



Ventura County Community Health Center (CHC) Board Meeting Minutes

Theresa Cho, MD
Ventura County Ambulatory Care
Chief Executive Officer
Medical Director
CHC Executive Director

Marth Ann Knutson
County of Ventura
Assistant County Counsel

Chaya Turrow
CHC Board Clerk

Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2024
12:30 - 2:00 PM

2240 E Gonzalez Rd,
Suite 200
Oxnard, CA 93036

CHC BOARD MEMBERS:

DAVID TOVAR, District 3
Chair

RALPH REYES, District 3
Vice Chair

ESPY GONZALEZ, District 2
Secretary

RENA SEPULVEDA, District 1
Treasurer

MANUEL MINJARES, District 3

RENEE HIGGINS, MD, District 3

MELISSA LIVINGSTON, District 4

JAMES MASON, District 5

MONIQUE NOWLIN, District 1

Call to Order:

David Tovar called the meeting to order at 12:36 PM.

1. Roll Call

David Tovar	Present
Ralph Reyes	Absent
Espy Gonzalez	Present
Rena Sepulveda	Present
Manuel Minjares	Present
Renee Higgins, MD	Present
Melissa Livingston	Present
James Mason	Absent
Monique Nowlin	Absent

Roll call confirmed that a quorum was present.

2. Ventura County Staff Present

Theresa Cho, MD, HCA – Ambulatory Care
Marty Knutson – County Counsel
Lizeth Barretto, HCA – Ambulatory Care
Allison Blaze, HCA - Ambulatory Care
Jason Cavender, HCA – Ambulatory Care
Farhan Malik, HCA – Ambulatory Care
Elisabet Drumwright, HCA – Ambulatory Care
Christina Woods, HCA – Health Care Plan
Dee Pupa, HCA – Health Care Plan

Public Present

Dr. Melody Schniepp

3. Public Comments

Action Items:

4. Approval of CHC Board Meeting Agenda for March 28, 2024

Board Member Minjares motioned to approve. Board Secretary Gonzalez seconded. Motion passed.

5. Approval of CHC Minutes for February 22, 2024

Board Secretary Gonzalez motioned to approve. Board Treasurer Sepulveda seconded. Motion passed.

6. Review and Approve 2024 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines

Ms. Barretto shared the updated Federal Poverty Level Guidelines and Sliding Fee Discount Program Rate Schedule. These are updated every year. Ms. Pupa from the Health Care Plan mentioned that folks that are above 200% have the option for the self-pay discount program. Ms. Barretto also shared that the auditors during the Operational Site Visits like to see the FQHC separate. Board Member Higgins confirmed that Program 6 was self-pay discount program, not sliding fee.

Board Member Livingston motioned to approve the 2024 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines. Board Member Higgins seconded. Motion passed.

Presentation Items:

7. Santa Paula West Clinic Presentation

Mr. Malik shared a presentation on the Santa Paula West Medical Clinic. Mr. Malik oversees
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the Santa Paula and Fillmore clinics. The Santa Paula West Medical Group and Pediatrics has two entrances, front for the medical group and rear for pediatrics. Some of the services offered include adult and pediatric primary care, a community health worker, a comprehensive prenatal services worker, behavioral health services, phlebotomy, retinal exams, EKG, ultrasounds, and obstetrics. The specialty at Santa Paula West is their Pride Clinic, where they see patients throughout the whole county and provide hormonal therapy, referrals, and behavioral health. There is a hired therapist who only sees these patients.

Some of the challenges that Santa Paula West faces include, absorbing SPMC staff when they are already a large clinic at capacity, no landlord to deal with some facility issues, 92 degrees during summer with air conditioning not working, separate registration desks that cause confusion, and patient access issues while providers were on LOA.

For the 2023 year, the clinic had about 16,000 total visits, including nurse and lab visits. They had a 10% no show rate, which is good. The average is 12-15%, with 20% being pretty common. Board Member Livingston asked if the clinic captures wait times. Mr. Malik said they do not. Ms. Barretto said there are check-in options, but it has not been implemented.

8. Fillmore Clinic Presentation

Mr. Malik shared the presentation on the Fillmore Family Medical Group clinic. The building is county owned and they share with Behavioral Health. Some of the services offered include adult and pediatric primary care, a comprehensive prenatal services worker, behavioral health services, phlebotomy, retinal exams, EKG, ultrasounds, and obstetrics. The specialty at the Fillmore clinic is gastroenterology once a month.

In addition to absorbing some of the SPMC staff and providers during closures, Fillmore also has difficulty recruiting nurses. Fillmore is a small town with a small pool of candidates. The drive becomes too far when they travel from out of town. Additionally, there is a vacant physical therapy section that could be used if more providers are hired.

During 2023, the Fillmore clinic had about 13,000 total clinic visits, 9% no show rate, and 2,800 outgoing referrals processed, which is a lot for one clerk to process. Board Chair Tovar asked what the wait time for someone to create an appointment would be. Mr. Malik said a new appointment is one to two weeks, but some established patients can be seen the same day.

Board Member Higgins asked if vacancies are listed on county job site – yes. Board Member Minjares asked if there were discussions of consolidating all into full Santa Paula campuses? Dr. Cho said that they are beginning blueprints. Services would include dental, optometry, and geriatrics. They have begun looking at Limoneira, but transportation may be an issue. Board Member Minjares would like to work together to make it happen. Board Member Livingston asked if there is a timeline and Dr. Cho said, “protracted. Maybe 2030.”

9. Sierra Vista Clinic Presentation

Ms. Drumright is the Clinic Administrator for the Sierra Vista Clinic. She has been with the County for 17 years and at Sierra Vista for 12. Sierra Vista is located in Simi Valley, open

Monday through Thursday from 7:00am to 7:00pm, providing late hours for more access. The clinic is open on Fridays from 8:00am to 5:00pm and there is an Urgent Care open Monday through Sunday. They share a building with Behavioral Health. The reception area has eight windows and 16 front office staff. There are seven to ten MAs. Their lab draw station is very busy and they see about 100 patients per day. They have a new digital X-ray machine thanks to a HRSA grant.

Some of the services offered include adult and pediatric primary care, comprehensive prenatal services, behavioral health services, phlebotomy, nutrition education, retinal exams, X-rays, NST, Botox for migraines, and echocardiograms. Specialty services include cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, infectious disease, internal medicine, nephrology, OBGYN, oncology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, pediatric and adult neurology, podiatry, pulmonology, rheumatology, and weight management. Dr. Blaze just hired 2 to 3 new OBGYNs to increase OB services.

During 2023, there were over 64,000 visits, about 9 visits per half day, and over 15,000 referrals processed. The clinic has 70 support staff, with 36 providers. Some process improvements include just implementing the Cerner Practice Management, which will help with workflows throughout the full system. Also, Sierra Vista is next for onboarding the Call Center. This will improve customer service and phone wait times.

Some challenges that Sierra Vista has faced include the location is far from radiology, spatial constraints, and recruitment.

Discussion Items:

10. Continued Business

a. Board Recruitment

Ms. Turrow shared the Board demographics. Currently the Board is split evenly between men and women. There are 13% that work in the health industry, and 13% that work with the homeless population. Additionally, the Board has 63% consumer versus 36% non-consumer members. These numbers show compliance with the CHC bylaws and are parallel to the community served. It is important to recruit more members to maintain compliance.

Ms. Turrow requested and urged the Board Members to help with the recruitment process. Members can be consumers or non-consumers, but the Board can only appoint one or two more non-consumer members to maintain compliance.

b. Grants Updates

The Expanding Covid-19 Vaccination grant will be finalized within the week.

Our organization received 19 questions from the original UDS Submission. The team was very helpful in sending these thoughtful responses in on time. The UDS Submission report will be presented to the CHC Board during the April or May meeting.

11. New Business

a. Single Audit Findings

Ms. Barretto shared that Ambulatory Care was selected to be audited. The auditors reviewed the Health Center requirements and grant requirements, as well as expenditures. Our team submitted 90 samples of sliding fee and adjustments. The auditors found six errors with staff placing in the wrong category, paying less. Our team has written an action plan to correct the findings. The clinics will go through training and retraining.

Board Chair Tovar asked if the errors were centralized to one clinic. Ms. Barretto clarified that they were not and spread out across multiple. The finding is under billing and collections. Board Member Livingston asked if it was a material finding – yes.

Ms. Barretto said it was a good learning experience to see how the staff was doing their math. It might be good to have a sheet to help staff walk through the equations and have their math shown on the application, so our team doesn't have to decipher how they came to the final number.

12. CEO Update – Theresa Cho, MD - HCA, Ambulatory Care

Dr. Cho shared that they have hired a new CFO, who will begin early April. He is from Arizona and has previously worked in hospitals, not clinics. There is still a Revenue Cycle Manager vacancy that the team is working to fill. There is an opportunity for this position to create consistency throughout the clinics.

Dr. Cho shared that the EHR onboarding has been clunky between providers to specialties. They also must message the referral clerk separately letting them know. The team has pared down to 90 searchable options, which is still a lot. There is ongoing work to do with the EHR to get it where it will be the most helpful.

Dr. Cho attended a conference in Chicago where she talked about access, the centralized call center and texting. There were 250 people who attended her talk and about three dozen came up afterward to ask questions.

The team is actively looking at the budget. It is tough but will help with the CFO onboarding. The staffing costs have gone up and pharmaceutical/medicine costs are on the rise.

13. Board Comments

None.

14. Staff Comments

None.

15. Adjournment – Adjourn 1:42 pm

Audio files of the CHC Co-Applicant Board meetings are available by contacting the CHC Co-Applicant Board Clerk at chcboardclerk@ventura.org

Minutes submitted by: Chaya Turrow, CHC Board Clerk

**Next Meeting: Thursday, April 25, 2024
2240 E Gonzalez Rd, Suite 200, Oxnard, CA 93036**