

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 October 1, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
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Members Present: Earl Arbuckle, Chair
Nelly Clotter-Woods, Vice Chair
Chris Hooper, Member – *participated remotely*
Salina Imam, Member – *participated remotely*
Aime Ishimwe, Member – *participated remotely*
Scott Jacobson, Member – *participated remotely*
Eric Manoa, Member – *participated remotely*
Norma Muñoz, Member
Essen Otu, Member
Eileen Sullivan, Member
Wayne Tormala, Member – *participated remotely*

Members Absent: Piedad Blake, 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
Paige Pataky, Senior Counsel Employment and Litigation
Jeanne Nizigiyimana, Refugee Clinic Manager

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 eleven of the twelve voting members of the Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council were present, which represented a quorum.

For the benefit of all participants, Ms. Tapia announced the Governing Council members who participated 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 – October 1, 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 September 3, 2025
 - b. Contracts:
 - i. Intentionally Left Blank
 - c. Governance:
 - i. Approve a Congratulatory Letter from the Governing Council to Federally Qualified Health Center Clinic of the Year Staff
 - ii. Approve a Congratulatory Letter from the Governing Council to Dental Clinic Staff
 - 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. Otu seconded.

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

2. Mission Moment – A Patient Story

Ms. Nizigiyimana shared a story of a patient who, after experiencing homelessness and severe health challenges, was referred to Valleywise Community Health Center—McDowell. There, he received comprehensive support, including medical treatment, housing assistance, nutritional resources, and dedicated case management. Over time, his physical and mental health stabilized, and he gained access to safe housing, reliable transportation, and consistent meals. He was so grateful for the care and compassion he received, which highlighted Valleywise Health's commitment to serving vulnerable populations and dedication to patient care.

She stated another patient from the Democratic Republic of Congo, enjoyed connecting with cultural health navigators during her visits. She often lingered in the lobby to chat, expressing that the clinic reminded her of being with her children in Europe. Ms. Nizigiyimana expressed that a strong rapport had been established between the staff and patients.

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

3. Discuss, Review and Acknowledge Valleywise Health's Federally Qualified Health Centers Locations, Hours of Operation and Services

Dr. Barker stated that acknowledging Valleywise Health's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) locations, hours of operation, and services was an annual requirement by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), noting the only update was to the Valleywise Community Health Center-McDowell's operating hours.

MOTION: Ms. Sullivan moved to acknowledge Valleywise Health's Federally Qualified Health Centers locations, hours of operation and services. Mr. Jacobson seconded.

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

4. Discuss, Review and Acknowledge the Following Valleywise Health Policies:
a. 99002 G - Billing
b. 99004 G - Collection Efforts

Dr. Barker said that the Valleywise Health policies were reviewed every two years and required formal acknowledgment by the Governing Council. The policies outlined efforts to collect payment for services rendered, including billing procedures, financial qualification for coverage, third-party billing, a sliding fee scale, and guidance for collecting outstanding balances.

MOTION: Ms. Sullivan moved to acknowledge Valleywise Health policies: 99002 G – Billing and 99004 G - Collection Efforts. Mr. Otu seconded.

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

5. Discuss, Review and Approve Revisions to Valleywise Health Policy: 20077 D - FQHC Clinic: After Hours Care and Calls

Dr. Barker shared that the revised after-hours policy would now instruct the switchboard operator to contact the backup on-call provider if the initial provider does not respond within 15 minutes, shortening the previous response window of 30 minutes.

Mr. Otu emphasized the importance of using gender-neutral language, noting that some providers may not identify with a specific gender. He recommended replacing gendered terms such as him or her with more gender-neutral terms.

Dr. Barker agreed with the recommendation and confirmed she would make the necessary changes and present the revised policy to the Governing Council for approval at the November meeting.

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

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

Dr. Barker noted that the only change involved with the Change in Scope was adding cardiology to the pediatric specialty services.

MOTION: Ms. Sullivan moved to approve submission to Health Resources and Services Administration Form 5A for a Change in Scope: Add Pediatric Specialty Services – Cardiology. Ms. Muñoz seconded.

VOTE: 11 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Imam, Mr. Ishimwe, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Manoa, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tormala

0 Nays

1 Absent: Ms. Blake

Motion passed.

7. Report on Orange Frog Training Workshop

The Orange Frog training was a workplace program based on positive psychology that helped individuals and organizations boost performance through happiness and optimism.

Mr. Jacobson expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to spend two full days with the FQHC staff, commending their dedication to cultivating a positive workplace culture and strong team collaboration in support of patient care. He stated the Orange Frog training was an engaging experience, noting the staff's enthusiastic participation throughout the sessions.

Chair Arbuckle said that it was a meaningful opportunity to connect with staff which he had been engaging with more frequently in recent months. He appreciated the chance to elevate workplace culture through the Orange Frog training. The experience included themed activities, discussions on challenges like funding, and a happiness tour around the Valleywise Health campus that emphasized positivity and appreciation. Staff responded enthusiastically, reinforcing the importance of gratitude, teamwork, and shared purpose in supporting Valleywise Health's mission.

Dr. Barker shared a personal experience of a positive cultural shift within the clinics, highlighting early indicators of the Orange Frog training's effectiveness while awaiting formal data. She expressed gratitude for the ambassadors' active engagement in supporting the FQHC clinics.

8. Valleywise Health's Federally Qualified Health Centers Year-in-Review Report

Dr. Barker summarized the annual report she presented to the Maricopa County Special Health Care District Board of Directors (Board) with a comprehensive year-in-review aligned with the organization's strategic plan. Her presentation highlighted achievements across five key focus areas: enhancing patient experience, mobilizing equitable health initiatives, connecting with our community, empowering our teams, and modernizing our operations.

She reviewed the strategic initiative challenges: workforce, reimbursements, patient access, resources and Governing Council, noting that while workforce recruitment and compensation remained ongoing challenges, the organization had made significant progress in provider recruitment, reaching nearly full staffing levels.

Dr. Barker presented an overview of the calendar year (CY) 2024 Uniform Data System (UDS) metrics, noting Valleywise Health's position among other FQHCs in Arizona and across the nation.

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

8. Valleywise Health's Federally Qualified Health Centers Year-in-Review Report, cont.

Nationally, 32 million patients received care through 1,359 FQHCs, with Arizona accounting for 23 centers serving approximately 867,000 patients. Valleywise Health contributed over 10% of that total, serving around 86,692 individuals.

Ms. Iman inquired if all the Valleywise Health facilities provide care to undocumented individuals.

Dr. Barker stated that Valleywise Health provided care to all individuals, regardless of their ability to pay or immigration status, noting that anyone could access services at Valleywise Health facilities without needing to show proof of residency or legal status in the United States.

She reported that in 2024 the total FQHC visits rose from 315,000 to 337,045, a two percent increase which aligned with the organization's three-year goal of a five percent growth. Dental visits were better than expected, reaching 26,851 compared to 24,000 the previous year. Integrated behavioral health services served 36,495 patients in 2024 and remain on track for continued growth.

She conveyed the Board and staff's gratitude for the Governing Council's ongoing dedication to the FQHCs.

Chair Arbuckle highlighted the importance of active engagement and participation among the Governing Council members, acknowledging that while they serve as volunteers, their support for the Board initiatives, such as the Proposition 409 campaign, and their visible presence in the community were vital. He reaffirmed the Governing Council's role in governance rather than operations, highlighting its responsibility in decision-making and advocacy. Reflecting on the Governing Council's growth, he noted that many members had joined within the past three years, and with a few long-standing members nearing transition, efforts to recruit new representatives would continue into the fiscal year.

Mr. Otu raised concerns about the ongoing challenges related to the payer mix. He inquired whether Valleywise Health's structure had any nuanced differences regarding how it would address the payer mix challenges and asked whether new strategies or interventions were being considered.

Dr. Barker reiterated Valleywise Health's core mission to serve all individuals, regardless of their ability to pay, acknowledging that the organization may never reach low uninsured rates, but improving the payer mix slightly by reducing the uninsured rate and increasing the amount of Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) patients using Valleywise Health.

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

Mr. Hooper mentioned that during the last Connecting with the Community Committee meeting, members collaborated with Maricopa County Public Health partners to review 20 key indicators tied to the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), a federally mandated process guiding strategic planning and community engagement. The group began prioritizing these indicators, aiming to narrow them to six actionable indicators by December 2025, for presentation to the Governing Council.

He stated he led storyteller training to help staff share heartfelt narratives about their work at Valleywise Health. He reflected on the emotional impact of these stories and the dedication of staff across departments, noting that the storytelling training was halfway complete.

NOTE: Mr. Jacobson exited the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

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

10. Federally Qualified Health Centers' Chief Executive Officer's Report, Including Ambulatory Operational Dashboards

Dr. Barker reviewed the ambulatory operational dashboard for August 2025. She reported that overall performance metrics showed positive progress, with most indicators meeting their metrics. She noted that new patient availability averaged 14 days which was better than the 21-day benchmark. The no-show rate remained a challenge at 16.5%, missing the 15% benchmark. She highlighted the Press Ganey patient experience score of 79%, which was better than the benchmark of 78 percent.

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

Mr. Purves expressed his gratitude to all participants in the Orange Frog training program, describing it as inspiring, and noted that he keeps an orange frog on his desk as a daily reminder of its impact.

He noted that the Board approved the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)'s goals for FY 2026 and took a moment to connect the goals to the organization's core values. He restated the mission: to provide exceptional care without exception, every patient, every time. He also highlighted the vision to be nationally recognized for transforming care to improve community health.

Mr. Purves mentioned that the demolition of the legacy hospital had become an increasingly fascinating process, noting that the project remained on track and would ultimately lead to the repaving of the site for parking in preparation for the next major project. He stated that Proposition 409 was designed to provide capital funding for future development, which would be financed and repaid through the people who pay Maricopa County's property taxes. He explained that the projects that would be funded through Proposition 409 were projected at \$898 million.

Mr. Purves reiterated the discussion about payer mix and highlighted the organization's critical responsibility to be a good steward of taxpayer resources. He stressed that gaining support from the state, donors, and the broader community required demonstrating fiscal accountability. He explained that increasing the proportion of Medicaid patients would generate additional resources to reinvest in services that were not self-sustaining, but expressed confidence in Dr. Barker and her team, who were actively working on strategies to improve quality, reduce costs, and strengthen financial margins.

12. Governing Council Member Closing Comments/Announcements

There were no comments.

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Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Otu moved to adjourn the October 1, 2025, Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting. Ms. Sullivan seconded.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.



Denise Tapia
Deputy Clerk of the Board