

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
September 3, 2025, 5:30 p.m.**

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Eric Manoa, Member
Wayne Tormala, Member

Others/Guest Presenters:

Michelle Barker, DHSc, Chief Executive Officer of the Federally Qualified Health Centers
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
Ijana Harris, JD, General Counsel – *participated remotely*
Amanda de Los Reyes, MBA, CRCR, Vice President, Revenue Cycle
Crystal Garcia, RN, MBA, Vice President, Specialty Services, Quality and Safety
Steven Ortquist, JD, CHC-F, Interim Chief Compliance Officer
Alba Ralph Martinez, Patient Access Quality Specialist

Recorded by:

Denise Tapia, Deputy Clerk of the Board

Call to Order:

Chair Arbuckle called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Roll Call

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

For the benefit of all participants, Ms. Tapia announced the Governing Council members participating remotely.

Call to the Public

Chair Arbuckle called for public comment. There were no comments

**Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council
Meeting Minutes – General Session – September 3, 2025**

General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action:

1. Approval of Consent Agenda:
 - a. Minutes:
 - i. Approve Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting minutes dated August 6, 2025
 - b. Contracts:
 - i. Acknowledge Amended and Restated Statement of Work #2 - FQHC Services, for Master Services Agreement (90-23-177-1) between Maricopa County Special Health Care District dba Valleywise Health, and District Medical Group for fiscal year 2026
 - c. Governance:
 - i. Approve Renewal of the Valleywise Health Policy 89100T – Governing Council Member Conference and Travel Expenses
 - d. Medical Staff:
 - i. Intentionally Left Blank

NOTE: Ms. Blake joined at 5:37 p.m.

Ms. Sullivan requested item 1.a.i. be removed from the consent agenda, to be discussed and voted on separately.

MOTION: Mr. Jacobson moved to approve the consent agenda minus item 1.a.i. Mr. Otu seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan
0 Nays
2 Absent: Mr. Manoa, Mr. Tormala
Motion passed.

MOTION: Mr. Otu moved to approve consent agenda item 1.a.i., Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting minutes dated August 6, 2025. Mr. Hooper seconded.

VOTE: 9 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu
0 Nays
2 Absent: Mr. Manoa, Mr. Tormala
1 Abstain: Ms. Sullivan
Motion passed.

**Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council
Meeting Minutes – General Session – September 3, 2025**

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

2. Mission Moment – A Patient Story

Ms. Martinez stated that PAC staff serve as frontline responders, not just appointment schedulers, and praised the strong collaboration between PAC, Valleywise Health clinics, and nursing teams.

She commended a Patient Assistance Center (PAC) scheduler for her exceptional handling of a crisis call from a suicidal patient. Despite delays in reaching clinical staff, the scheduler remained calm, compassionate, and fully engaged, offering reassurance and support throughout the 30–40 minute call. With assistance from a co-worker, she eventually connected the patient to a nurse.

Ms. Martinez described this call as a mission moment, reflecting the broader role the PAC played in supporting patients through difficult situations.

3. Presentation on the Patient Assistance Center (PAC)

Ms. De Los Reyes explained that the PAC served as the central communication center for Valleywise Health, supporting patients in scheduling both primary and specialty care appointments. In addition to managing referrals and insurance verification, the PAC team was composed of specialized staff assigned to different locations, which enhanced their ability to address specific inquiries effectively. She stated that the PAC's role extended beyond handling phone calls, noting the complexity and scope of its operations.

During fiscal year (FY) 2025, the PAC averaged 80,000 answered calls per month, with daily volumes reaching nearly 4,500 calls. The call abandonment rate, defined as the percentage of calls not answered within 30 seconds, was 3.4% better than the benchmark of 6.5 percent.

She introduced the use of decision trees, a relatively new tool that helped ensure patients were scheduled with the appropriate provider at the right time.

Ms. De Los Reyes stated there were upgrades to the electronic medical record software which implemented several advanced technologies to enhance patient access and scheduling efficiency. One feature was a fast pass, which allowed patients to receive text notifications when earlier appointments became available. Open scheduling was also introduced, enabling patients, including new ones, to schedule appointments online based on availability and location. The restructured session limits moved away from rigid appointment models to a more flexible model that allowed providers to treat an established number of specific appointment types throughout the day. This approach helped reduce unfilled appointments and improved overall scheduling accessibility for patients.

Dr. Barker noted that the appointment availability and fill rate had consistently remained at 90% for more than twelve months, recently increasing to 93 percent. The milestone was largely attributed to the implementation of session limits, which enabled the team to schedule patients more efficiently.

Mr. Otu thanked Ms. De Los Reyes for the presentation and noted the effectiveness of new approaches that were positively impacting patients. He recognized that staff members handled emotionally difficult calls, even beyond their usual roles, and asked what training the PAC staff received to support callers in crisis.

Ms. De Los Reyes said that staff underwent standard Valleywise Health training along with additional specialized sessions to prepare for such callers in crisis situations.

Dr. Barker explained that the process of connecting patients to the appropriate support, whether a therapist, counselor, or crisis team, was complex and relied heavily on clinic nurses, clinical resource leaders (CRLs), and clinic managers making swift, informed decisions, supported by direct communication tools and strong team cohesion despite working remotely.

**Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council
Meeting Minutes – General Session – September 3, 2025**

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

4. Discuss and Review the Federally Qualified Health Centers Compliance Program and Ethics Line Report

Mr. Ortquist briefly introduced himself and noted that the primary strategy of a compliance program in the healthcare setting was to support employees and other workers within the organization to avoid issues. In a healthy organization, there were always a lot of regulations to keep track of, and problems still came up. In his role, as interim Chief Compliance Officer, he aimed to assist the organization to address and correct concerns as they occurred.

He explained that the focus of a compliance program was based on key areas highlighted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in its recent guidance. Areas included the False Claims Act, the Anti-kickback Statute, civil monetary penalty authorities, exclusion authorities, and the Stark Law related to physician self-referrals.

He also noted that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was part of this framework, especially concerning the privacy and security of health information. These laws were instrumental in shaping the scope of a healthcare compliance program.

Mr. Ortquist stated there were no calls into the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) ethics line for the fourth quarter of FY 2025. When calls were received, the goal was to close the inquiry within 30 days.

MOTION: Ms. Sullivan moved to recess general session and reconvene in executive session at 6:17 p.m. Mr. Otu seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan
0 Nays
2 Absent: Mr. Manoa, Mr. Tormala
Motion passed.

General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action:

Chair Arbuckle reconvened general session at 6:35 p.m.

5. Discuss, Review and Approve Submission to Health Resources and Services Administration Form 5A for a Change in Scope: Add Pediatric Specialty Services – Neurology, Pulmonology, Endocrinology, and Gastroenterology

Dr. Barker explained that the expansion of pediatric specialty services had enhanced the ability to serve patients, prompting a request to formally include the pediatric specialties of neurology, pulmonology, endocrinology, and gastroenterology within the FQHC scope. An application was submitted to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and received approval.

MOTION: Mr. Otu moved to approve submission to Health Resources and Services Administration's form 5A for a change in scope to add the following pediatric specialty services: neurology, pulmonology, endocrinology, and gastroenterology. Ms. Sullivan seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan
0 Nays
2 Absent: Mr. Manoa, Mr. Tormala
Motion passed.

**Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council
Meeting Minutes – General Session – September 3, 2025**

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

6. Discuss, Review and Approve the Federally Qualified Health Center Clinic of the Year for Fiscal Year 2025

Dr. Barker explained that the selection process for Clinic of the Year involved evaluating patient experience scores, volume-to-budget performance, total visits, and employee engagement across all clinics, with a focus on percentage improvement. One clinic demonstrated notable achievements, including a patient experience score of 78.9%, a 136% improvement in volume-to-budget variance, a 14.1% increase in total visits, and an employee engagement score of 82.2 percent. Based on the results she recommended that Valleywise Community Health Center - West Maryvale be named Clinic of the Year for FY 2025.

MOTION: Ms. Sullivan moved to approve Valleywise Community Health Center – West Maryvale as the Federally Qualified Health Centers Clinic of the Year for Fiscal Year 2025. Ms. Muñoz seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan
0 Nays
2 Absent: Mr. Manoa, Mr. Tormala
Motion passed.

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

Mr. Hooper shared that the Connecting with the Community Committee (CCC) had focused on a strategic plan to strengthen community engagement through its champion clinics.

The clinics were set to host community events aimed to connect with local leaders, potential patients, businesses, and health insurance companies, while showcasing Valleywise Health's services. Improvements included a standardized event checklist, a behavioral health campaign video, cross-departmental collaboration, and trained storyteller ambassadors.

Mr. Hooper mentioned the storyteller training was scheduled to begin on September 8, 2025.

He stated the CCC planned to finalize metrics for the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), which would be submitted to the Governing Council for approval.

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

Dr. Barker discussed the ambulatory dashboard, noting that Ms. De Los Reyes reported a notable increase in the appointment fill rate, which reached 93.1% with a benchmark of 93%, a 3% increase from the previous month. She noted that new patient availability was 13.9 days, surpassing the 21-day benchmark, a result largely driven by enhancements by fast pass, open scheduling, and session limitations.

The no-show rate missed the 15% benchmark, coming in at 16.9%. With some clinics experiencing rates as high as 30% on certain days. There were targeted plans to address barriers to attendance.

The referral ready to book benchmark was 95%, with most clinics booking within three to seven days, better than the benchmark at 96.2 percent.

**Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council
Meeting Minutes – General Session – September 3, 2025**

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

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

The patient experience score began the year at 77.8%, just missing the 78% benchmark, with expectations for improvement through initiatives such as the Orange Frog workshop training designed to boost happiness, engagement, and performance within the organization.

Dr. Barker reviewed financial metrics, noting revenues were 10% better than budget, expenses missed budget by 7%, and total visits were 7.8% better than budget for FY 2026.

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

There were no comments.

10. Governing Council Member Closing Comments/Announcements

There were no comments.

Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Jacobson moved to adjourn the September 3, 2025, Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting. Ms. Sullivan seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam
Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan
0 Nays
2 Absent: Mr. Manoa, Mr. Tormala
Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.



Denise Tapia
Deputy Clerk of the Board