



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 9, 2022**

**Marin County Health & Wellness Campus**

Meeting conducted via Zoom

3:00 – 5:00 pm

Benita McLarin, FACHE  
DIRECTOR

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH  
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Lisa M. Santora, MD, MPH  
DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

3240 Kerner Boulevard  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
415 473 4163 T  
415 473 6002 F  
415 473 3232 TTY  
[marinhhs.org/public-health](http://marinhhs.org/public-health)

**I. Call to Order**

CM Wade Flores called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

**II. Roll Call**

Council Members Present at Roll Call: Bobby Moske, Elaine Flores, Wade Flores, Lydia Arellano, Linda Dobra, Leslie Gallen, Alexey Nizovskikh, Jimi Amos, Julie Case, Jodie Campbell, Julie Dowling

Council Members Arriving Late: None

Council Members Absent: James Frazier, Esmeralda Garcia

Staff Present: Nga Le (HHS), Cicily Emerson (HHS), Benita McLarin (HHS), Loretta Rogers (HHS), Alejandra Garcia (HHS)

Public Present: Racquel Beltran (MCC), Connie Kadera (MCC), Leigha Andrews (MCC), Miko Lagrimas (MCC), Stephen Spano (ALRP), Isabela Mihai (MCC)

**III. Review and approval of Agenda – VOTE**

CM Wade Flores asked members to review and approve the draft agenda. CM Julie Dowling moved to approve the agenda. CM Elaine Flores seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Review and Approval of Minutes – VOTE**

- a. January 12, 2022 meeting minutes – CM Wade Flores asked members to review the January 12, 2021 meeting minutes. CM Wade Flores asked for a minor change, i.e. to identify SSA in Lynn Murphy’s presentation as referring to “Support Services Area.” Nga Le made the change. CM Julie Dowling moved to approve the minutes as amended. CM Linda Dobra seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- V. General Announcements:** CM Wade Flores asked for any announcements.
- a. CM Leslie Gallen announced that Dana Van Gorder retired as Executive Director of the Spahr Center on February 28th. CM Leslie Gallen, Deputy Director, will fill in as the interim Executive Director until March 31st. The new director, Adrian Shanker, will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - b. CM Julie Case brought up a situation that occurred at the Spahr Center food pantry which CM Leslie Gallen explained i.e., people can show up and wait until someone is available to wait on them.
- VI. Public Comment:** CM Wade Flores asked for public comment.
- a. Stephen Spano of the AIDS Legal Referral Panel (ALRP) in San Francisco introduced himself. The ALRP offers support in Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties. They work to resolve issues where there is conflict or lack of access to service providers for Ryan White patients.
  - b. The other members of the public introduced themselves. This included Benita McLarin, Director of Health and Human Services; Alejandra Garcia, Public Health Investigator for HHS; Connie Kadera, Chief Dental Officer for MCC; Isabela Mihai, Compliance & Privacy Officer at MCC; Racquel Beltran, Senior Dental Operations Officer at MCC; Leigha Andrews, Senior Director of Medical Operations at MCC; Miko Lagrimas, DDS at MCC.
- VII. Co-Chair Report:** CM Wade Flores reminded Council members to prepare for decisions regarding priorities and allocations of budget funds which will be discussed in future meetings. He expressed gratitude that all members were feeling well.
- VIII. Prevention Program Report:** CM Linda Dobra reported the following:
- a. Romario Conrado, Bilingual HIV Prevention Navigator, is approved to do testing at the Spahr Center. He is working hard with Chris Brown out in the community with PrEP and Syringe Access.
  - b. She is working with staff at the jail to create systems of care regarding Hepatitis C and HIV.
  - c. April is STD awareness month, so members may see information about testing, etc.
  - d. Questions: CM Wade Flores asked if the Governor's announcement the other day about mental health would affect the prevention program. CM Linda Dobra said that she had not heard the announcement. Director Benita McLarin stated that the announcement was about additional funds being allocated for supporting residents with mental health issues, particularly those who are homeless.

- IX. Division of Public Health Report:** Cicily Emerson shared her screen and reported the following:
- a. She reviewed the President’s National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan to guide public health efforts going forward. It has four points: (1) Protect against and treat COVID-19; (2) Prepare for new variants; (3) Prevent economic and educational shutdowns; (4) Lead the world to vaccinate the world and save lives.
  - b. She reported that the omicron variant is the leading variant in Marin County. The omicron surge has peaked and is now winding down. The number of cases among the unvaccinated was much higher than those who were vaccinated. The lowest case rates were among those who were vaccinated and had received a booster shot.
  - c. She commented on how the death rates before and after the introduction of vaccine testify to the effectiveness of the vaccines.
  - d. Pediatric vaccination is still being studied.
  - e. The County is now trying to close the boosting rate gap between white residents on the one hand and Hispanic and African American residents on the other.
  - f. As of the end of this week, masking in schools will be strongly recommended but not required.
  - g. There is now in place a vaccination mandate for first responders.
  - h. There is a new framework for looking at COVID-19. Public Health will no longer look at community infection rates to determine response but rather hospitalization rates. Those will determine policy changes. Marin County is currently at the Low level of transmission, but there are still recommendations in place for people who are immune-compromised. It is recommended that these residents be up to date on vaccination and boosters and are aware of current treatments available. She also recommended that residents have test kits at home so that their infection could be caught early. Spahr Center has many test kits available and there are two tests per kit. The recommendations change when the level of transmission is at the Medium and High levels.
  - i. At the next Board of Supervisors meeting, there will be a Board resolution and presentation by Dr. Lisa Santora, recognizing all our partners who worked with County Public Health during the pandemic. It takes place in the Board of Supervisors Chambers.
  - j. Nga Le reported that the annual Client Satisfaction Survey has been mailed out. Those who send in a completed survey will receive a \$20.00 gift card.
- X. Oral Health Update:** Racquel Beltran shared her screen and reported the following:
- a. She presented Ryan White (RW) grant figures for FY 2021-2022 (from April 1, 2021, to Feb. 28, 2022). 45 RW patients were served, 21 of which were RW only. There were 162 RW average visits with 3.6 visits per RW patient. The average cost per RW visit was \$455.49

(excluding administrative costs), with a \$260 reimbursement rate from Denti-Cal at the 4<sup>th</sup> Street location. The total charges for RW patients were \$73,790. Total funds from RW for this FY were \$46,200.

- b.** Council members asked questions for clarification. Racquel stated that the RW grant money went mostly for staff salaries but in the coming FY it will go for service fees. CM Lydia Arellano stated that the latest figures she has for RW eligible patients was 125. Because of the pandemic, many of these patients have not received regular care. She wanted to know if MCC is reaching out to these patients to get them back into regular care. Racquel stated that MCC is restarting their recall process to capture these patients. There are probably some that have not been contacted yet. MCC needs to assure they have availability to provide appointments, etc. They are playing “catch up.” CM Bobby Moske asked about referrals for specialty care. UCSF and UOP do not accept RW patients. MCC was still giving referrals to these places until very recently. Where can they go to get care? If this problem is not resolved, he recommends an audit. CM Lydia Arellano clarified for Bobby Moske that UCSF and UOP never took RW funds, and she explained how reimbursement happened in the past with work-around solutions.
- c.** Leigha Andrews and Cicily Emerson explained that the RW funds are audited every year.
- d.** Dr. Connie Kadera reported that MMC has an agreement with Dr. Daryl Dudum to take RW patients for root canals, emergency services. Patients need to make appointments with MCC to be evaluated. If specialty services are needed, a referral to Dr. Dudum will be made. For oral surgery, MCC has contracted with an oral surgeon in Larkspur. As of January 2022, MCC is empaneling patients which means a patient is assigned to a team of doctors for evaluation and treatment. This will streamline things. Not all shortcomings have been addressed, but MCC is working on them and has made great progress. CM Lydia Arellano asked how many appointments were set aside per month and how the RW patients would be paneled. Dr. Kadera stated that empaneling will happen randomly. Cicily Emerson stated that the County and MCC have been working on this problem for the last year or more to locate funds for these specialty services. Racquel Beltran also said that MCC has been working to provide transportation for patients, as needed, including out-of-county transportation. CM Wade Flores asked how long a RW patient would have to wait if an extraction was needed. Racquel Beltran stated that in an emergency, the patient could be seen the same day. An evaluation would be made as to what next steps needed to be taken e.g. a course of antibiotics may be needed before the extraction. Appointments are blocked each day for emergencies only. CM Bobby Moske asked if dentures are covered. Dr. Kadera said that there are varying criteria for Medi-Cal patients. Bobby also asked about a RW patient whose Medi-Cal coverage was

expiring. He was informed that Medi-Cal is extending coverage and there are payment plans available for patients who need to pay in increments.

- e. Isabela Mihai shared her screen and reviewed the process for handling patient complaints. Complaints can be communicated via in person complaint to a dental assistant, or via phone, email, an online complaint form or regular mail. MCC tries to address complaints within 24 hours although the complaint line says five days. MCC will consult with the patient, clear up the situation, implement new training, if needed and other steps. She reminded attendees that if medical information is to be provided to a third party, the patient must submit a completed authorization for release of information form. CM Wade Flores requested that HIV patients be included in MCC trainings and procedure discussions to assure good communication and understanding. Isabela agreed.
- f. Leigha Andrews reported some additional good news. In October, MCC will implement a new electronic health records system which will allow medical and dental health records to be in one system. She also agreed that it would be good to have HIV patients be part of training. CM Elaine Flores stated how important it is for all sides to work together to improve service. Jodie Campbell provided insight on challenges for MCC with funding and providing services. Racquel Beltran and Dr. Kadera repeated MCC's commitment to improve services and to be responsive to patient needs.
- g. Cicily Emerson thanked all the MCC staff who attended this meeting, made their presentations and answered questions. MCC staff will share their contact information in the Chat.
- h. Cicily Emerson also reported that the County does a yearly audit of all RW contractors to assure they are meeting RW grant requirements. The County does chart reviews and other checks. The contractors also have independent financial audits. So, MCC is well audited. CM Wade Flores then asked if an explanation could be provided so that the Council members could understand how the various numbers were arrived at. Just a basic understanding is all that's necessary. This will help inform the Council's allocation decisions. CM Bobby Moske asked if the audits could be viewed by the public. Cicily Emerson stated that the public can do a public records request. No client level data can be provided but all else is available.

**XI. Break – None.**

- XII. Budget Update:** Nga Le shared her screen and reported the following:
- a. The County has not yet received its RW Part A allocation yet for FY 2022-2023. The County is working on the assumption that it will be flat funding. The County is contracting with the Spahr Center for a grant of \$450,000.

**XIII. Membership – Review Application**

The Council reviewed Mikoyan Lagrimas's application and had discussion. Due to running out of time, the Council did not come to a decision. The application review and vote will be added to the next meeting's agenda.

**XIV. Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 8, 2022, 3:00 to 5:00 pm**  
**Location: TBD**