



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 13, 2024

Marin County Health & Wellness Campus, Room 110

Meeting conducted via Zoom and in person

3:00 – 5:30 pm

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I. Call to Order

CM Linda Dobra called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm.

II. Roll Call

Council Members Present at Roll Call: Elaine Flores, Wade Flores, Linda Dobra, Alexey Nizovskikh, Julie Dowling, Jimi Amos, Julie Case, Bobby Moske, James Frazier, Rosemary Lukholo

Council Members Arriving Late: None

Council Members Absent: Lydia Arellano

Staff Present: Nga Le (HHS), Cicily Emerson (HHS), Loretta Rogers (HHS), Adrian Acosta (HHS), Allison Paxtor (HHS)

Public Present: Racquel Beltran (MCC), Connie Kadera (MCC), Mariana Murguieta (MCC), Ana Garcia Reyes (MCC), Derice Seid (MCC)

III. Review and approval of Agenda – VOTE

CM Linda Dobra asked members to review and approve the draft agenda. The motion was made by Bobby Moske, seconded by James Frazier, and passed unanimously.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes – VOTE

a. January 10, 2024, meeting minutes – CM Linda Dobra asked members to review the January 10, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

V. General Announcements:

a. CM Bobby Moske stated that he was not aware of the closing of the Spahr Center and how their services would be transferred to other agencies. He thought that no one was apprised of its impending closure and sent out a critical letter. He later realized that there were announcements of its closure beforehand and so apologizes for his letter.

VI. Public Comment: None.

VII. Oral Health Update: Racquel Beltran from Marin Community Clinics (MCC) gave the following report:

- a. At the Fourth Street location, construction is close to being completed. As of next week, one section of the expansion should be completed although it will take a little time to get it staffed up. It should be ready in the next month. By May, it is anticipated that all of the suites will be open and running. One of the suites will be for emergency care. Connie Kadera stated that the expansion has made the facility much brighter and more attractive. She reminded attendees that adult care is also at the Novato location, 1690 Redwood Blvd.
- b. More approvals for specialty care have come through, using Ryan White grant funds.
- c. She then answered questions. CM Bobby Moske thanked both Connie and Racquel for all their hard work. He stated that he tried to make a general dental appointment but was not able to until May because that's when he was due for his next check-up. He wanted to know if that was a policy. There was some discussion of his particular situation. They will deal with his issue off-line. People who have problems with the MCC Dental Services, they can email at rwidental@marinclinic.org. In response to James Frazier's query, she confirmed that appointments can be made for the Novato location by calling 415-448-1500. Jimi Amos asked a question about dentures, that he would have to wait four months for dentures to be replaced. He says the dentures do not fit him and he was told that MCC will not re-fit them. He also received an invoice for \$540.00; is this common? Connie Kadera stated that Ryan White funds should cover the invoice, perhaps on a sliding scale. She urged him to send an email to the Ryan White email address about his problem with dentures as they do want to assure the dentures fit. Racquel Beltran urged attendees to email if they receive an invoice from MCC for services covered by Ryan White. CM Bobby Moske stated that now Medi-Cal covers more dental services that previously they did not. Connie Kadera stated that coverage was expanded for all ages; however, she has not seen any new services covered.

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

- a. Outreach Work: The program is leveraging CDCP staff for outreach in the Latino community for STI testing with Primary Health – Adrian Acosta and Monica Mazzini are supporting Suelybeth Rodas, Israel Martinez and Sandra Torres in the field.
- b. The Primary Health STI project continues with HHS staff (as above) and MCCT in Marin City.
- c. Jail Testing for HCV and HIV continues with an increase in testing over the last several months.
- d. There are future plans to train HHS staff for ADAP enrollment for and PrEP-AP enrollment since we see positive STI's in our reportable system of CalREDIE and identify those people who could benefit from PrEP.

- IX. Division of Public Health Report:** Cicily Emerson gave the following report:
- a. She reported that the Department of Health & Human Services has a new director, Dr. Lisa Warhuus. She comes from the City of Berkeley and also did work for Alameda County. She will be making the rounds.
 - b. Dr. Matt Willis, Public Health Officer, has announced that he will retire as of the end of September. Recruitment for his replacement will be underway soon.
 - c. There is a new County Administrator as Matthew Hymel is retiring at the end of March. The title of this position has been changed to County Executive and will be filled by Derek Johnson who has been City Manager for the City of San Luis Obispo. His first day of work with County of Marin is April 29, 2024.
 - d. The Division of Public Health is submitting an application for Public Health Accreditation which is a rigorous process in which Marin County Public Health has to demonstrate its effectiveness in providing services through documentation. This process will be going on throughout this year.
 - e. The attendees are eligible for another COVID vaccine shot. She urged them to get vaccinated with the new vaccine. Responding to James Frazier’s question, Cicily Emerson said that if an attendee was last vaccinated in November, they should get their next shot in April. The level of infection as shown in wastewater is heading from Moderate to Low.
 - f. She also mentioned that there were five fentanyl deaths in two weeks. This is a major concern. With the closing of Spahr Center, harm reduction services were interrupted, and Public Health has scrambled to get them back up and running. There was brief discussion.
- X. Ryan White Services Update and Discussion:** Cicily Emerson stated that all are very sad that Spahr Center stopped operations so abruptly. It is a big loss to the community as a whole and most particularly to the people who were served. It was the only LGBTQ+ serving organization in Marin. However, the services that were funded by Ryan White / Public Health through the Spahr Center are still going to be provided. There was a serious cash flow problem at the Spahr Center and that was what caused them to stop operations. Public Health worked with Spahr’s case management staff to develop transition plans. Adrian Acosta has been part of this transition team. Public Health is planning to hire Lauren Benjamin and Emily Sims, but there is an administrative delay in their hiring. Public Health is working with Community Action Marin to have them take over the emergency funds programs, which include Emergency Financial Assistance, Health Insurance Premiums and Cost Sharing Assistance, and Medical Transportation. Public Health also plans to do an RFP for Ryan White services to start July 1, 2024. She then answered questions.

- a. CM Wade Flores asked how long the transition will take. Cicily Emerson stated that it will take place over the next three months. This is also a good time for the Council members to think about other services they would like to see going forward. This might be a topic for the Community Forum. However, there will be a new contract with a new agency starting July 1, 2024. After the contract is signed, it will take a while for the new agency to hire new staff, etc. to provide the required services. He had also asked what went wrong at the Spahr Center. Cicily Emerson replied that it was mainly the financial difficulties. Amy Schroeder of the Spahr Center board was planning to attend this meeting but was unable to. She may be able to attend the next meeting. Cicily Emerson passed out a flyer with information. CM Bobby Moske provided some background and expressed concern about continuation of LGBTQ+ programs.
- b. There were further questions and answers and general discussion.
- c. CM Julie Case asked if the closure of the Spahr Center would affect the HIV Care Council. Would the Care Council continue to exist and meet? She assured that it would. Cicily Emerson explained how Ryan White funds, Part A and Part B are used.
- d. CM Linda Dobra announced that Lauren Benjamin and Emily Sims, formerly of Spahr Center, will begin work at the County on Monday, March 18, 2024.

XI. BREAK

XII. Community Forum Planning: CM Linda Dobra opened the discussion about the up-coming Community Forum.

- a. There was general discussion. It was determined that the focus would be on asking attendees about their perceptions of the needs of the community. They would be presented with current services and asked to prioritize them. They would also be asked about services not currently offered, but which they would like to see provided. There will also be an informational presentation. Attendees will also be provided with information about the RFP.
- b. The planning meeting will be on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 3:30 pm at 3240 Kerner Blvd. location. They will create the agenda. Nga Le will create and send out the flyer. The flyer will contain the date, time, location, agenda.
- c. The date of the Community Forum is Wednesday, April 24, 2024.
- d. The regular HIV Care Council meeting for April will be rescheduled for June 5, 2024.

XIII. Membership: No new items.

XIV. Next Steps – New Business: None.

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

Next Meeting: June 5, 2024, 3:00 to 5:30 pm
Location: 3240 Kerner, Room 110 and via Zoom