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 7, 2026, 5:30 p.m.

Members Present:	Earl Arbuckle, Chair – *participated remotely* Nelly Clotter-Woods, Vice Chair Piedad Blake, Member – *participated remotely* Aime Ishimwe, Member – *participated remotely* Maria Mancinas, Member Norma Muñoz, Member Essen Otu, Member– *participated remotely* Steven Pettigrew, Member Eileen Sullivan, Member – *participated remotely* Wayne Tormala, Member – *participated remotely*
Members Absent:	Glenda Cota, Member Chris Hooper, Member
Others/Guest Presenters:	Michelle Barker, DHSc, Chief Executive Officer of the Federally Qualified Health Centers Paige Pataky, JD, Assistant General Counsel Melanie Talbot, Chief Governance Officer and Clerk of the Board Frank Hemeon, Interim Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer Matthew Meier, MBA, Vice President, Financial Services Merima Bucaj, MD, Medical Director of Ambulatory Service Ashley Teeters, Vice President Revenue Cycle Siobhan Mee, Senior Director Revenue Cycle Katia Cota, Dental Assistant
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 eight of the twelve voting members of the Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council (Governing Council) were present, which represented a quorum. Ms. Sullivan and Mr. Otu joined after roll call.

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 none.

NOTE: Ms. Sullivan joined at 5:32 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 September 2, 2026

   b. Contracts:

      i. Acknowledge a new intergovernmental agreement (90-27-031-1) between Maricopa County Department of Public Health and Maricopa County Special Health Care District dba Valleywise Health, to support the Community Vaccine Provider Program

   c. Governance:

      i. Intentionally Left Blank

   d. Medical Staff:

      i. Acknowledge the Federally Qualified Health Centers Medical Staff and Advanced Practice Clinician/Allied Health Professional Staff Credentials

      ii. Acknowledge the appointment of Waridibo Evelyn Oluwatoyin Allison, M.D., Ph.D. as Department Chair of Internal Medicine

MOTION: Ms. Mancinas moved to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Muñoz seconded.

VOTE: 9 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Pettigrew, Ms. Sullivan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
3 Absent: Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper, Mr. Otu
Motion passed.

NOTE: Mr. Otu joined at 5:33 p.m.

Vice Chair Clotter-Woods read the Mission Statement aloud.

2. Mission Moment – A Patient Story

Ms. Cota stated that she loved her job and enjoyed helping patients while working alongside providers. She explained that many dental patients were visiting a dental office for the first time and often arrived feeling scared, uncertain, or ashamed. She said she focused on making patients feel comfortable, guiding them through the process, and serving as their advocate.

She noted that her bilingual skills allowed her to communicate effectively between providers and patients, helping ensure patients received the care they needed. She shared that many patients experienced a sense of relief when they were able to speak in their preferred language and have their concerns accurately translated.

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

2. Mission Moment – A Patient Story, cont.

Ms. Cota stated that seeing patients regain their smiles and confidence after treatment was one of the most rewarding aspects of her job. Although providers performed most of the clinical procedures, she felt proud to be part of each patient's journey.

She reflected on a message shared by her manager during a previous meeting: while staff may see many patients each day, each patient's visit is a unique and significant experience for them. She said this perspective had remained meaningful to her and influenced the way she approached patient care. She expressed appreciation for her team and stated that she was happy to be part of Valleywise Health.

3. Discuss and Review the Annual Federally Qualified Health Centers Fixed Assets Report

Mr. Meier presented the fixed assets report, explaining that the report displayed fixed assets for the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) locations, along with the corresponding depreciation over time. He noted that the report was intended primarily for informational purposes and provided an overview of the organization's assets and depreciation status across the FQHC locations.

Chair Arbuckle commented on the depreciation reflected in the organization's buildings and observed that some assets appeared to have a significant depreciation. He asked how changes in building value were accounted for and whether capital improvements, such as remodels, were added to the asset's current value and resulted in a reset or adjustment to the depreciation schedule.

Mr. Meier said that the organization had worked with its auditors, Plante Moran, to review and evaluate the remaining useful lifespan of equipment within each location. He stated that the asset values and depreciation schedules reflected those recommendations and were based on the useful life assumptions established through that review process.

4. Discuss, Review and Approve Revisions to Federally Qualified Health Centers Sliding Fee Discount Program/Policy #23624 D, and Revisions to Federally Qualified Health Centers Financial Assistance Sliding Fee Discount Schedule #23624

Ms. Mee reviewed a comparison of the Federally Qualified Health Centers Financial Assistance Fee Discount Schedule approved in May 2026 and the proposed changes, including the reasons for those revisions.

She explained that implementing fixed-dollar pricing for both laboratory and imaging services would make costs easier to estimate and more transparent for patients. Patients would no longer need to return for an additional estimate when a provider ordered a lab test, which would improve patient flow and simplify the billing process. For patients above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), charges had previously been based on a percentage of Medicare rates. The proposed schedule translated those Medicare-based calculations into fixed rates, making costs clearer and easier for patients to understand.

Ms. Mee reported that prenatal care fees had been reduced, with the prenatal package decreasing from $750-$900 to a sliding fee range of $100-$400 to improve access to care. She noted that requiring patients to pay several hundred dollars upfront could create a barrier to receiving prenatal services. Feedback from the community supported lowering those costs to improve affordability and accessibility.

She explained that most in-office procedures would now be bundled with the office visit unless a procedure involved a unique supply cost. The only procedures retaining separate fixed charges were primarily contraceptive devices and medications, such as Intrauterine Devices (IUDs), because of the direct cost associated with those products. General service fees were also simplified into co-pay structures that would be easier for patients to understand.

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

4. Discuss, Review and Approve Revisions to Federally Qualified Health Centers Sliding Fee Discount Program/Policy #23624 D, and Revisions to Federally Qualified Health Centers Financial Assistance Sliding Fee Discount Schedule #23624, cont.

Ms. Mee stated that dental fees remained unchanged, although a fixed fee was added for patients above 200% of the FPL. She clarified that the rate had previously been implied through an unofficial level 5 category and was now clearly defined within the schedule.

She reiterated that the revisions would provide easier cost estimates, reduce reliance on Medicare calculations, increase pricing transparency, establish defined rates for patients above 200% of the FPL, improve affordability and access to prenatal care, and simplify collections and financial counseling processes. She acknowledged that lowering certain fees could reduce self-pay collections, particularly for prenatal services and bundled procedures. However, she noted that the overall financial impact was expected to be limited because many outstanding self-pay balances were ultimately written off as bad debt.

Ms. Mee reviewed the ranking of projected financial impacts and outlined the implementation plan, noting that a previous challenge had been the inability of Valleywise Health Technology and Digital Services (TDS) to support certain billing decisions. Unlike prior processes, all proposed changes had been reviewed with the TDS department to ensure they could be built and implemented within the Epic (electronic health record) system. The proposed fee schedule was scheduled to go live on November 9, 2026, in conjunction with the next Epic system upgrade.

Mr. Otu requested clarification regarding the rationale for the proposed fee schedule revisions, particularly the significant reduction in prenatal care package fees. He asked what factors had prompted the changes at this time, beyond the Epic system updates, and sought an explanation of the considerations, trade-offs, and reasoning that supported the recommendation. He stated that he wanted a better understanding of why the organization was able to implement these changes now and the anticipated impacts of doing so.

Ms. Mee said that the fee schedule changes were primarily driven by concerns about access to care, particularly for prenatal services. She explained that some patients had previously participated in an informal process that allowed them to pay a $10 co-pay per visit. Because the program had never been formally approved, Revenue Cycle staff were unaware of it and had not considered its impact when developing the original prenatal package fees. As a result, the transition from a $10 co-pay model to an upfront prenatal package cost of $750 to $900 created a significant financial barrier for many patients. The proposed fee reductions were intended to lessen that burden and improve access to prenatal care.

Dr. Barker explained that the proposed fee reductions were supported by both patient access concerns and a financial review conducted by new Finance and Revenue Cycle leadership. She explained that FQHC services represent a small portion of the organization's overall budget but serve patients with the greatest financial need.

She emphasized that lowering prenatal, laboratory, and other service fees would improve affordability and encourage patients to seek care earlier, particularly prenatal care, rather than delaying treatment due to cost barriers. She said that prior fee changes had created unintended challenges for providers and patients. After extensive review and collaboration, leadership concluded that the revised, lower rates would better support patient access and care, even though they were below the rates charged by some peer FQHC organizations.

Mr. Hemeon stated that the previous billing structure was not patient-friendly because patients often had to return to registration for cost estimates after a provider ordered laboratory services. He noted that the proposed fixed-fee approach would simplify the process and improve patient experience.

He emphasized that many FQHC patients face significant financial hardship and that an upfront prenatal care fee of $750 created a substantial barrier to care for individuals with limited resources. Mr. Hemeon stated that the financial impact of reducing those fees would be minimal to the organization, while the potential health benefits for patients and their infants could be substantial.

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

4. Discuss, Review and Approve Revisions to Federally Qualified Health Centers Sliding Fee Discount Program/Policy #23624 D, and Revisions to Federally Qualified Health Centers Financial Assistance Sliding Fee Discount Schedule #23624, cont.

Mr. Hemeon explained that the changes align with the organization's commitment to eliminating financial barriers to care. He noted that providers had reported some patients declining services when they were unable to afford their co-pays. By lowering fees and simplifying the payment process, the organization could improve access to care, encourage patients to receive treatment, and better support vulnerable populations while having only a limited impact on overall revenues.

Mr. Pettigrew said that he appreciated hearing the explanation of the analysis and modeling that had been completed to assess the proposed fee schedule changes. He noted that, when reviewing the presentation, some of the fee reductions initially appeared significant and raised concerns about their potential financial impact. However, he stated that he was comfortable with the recommendation after learning that staff had thoroughly evaluated the proposal, tested the impacts, and understood the associated financial implications.

Ms. Mancinas expressed support for the substantial reduction in the prenatal care package fees, stating that she was pleased the services would be more affordable for mothers and that the changes would not significantly impact the budget. She then asked whether there were plans to provide or expand support for mothers through postnatal care services following the birth of their babies.

Ms. Mee shared that after patients were discharged from inpatient maternity care, they transitioned to the organization's regular visit plan for their ongoing postnatal care and follow-up services.

Chair Arbuckle expressed support for the proposed fee schedule changes and commended staff on their work. He noted that the significant fee reductions initially raised concerns about potential budget impacts, but the discussion and analysis presented by staff addressed those concerns. Chair Arbuckle stated that he was pleased to see community feedback being incorporated into the process and believed the organization was moving in a positive direction.

MOTION: Mr. Pettigrew moved to approve revisions to the Federally Qualified Health Centers Sliding Fee Discount Program/Policy #23624 D. Mr. Otu seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Mr. Pettigrew, Ms. Sullvan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
2 Absent: Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper
Motion passed.

MOTION: Mr. Pettigrew moved to approve revisions to the Federally Qualified Health Centers Financial Assistance Sliding Fee Discount Schedule #23624. Ms. Muñoz seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Mr. Pettigrew, Ms. Sullvan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
2 Absent: Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper
Motion passed.

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

5. Discuss, Review and Approve Grant Application to Health Resources and Services Administration for Expanding Nutrition Services, Grant No. HRSA-27-099

Dr. Barker mentioned that a grant application had been submitted to Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) under the Making America Healthy Again nutrition services grant program. She explained that the proposal focused was on addressing chronic disease identified through the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

She stated that, if awarded, the grant would support a program that combined education and patient empowerment with access to healthy food options designed for individuals with diabetes and cardiovascular conditions. She noted that because it was a HRSA grant, the item was being presented to the Governing Council after submission but prior to any award decision. She further explained that, if the grant were approved and the organization received funding, the proposal would be brought back to the Governing Council for full approval in accordance with grant requirements.

Ms. Muñoz inquired about the grant funding amount and asked whether the grant was intended exclusively for the FQHCs.

Dr. Barker said the grant request was for $350,000 annually for two years. She stated that the organization expected to receive a funding decision by the end of the year, although award notifications were sometimes delayed beyond anticipated timelines. She noted that the grant was scheduled to begin on December 1, 2026 and explained that, in order to meet that start date, HRSA would need to provide notification in the near future to allow sufficient time for implementation and program planning. Dr. Barker mentioned that the grant funding was designated specifically for the FQHCs.

MOTION: Mr. Otu moved to approve the Grant Application to Health Resources and Services Administration for expanding nutrition services, Grant No. HRSA-27-099. Ms. Sullivan seconded.

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Mr. Pettigrew, Ms. Sullvan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
2 Absent: Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper
Motion passed.

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

Dr. Barker presented the annual review of the document that identified each FQHC location, including its address, hours of operation, and services provided. She stated that the information had remained largely unchanged from the previous year, with the exception of the removal of the Mobile Health Unit (MHU).

She explained that the document was reviewed annually to ensure compliance with applicable requirements and to confirm that Governing Council members were aware of the services offered and operating hours at each location. She requested the Governing Council acknowledge the document as part of the annual review and compliance process.

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

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

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

VOTE: 10 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Mr. Pettigrew, Ms. Sullvan, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
2 Absent: Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper
Motion passed.

7. Discuss, Review and Approve the Maricopa County Special Health Care District dba Valleywise Health, Organizational Chart for the Federally Qualified Health Centers

Dr. Barker stated that several leadership changes had occurred and that the organizational chart was being updated to reflect those changes. She reported that Dr. Merima Bucaj had been appointed Interim FQHC Medical Director and that Dr. Jodie Carter had accepted the role of Interim Chief Medical Officer. She announced the appointments of Mr. Frank Hemeon as Interim Chief Financial Officer and Ms. Jan Botts as Interim Vice President of Quality and Safety.

Dr. Barker identified an error in the organizational chart. She explained that Dr. Baharak Tabarsi should be removed as FQHC Quality Director and replaced by Dr. Srilakshmi Settipalli. She requested that any motion to approve the updated organizational chart include this correction.

She said that, with the exception of the noted change, the organizational chart was complete. She explained that maintaining and updating the chart was an annual requirement and could also be done as needed to reflect organizational changes.

MOTION: Vice Chair Clotter-Woods moved to approve the Maricopa County Special Health Care District dba Valleywise Health organizational chart for the Federally Qualified Health Centers, with the amendment to remove Dr. Baharak Tabarsi as the FQHC Quality Director and add Dr. Srilakshmi Settipalli in that position. Mr. Pettigrew seconded the motion.

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

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

Dr. Barker reviewed the FQHC operational dashboard and reported that overall performance remained strong. She noted a recent improvement in no-show rates, which declined from 17% to 16%, bringing the organization closer to its 15% benchmark. She referenced ongoing no-show reduction initiatives and additional plans aimed at further lowering the rate and maximizing the utilization of available appointment slots.

General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action, cont.

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

Dr. Barker highlighted the combined FQHC results patient satisfaction results, stating that the Press Ganey score was 78.5% above the 78% benchmark. She noted that two measures remained slightly below the desired year-end benchmarks but expressed confidence that the organization would achieve those goals, citing the hard work and dedication of the care teams. She acknowledged the progress being made across operational and quality performance measures.

She reported that the HRSA Operational Site Visit (OSV) was tentatively scheduled for March 2027 and that HRSA had provided six months' notice, allowing additional time for preparation. She explained that HRSA was piloting one-day and two-day site visits and expressed hope that the organization would qualify for a shorter review based on its exceptional performance during the previous site visit, which resulted in no findings. She advised that Governing Council members would receive training and informational materials in preparation for the OSV.

Dr. Barker provided an update on the recent Maricopa County Special Health Care District Board of Directors (Board) meeting. She highlighted an annual presentation from Home Assist Health (HAH) Fiscal Year 2026 report, noting the organization's continued close relationship with Valleywise Health and suggesting a similar presentation for the Governing Council in the future.

She mentioned that an annual FQHC year-in-review presentation had been shared with the Board and would be presented to the Governing Council at a future meeting.

Dr. Barker stated that the Board reviewed the annual Culture of Safety Survey results and discussed future improvement initiatives. She reported that Valleywise Health met or exceeded the CEO performance goals for FY 2026 in nearly all strategic areas, with the exception of one inpatient services measure that remained a work in progress. She noted that the FQHCs met and exceeded their performance goals.

She said that the Board received an overview of the Valleywise Health Artificial Intelligence and expressed interest in providing a similar presentation to the Governing Council in the future.

Dr. Barker reminded the Governing Council that the upcoming clinic learning experience was scheduled for November 17, 2026 at Valleywise Community Health Center - West Maryvale. She stated that the visits had been well received by both staff and Governing Council members who had participated. Dr. Barker noted that each clinic offered a unique experience and learning opportunity, providing valuable insight into the services and operations at different locations. She encouraged the Governing Council members who were interested in attending additional site visits throughout the year to contact her.

She requested feedback regarding the Governing Council's traditional December holiday Governing Council meeting, which included a potluck. She noted that the event appeared to have been well received in previous years but wanted to gather members' input before making plans. She invited members to share their thoughts either during the meeting or by email so that the event could be planned according to the group's preferences.

NOTE: Ms. Sullivan exited the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Pettigrew moved to recess general session and reconvene in executive session at 6:28 p.m. Ms. Muñoz seconded.

VOTE: 9 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Ms. Blake, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Mr. Pettigrew, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
3 Absent: Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Sullivan
Motion passed.

NOTE: Ms. Blake exited the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

General Session, Presentation, Discussion and Action

Chair Arbuckle reconvened general session at 7:03 p.m.

9. Consideration, Discussion and Possible Action on the Performance Evaluation of Michelle Barker, DHSc, Chief Executive Officer, Federally Qualified Health Centers, for Fiscal Year 2026

Chair Arbuckle reported that the Governing Council discussed Dr. Barker's performance and the future evaluation process. He noted that Governing Council members recognized Dr. Barker's willingness to listen, consider feedback, and work collaboratively with the Governing Council. After reviewing her self-evaluation, the Governing Council agreed with the assessment and expressed a positive overall view of Dr. Barker's performance as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the FQHCs, with some members suggesting that certain areas may have merited even higher ratings.

Vice Chair Clotter-Woods thanked Dr. Barker for her service during the past year and commended her leadership. She stated that her observations of her interactions with the Governing Council and the community had consistently been effective, efficient, and respectful, reflecting both the organization's mission and her personal values. She noted that Dr. Barker had demonstrated an intentional commitment to including both community and Governing Council perspectives in decision-making. Vice Chair Clotter-Woods described her performance as exceptional and expressed her appreciation for her work over the past year.

Ms. Muñoz commended Dr. Barker for her leadership and for consistently keeping the Governing Council informed about activities and developments throughout Valleywise Health system. She stated that she was highly informative, passionate, and attentive to organizational matters, and she appreciated her responsiveness and willingness to answer questions and help the Governing Council better understand healthcare and hospital operations. Ms. Muñoz expressed agreement with Dr. Barker's self-evaluation, noting that she viewed her performance as highly effective, with some areas rising to an exceptional level. She thanked her for her continued service and support.

Mr. Tormala said that he supported the comments already shared regarding Dr. Barker's performance. He noted that Dr. Barker had been highly responsive to both him and the Governing Council as a whole. He stated that although she does not provide direct patient care, her leadership played a critical role in advancing health equity within the community and ensuring access to healthcare services. Mr. Tormala expressed his belief that lives were positively impacted by her work and described her performance as superb. He added that, given his focus on Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and community engagement, he would have rated Dr. Barker even higher than she rated herself in her self-evaluation.

Dr. Barker stated that she intentionally applied the same evaluation standards to herself that she used when evaluating members of her leadership team. She explained that she strived to assess her performance realistically and believed there was always room for improvement, which was why she would not typically give herself the highest rating in every category.

Mr. Otu echoed the previous comments and stated that Dr. Barker's leadership and stewardship were invaluable to Valleywise Health. Drawing from his own experience in executive leadership within an FQHC, he acknowledged the complexity and challenges of leading a healthcare system of that size. He remarked that the goals established for the year were impressive and noted that significant progress had been made in achieving them. He specifically highlighted improvements in appointment fill rates, patient satisfaction, and employee satisfaction, stating that these outcomes reflected strong leadership. Mr. Otu expressed his appreciation for Dr. Barker's work and thanked her for her continued dedication and service.

Ms. Mancinas expressed particular appreciation for the site visit program that Dr. Barker had established. She stated that the program enhanced her role as a Governing Council member by providing opportunities to engage with Valleywise Health beyond attending monthly meetings, reviewing presentations, and taking formal action on agenda items. She described the experience as valuable, meaningful, and informative.

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

9. Consideration, Discussion and Possible Action on the Performance Evaluation of Michelle Barker, DHSc, Chief Executive Officer, Federally Qualified Health Centers, for Fiscal Year 2026, cont.

Ms. Mancinas shared that she was impressed and proud of Valleywise Health and commended Dr. Barker, Dr. White, and the leadership team for their dedication and hard work. She remarked on the high level of professionalism demonstrated throughout the organization and noted that any discrepancies were promptly identified and addressed. Ms. Mancinas thanked Dr. Barker and the leadership team for their commitment, transparency, and outstanding service.

Chair Arbuckle agreed with the positive comments shared by other Governing Council members and thanked Dr. Barker for her leadership and support. He stated that she had been especially helpful in his role as Chair by listening, providing opportunities for learning, and engaging in thoughtful discussions to exchange ideas. He also appreciated her willingness to explore new approaches and opportunities for growth. Chair Arbuckle expressed his gratitude for her collaboration, guidance, and continued partnership.

Dr. Barker emphasized her commitment to continuous improvement and welcomed any suggestions on ways the organization could enhance its services or operations. Dr. Barker noted that the site visit program was developed as a direct result of conversations with Governing Council members regarding opportunities for greater engagement and collaboration. She explained that she takes such feedback seriously and uses it to guide improvements. Dr. Barker expressed sincere appreciation for the Governing Council's support, engagement, and thoughtful feedback, stating that she valued them immensely.

MOTION: Mr. Otu moved based on the Governing Council's review of Dr. Barker's performance evaluation for fiscal year 2026, the Governing Council had determined that she met the rating of Highly Effective. Mr. Tormala seconded.

VOTE: 8 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Mr. Pettigrew, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
4 Absent: Ms. Blake, Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Sullivan
Motion passed.

10. Report on the Federally Qualified Health Centers Learning Engagement Program

Mr. Tormala noted that he had participated in visits to both the Valleywise Community Health Center - North Phoenix and Valleywise Community Health Center - McDowell sites and found them to be highly valuable. He strongly encouraged fellow Council members who had not yet attended a site visit to do so, stating that seeing the operations firsthand provided a much deeper understanding of the organization's work and the Council's role in supporting it. He emphasized that meeting the people behind the services made a significant impact and reinforced the importance of the work being done.

He stated that he was particularly impressed by the high level of passion and commitment demonstrated by the FQHC staff, including those who had served the organization for many years. He remarked that this dedication was a tremendous asset to the community, especially in an area of healthcare that could sometimes receive less attention, such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) services. He expressed his appreciation for the staff, the site visit experience, and the important work being carried out throughout the organization. Mr. Tormala thanked Dr. Barker for her responsiveness and for supporting opportunities that allow Governing Council members to engage directly with staff and programs across the organization.

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

10. Report on the Federally Qualified Health Centers Learning Engagement Program, cont.

Ms. Muñoz reported on her visits to the Valleywise Community Health Center - McDowell and Valleywise Community Health Center - South Phoenix locations, stating that both experiences were informative and impactful. She praised the friendly, knowledgeable, and passionate staff and noted that the visits enhanced her understanding of the healthcare services provided throughout the Valleywise Health system. She highlighted the Valleywise Community Health Center - McDowell comprehensive HIV care services, specialized programs, strong patient outcomes, and commitment to patient engagement. Ms. Muñoz expressed appreciation for learning about the significant advancements in HIV treatment and care.

She spoke about the Valleywise Community Health Center - South Phoenix, emphasizing its broad range of services, including diabetes care, women's health, medication-assisted treatment, infusion services, substance use disorder treatment, food assistance resources, and pharmacy services. Ms. Muñoz commending both clinics for their dedication to providing comprehensive, accessible, and community-centered care.

Mr. Pettigrew shared observations from his visits from the Valleywise Community Health Center - McDowell and Valleywise Community Health Center - South Phoenix, noting that both provided valuable insight into the exceptional care being delivered throughout the Valleywise Health system. He stated that one of the most significant takeaways from the Valleywise Community Health Center - McDowell was learning about the remarkable advancements in HIV treatment over the past several decades. He was particularly impressed to learn that individuals living with HIV who were properly diagnosed, adhere to treatment, and receive regular care could now have life expectancies comparable to the general population.

He highlighted the Valleywise Community Health Center – South Phoenix residency program as a unique strength of the site. He noted that the presence of numerous residents creates both challenges and advantages, including increased flexibility in scheduling and improved patient access to care. He also commented positively on the clinic's adoption of new technology and electronic tools, noting that staff appeared enthusiastic about these advancements.

Mr. Pettigrew commended Dr. Barker for encouraging executive leadership to participate in the site visits and stated that their presence demonstrated a genuine interest in understanding clinic operations and supporting staff. He observed that, while each clinic has its own unique characteristics, all shared a strong commitment to providing high-quality patient care. He noted that staff were proud of their work and welcomed opportunities to showcase their programs and services. He shared that during the Valleywise Community Health Center - South Phoenix Clinic visit, staff identified the need for additional services, including a dental program, as an area for future consideration.

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

This item was not discussed.

12. Governing Council Member Closing Comments/Announcements

Chair Arbuckle provided a brief update on ongoing discussions related to ideas and best practices learned at the National Association of Community Health Centers conference (NACHC). He stated that he and Vice Chair Clotter-Woods had been meeting to review and discuss several concepts and planned to continue developing ideas before bringing them forward to Dr. Barker and, ultimately, the Governing Council for consideration. He noted that meetings with the staff within the Finance Department had been scheduled in the coming weeks to explore potential enhancements to financial reporting. Chair Arbuckle emphasized that no formal proposals were being presented at that time and that the discussions remained in the early stages of idea development.

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

12. Governing Council Member Closing Comments/Announcements

Mr. Otu announced that he and his wife would be hosting a table on behalf of Salt River Project (SRP) at the Valleywise Health Foundation's A Night in the Valley event and invited interested Governing Council members and their guests to attend. He stated that the event would be held on Saturday, October 17, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Creighton University and would feature a 1920's speakeasy theme, including dinner, live jazz entertainment, and period attire. Mr. Otu encouraged interested attendees to contact him directly.

Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Pettigrew moved to adjourn the October 7, 2026, Valleywise Community Health Centers Governing Council Meeting. Mr. Otu seconded.

VOTE: 8 Ayes: Chair Arbuckle, Vice Chair Clotter-Woods, Mr. Ishimwe, Ms. Mancinas, Ms. Muñoz, Mr. Otu, Mr. Pettigrew, Mr. Tormala
0 Nays
4 Absent: Ms. Blake, Ms. Cota, Mr. Hooper, Ms. Sullivan
Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.



Denise Tapia
Deputy Clerk of the Board