

Minutes

**Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting
Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Pavilion
2609 East Roosevelt Street, Phoenix, AZ 85008
2nd Floor, Auditoriums 1 and 2
July 2, 2025, 5:30 p.m.**

Members Present:

Earl Arbuckle, Chair
Nelly Clotter-Woods, Vice Chair
Piedad Blake, Member
Chris Hooper, Member
Salina Imam, Member – *participated remotely*
Aime Ishimwe, Member – *participated remotely*
Scott Jacobson, Member
Eric Manoa, Member – *participated remotely*
Essen Otu, Member
Eileen Sullivan, Member
Wayne Tormala, Member

Members Absent:

Norma Muñoz, Member

Others/Guest Presenters:

Michelle Barker, DHSc, Chief Executive Officer of the Federally Qualified Health Centers
Steve Purves, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer – *participated remotely*
Michael D. White, MD, MBA, Chief Clinical Officer – *participated remotely*
Claire Agnew, CPA, MBA, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer – *participated remotely*
Melanie Talbot, Chief Governance Officer and Clerk of the Board – *participated remotely*
Matthew Meier, MBA, Vice President, Financial Services
Paige Pataky, Sr Counsel, Employment and Litigation
Christopher Brendemuhl, Department Chair of Dentistry
Christie Blanda, Senior Director Ambulatory Services
Jose Luis Madera, Senior Manager Integrated Behavioral Health Services

Recorded by:

Denise Tapia, Deputy Clerk of the Board

Call to Order:

Chair Arbuckle called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Ms. Tapia called roll. Following roll call, she noted ten of the twelve voting members of the Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council were present, which represented a quorum. Ms. Sullivan arrived after roll call.

For the benefit of all participants, Ms. Tapia announced how many Governing Council members participated remotely.

Call to the Public

Chair Arbuckle called for public comment. There were no comments

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NOTE: Ms. Sullivan arrived at 5:31 p.m.

General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action:

1. Approval of Consent Agenda:
 - a. Minutes:
 - i. Approve Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting minutes dated May 7, 2025
 - ii. Approve Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council meeting minutes dated June 4, 2025
 - b. Contracts:
 - i. Intentionally Left Blank
 - c. Governance:
 - i. Approve revisions to Governing Council Policy 89102 T – Member Orientation
 - ii. Approve registration fee, airfare, lodging, and meals & incidentals per diem not to exceed allowable under applicable District practices and policies for Piedad Blake and Wayne Tormala to attend the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) Annual Conference August 17-19, 2025, in Chicago, Illinois
 - iii. Approve the amended Charter for the Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council's Connecting with the Community Ad Hoc Committee
 - iv. Appoint Piedad Blake to the Connecting with the Community Ad Hoc Committee
 - v. Appoint Alma Ramirez to the Connecting with the Community Ad Hoc Committee
 - d. Medical Staff:
 - i. Acknowledge the Federally Qualified Health Centers Medical Staff and Advanced Practice Clinician/Allied Health Professional Staff Credentials

MOTION: Mr. Jacobson moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Tormala seconded.

VOTE: 11 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Manoa, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
1 Absent: Ms. Muñoz
Motion passed.

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General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action, cont.:

2. Mission Moment – A Patient Story

Mr. Madera shared updates on the Integrated Behavioral Health (IBH) program, emphasizing its continued growth, innovation, and deep commitment to meeting patients in their most vulnerable moments, whether facing mental health crises, trauma, substance use challenges, or simply striving to be the best version of themselves. He illustrated its impact through compelling stories of how IBH services had transformed people's lives.

Mr. Otu expressed appreciation for the meaningful impact that IBH was making and extended his thanks to Mr. Madera for his ongoing contributions.

3. Presentation on the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance

Dr. White mentioned that in 2017, the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance was launched to enter a strategic partnership with St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Valleywise Health, and District Medical Group that would provide centralized infrastructure and resources to promote medical education and clinical training. The arrival of osteopathic programs and expanded clinical rotations in Phoenix marked a turning point.

The Alliance's mission was to improve the quality of the education experience for all learners through the operation of high-quality academic programs that produce top clinical health professionals trained in quality and safety that would be ideal for the medical workforce requirements of Arizona and the affiliated partners.

The goal was to establish a robust clinical learning environment that equips health profession students with the skills and training needed to launch successful careers in healthcare and ultimately serve the patients and communities of Valleywise Health.

All residency programs are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), ensuring that graduates meet licensing and board eligibility requirements in their specialties.

Dr. White stated the Alliance supported over 335 residents and fellows across different medical programs, many of whom train within Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC's). New programs and programs in development reflect a targeted effort to address Arizona's healthcare workforce gaps, especially in underserved rural communities.

Despite being the 14th most populated state, Arizona ranked 42nd in primary care access, highlighting the urgent need for localized training to retain talent. Sixty percent of Creighton-trained residents remained in Arizona post-training, with over 42% joining partner institutions like District Medical Group and Dignity Health.

Beyond physicians, the Alliance welcomes nearly 2,000 students annually across more than 30 institutions for 4,000 clinical rotations. Health education offerings include medicine, physician assistant studies, nursing, physical and occupational therapy, and pharmacy, each embedding students in Valleywise Health's clinics and hospitals.

Dr. White noted the Creighton University Health Sciences Campus in Phoenix would host 1,000 students by 2025, responding to national forecasts that predict shortages of 90,000 physicians and 50,000 nurses by 2030. Through interprofessional education, accelerated training models, and faculty development initiatives, the Alliance was building a collaborative and future-ready healthcare workforce for Arizona and beyond.

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General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action, cont.:

3. Presentation on the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance cont.

Dr. White noted the primary care residency program rotated at the FQHCs. The internal medicine residents saw patients at the Valleywise Community Health Centers – Chandler, South Phoenix/Laveen, and Valleywise Health Comprehensive Health Center - Phoenix. The obstetrics residents were seeing patients at the Comprehensive Health Center - Phoenix. The family medicine residency program sees patients at the Valleywise Health Community Center – South Central, with the residents growing to 25 this year.

Chair Arbuckle asked whether residents rotated at other Valleywise Health Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Dr. White stated that they were only assigned to the previously mentioned locations due to certain rules and guidelines.

Mr. Tormala expressed his support for ongoing efforts to expand Arizona's medical capacity, focusing on the exploration of rural health, an area at high risk due to federal policies.

Dr. White agreed and emphasized Valleywise Health's active engagement in partnering with rural communities to develop a residency program that balances urban training with experience in rural environments.

4. Discuss and Review the Semiannual Federally Qualified Health Centers Referral Report

Mr. Meier reviewed the referral report and announced the internal referrals remained consistent, year over year, with 78.8% of patients referred internally for services. The remaining 21.2% were referred to providers/services outside of Valleywise Health.

5. Discuss and Review the Semiannual Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Grants Funding Utilization Report

Mr. Meier reviewed the semiannual HRSA grant funding utilization report. Valleywise Health maintained four active grants: Service Area Competition (SAC) grant First Things First grant, Bridge Access Program grant, and the Behavioral Health Services Expansion grant.

Chair Arbuckle asked if the Behavioral Health Services Expansion grant was extended to August 2026.

Mr. Meier confirmed staff had until August 2026 to utilize grant funds due to a no-cost extension.

Mr. Otu inquired whether there had been any federal updates regarding the renewal of existing grants, noting that several award periods were set to expire this year or next, and asked if any specific grants were currently monitored for potential changes.

Dr. Barker noted concern regarding the SAC grant, which was renewed in April 2025 for only one year, shorter than the usual three-year term. She said currently, there were no grants identified as being at risk.

6. Discuss, Review and Approve the Maricopa County Special Health Care District dba Valleywise Health, Uniform Guidance audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, Including Information Related to the Federally Qualified Health Centers

Mr. Meier reported that the annual Uniform Guidance audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 had been completed, and the independent auditor's opinion confirmed the financial statements were presented fairly in all material respects, with zero findings.

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General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action, cont.:

6. Discuss, Review and Approve the Maricopa County Special Health Care District dba Valleywise Health, Uniform Guidance audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, Including Information Related to the Federally Qualified Health Centers, cont.

Dr. Barker emphasized that the audit was a HRSA requirement to maintain continued grant funding.

Mr. Meier announced that Valleywise Health would transition from EY to Plante Moran as its independent auditor going forward.

Mr. Otu requested clarification on the auditor's findings regarding the net position, specifically, how certain elements would be categorized without creating a material change.

Mr. Meier explained that while the net position remained unchanged, the funds had been categorized as restricted rather than unrestricted, reflecting a more conservative financial approach. This prompted a recommendation to reallocate the funds to an unrestricted category.

MOTION: Mr. Hooper moved to approve the Maricopa County Special Health Care District dba Valleywise Health, Uniform Guidance audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, including information related to the Federally Qualified Health Centers. Mr. Jacobson seconded.

VOTE: 11 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Manoa, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
1 Absent: Ms. Muñoz
Motion passed.

7. Approve Change in Scope to Reduce the Hours of the Valleywise Health Mobile Health Clinic to Four Hours per Month, effective August 2025

Dr. Barker said the Valleywise Health Mobile Health Clinic (MHC) would be parked until funding was secured, and requested the Governing Council approve reducing the hours to four hours a month starting August 1, 2025, to keep it operationally ready.

MOTION: Mr. Otu moved to approve the change in scope to reduce the hours of the Valleywise Health Mobile Health Clinic to four hours per Month, effective August 2025. Mr. Tormala seconded.

VOTE: 11 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Manoa, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
1 Absent: Ms. Muñoz
Motion passed.

MOTION: Mr. Hooper moved to recess general session and reconvene in executive session at 6:29 p.m. Mr. Otu seconded.

VOTE: 11 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Manoa, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
1 Absent: Ms. Muñoz
Motion passed.

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General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action Cont.:

Chair Arbuckle reconvened general session at 7:18 p.m.

8. Meeting Update/Report from Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council's Connecting with the Community Committee

Mr. Hooper stated that the Valleywise Health Community Health Centers Governing Council's Connecting with the Community Committee had gathered information on events planned by each FQHC and expressed hopes to launch a pilot storytelling program in partnership with the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers (AACHC).

9. Federally Qualified Health Centers' Chief Executive Officer's Report, including Ambulatory Operational Dashboards

Dr. Barker stated the next month's dashboard would mark the end of the Fiscal year, at which point she would present the final numbers.

She also noted that William O'Neill and Jane Wilson were no longer serving on the Governing Council and that she would solicit new members from districts one and two.

10. Valleywise Health's President and Chief Executive Officer's Report

Mr. Purves thanked Chair Arbuckle for attending the Blessing Ceremony marking the start of the iconic old hospital's demolition, calling it a beautiful tribute filled with shared memories.

He updated the Governing Council on the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, outlining Valleywise Health's concerns regarding proposed cuts to Medicaid, an estimated \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. He warned that the bill could cause irreparable harm to the healthcare system by reducing access to care for all Americans and severely impacting hospitals' ability to serve the most vulnerable populations. Projections indicate that nearly 12 million individuals could lose their healthcare coverage.

Mr. Purves noted two primary concerns: the reduction in Directed Payment Program funds and the potential loss of the HEALTHII Program, which supported Medicaid by utilizing federal funding to align reimbursement rates with average commercial rates.

Valleywise Health remained committed to safeguarding care for the most vulnerable patients, doing everything within its means to provide the highest-quality service possible with the available resources.

11. Governing Council Member Closing Comments/Announcements

Chair Arbuckle thanked the Governing Council for their confidence in electing him as Chair. He outlined goals and highlights for the year ahead and urged continued support for staff during uncertain times. He also encouraged members to actively participate in Valleywise Health events.

Vice Chair Clotter-Woods expressed her gratitude for being elected to serve on a thoughtful, mission-driven team as Vice Chair. She emphasized that the Governing Council was not only navigating change but also shaping the future of equitable healthcare.

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Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Hooper moved to adjourn the July 2, 2025, Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting. Mr. Otu seconded.

VOTE: 11 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Manoa, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
1 Absent: Ms. Muñoz
Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Denise Tapia
Deputy Clerk of the Board