIV. Membership

- a. **Fel Agrelius' application for membership on the HIV/AIDS Care Council:** There was general discussion, after which a vote was taken. The Council voted not to accept Fel Agrelius as a member of the Council.
- b. **Attendance:** CM Linda Dobra reviewed the bylaws governing attendance. Council members are entitled to two excused absences per year. If a member feels that he/she will not be able to attend reliably due to illness or other circumstance, he/she can ask for a leave of absence.
- c. **Bylaws:** CM Linda Dobra gave a brief update on the bylaws. She suggested that a subcommittee be formed after the Forum to review the bylaws and present their findings to the Council at the June 14, 2023, meeting.
- d. **Other:** Nga Le asked Council members if they want to continue to meet from 3:00 to 5:30 pm. There was brief general discussion. It was agreed to keep the same schedule.

XV. Next Steps – New Business: None.

XVI. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:22 pm. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 3:00 pm.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 3:00 to 5:30 pm
Location: 3240 Kerner, Room 109 and via Zoom