

**Healthcare Equity Advisory Council**  
**Tuesday, May 17, 2022**  
**Minutes**

**Community Voting Members Present:**

Kimberly Cofield – Co-Chair  
Emily Bridges  
Dr. Liz Diaz-Querol  
Kimberly Kelley  
Juliza Ramirez  
Hugo Tapia  
Juana Zaragoza  
Audrey Ford

**Voting Members Absent:**

**Guests:**

Phin Xaypangna  
Kate English

**Administrative Voting Members Present:**

Barry Zimmerman – Chair  
Dr. Theresa Cho  
Dr. Loretta Denering  
Rigoberto Vargas  
Kristina Swaim

**Administrative Voting Members Absent:**

Dr. Sevet Johnson  
Dr. John Fankhauser

**Staff Present:**

Erik Cho  
Selfa Saucedo  
Cynthia Salas

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m. by Chair Zimmerman.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. APPROVAL OF APRIL 19, 2022 MINUTES**

Moved by J. Ramirez, seconded by K. Kelley. Approved.

**4. ALL PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR AGENDIZED ITEMS & ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Oscar Hernandez, Assistant Superintendent Rio School District, commented on Logrando Bienestar expansion, and advocated for more support in the schools and for the Mixteco population. He called for expanded bilingual and trilingual services, allocation of resources according to need, increased communication and collaboration.

Armando Vargas of EL Rio presented the following questions to the Council:

- How does the County include community in decision-making regarding changes or implementation of changes to programs like Medi-Cal; who have you invited to participate (parents, students)?
- What prevention programs are created or planned for adults, families, under 18?
- Why does it take so long to create programs?
- What services have you created to improve the community?
- Those creating programs need to understand the needs of this community, live in the area and have experienced the problems in our environment.

- Where will agency be in 5 years? What are your goals?
- How do you inform the public about the work that you do?

## 5. OVERVIEW OF THE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

Mr. Zimmerman gave a brief overview of the agency organizational structure. We are a safety net system providing the highest standard of care to all. Policy, program approval and funding decisions are directed and overseen by the Board of Supervisors.

## 6. DEFINING EQUITY

Ms. Saucedo, Director of Health Education Public Health and Director, Office for Health Equity, shared a presentation on health equity.

Social determinants of health are all the factors that influence your health: the circumstances in which people are born, raised, live, work, play, and age. For example, people who don't have access to a grocery store with healthy food are more likely to suffer from conditions related to poor nutrition.

Inequity is systemic and avoidable. As an example, in the 93030 zip code where incidence of asthma in children is high, relevant conditions include crowded housing (mold and mildew), agriculture (pesticides), proximity to highways and power plants.

Equity entails adjusting to address the unique circumstances and needs of different communities.

Ms. Kelley emphasized the need to address biases that health care providers bring with them.

Health Literacy for both provider and patient is a good topic for future discussion.

**VCMC/SPH** Mr. Zimmerman shared a brief overview of the County hospitals. VCMC is a designated trauma center for West County, with only pediatric intensive care unit in the area, and houses the Family Medicine Residency Program. Santa Paula Hospital serves the Santa Clara Valley; plans for a new hospital facility are underway. Certain DEI efforts are already underway.

## 7. AMBULATORY CARE

Dr. Cho presented an introduction to the county system of safety net clinics, 18 of which are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHC designation allows access to grants to provide dental care, healthcare for the homeless, antiviral medications, etc. Optometry equipment has been installed at Las Islas, and we are looking for an optometrist. Future Santa Paula clinic will have an optometry suite. Schools and churches are an effective way to do outreach and provide medical care.

Ms. Zaragoza related problems with Mixteco language assistance at Las Islas Clinic (information not being interpreted correctly for the patient, offensive comments made about patients).

Dental services at Magnolia clinic in Oxnard and services at proposed Santa Paula clinic will be under the discount program and/or covered by Medi-Cal.

MICOP provides interpretation training but not certification.

## 8. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Dr. Denering provided an overview of the Behavioral Health department.

The State mandates services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries with serious mental illness. VCBH provides a continuum of services starting with education and prevention. In 2016 SUS services were reorganized and medical necessity criteria were relaxed, allowing expansion of services and referrals to residential treatment.

**BH Equity:** Ms. Salas, Health Equity/Ethnic Services and Cultural/Linguistic Manager, gave a presentation on Health Equity in Access and Services.

Ms. Kelley commented that it seems that there are very few resources for our youth and so much need. Acknowledging that resources are limited, Dr. Denering noted that peer led services are available through the Wellness Centers at the high schools, and referrals to clinicians can be from there. Plans are in place to expand the Wellness Centers to middle schools.

Ms. Bridges inquired if residential facilities are specialized for disability populations. Dr. Denering replied that we have facilities that can specialize, subject to bed availability.

Dr. Diaz Querol noted that COVID has exploded demand for mental health services, and asked plans are in place to develop the workforce. VCBH is implementing a grant funded program to promote Behavioral Health careers with undergraduate training and internships. There are statewide initiatives for BH and other specialty areas in play. We are also working with Chicano studies students to encourage medical school and Behavioral Health career paths.

Mr. Hernandez advocated for long term goal of developing clinicians from our community that are bilingual and trilingual.

**9. PUBLIC HEALTH** This item will be carried over to next meeting.

**10. MEMBER COMMENTS AND CALL FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEM(S)**

- a. Council member comments: BHAB is a public meeting also, another opportunity for the community to interact.
- b. Next meeting June 21, 2022.
- c. Agenda Setting: Public Health overview, more specifics on hospital services, incorporation of today's comments, focus on specific issues (work can be broken into subcommittees).

**11. ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.