



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAM

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION MINUTES FOR MAY 2022 MEETING

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|---------------|---|--------------|---------|
| DATE: | May 16, 2022 | TIME: | 9:00 AM |
| PLACE: | HYBRID MEETING: Meeting held IN-PERSON and on ZOOM: Physical location: Central Fire, 930 17 th Ave., Santa Cruz. Downstairs conference room, to the left as you walk in the door | | |

AGENDA

ITEM:

1. Call to Order/Establish Quorum, Review/Correct Agenda, Minutes for April 2022:
Motion to approve Minutes for April 2022 passed.
2. **Written Correspondence Listing-**
 - a. *The Written Correspondence Listing is established to act as a report of materials received by the Commission as a whole but may also include items requested for inclusion by individual Commissioners. Upon completion of any actions deemed necessary (i.e., acknowledgment, referral, etc.), these items are included in the Written Correspondence Listing. While these items are not part of the official record of meetings of the Emergency Medical Care Commission they will be maintained by the Santa Cruz County Emergency Medical Services Agency for a period of two years. **No Correspondence presented.***
 - b. **Annual Diversion Report-Report copy provided for review.**
3. **Oral Communications-**
 - a. *Oral Communications for items not on the agenda will be presented for discussion purposes only and may be brought to the Commission by Commissioners or members of the public. **No Oral Communications***
4. **Behavioral Health update and impact on the ED's and EMS system-entire meeting is dedicated to this topic.**
 - a. **The Commission will engage in a focused discussion about the Behavioral Health impact on the ED's.**
 - i. *Update from Monica Morales, Director of Health Services:*
 1. *Ms. Morales provided an overview of the current situation with behavioral health in Santa Cruz County. She indicated the goal is to identify how to partner, and noted it will take a system working together to facilitate improvements. She noted that Santa Cruz is experiencing similar challenges as other areas in the state and nation. In reviewing other counties, she noted*

that we are lucky as patients in other areas may need to stay in Emergency Departments or jails rather than be transferred to a psych facility.

2. *Mr. Riera provided a detailed overview of behavioral health services that currently exist in the county, which includes: Mobile Emergency Response Teams for adults and Youth, Mental Health Liaisons who co-respond with Santa Cruz PD, Sheriff's Office, and Watsonville PD. Also included are Focused Intervention Teams who work with persons who are frequent contacts of law enforcement, the Crisis Stabilization Program (CSP) offering urgent crisis services, the Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF) offering inpatient services for both Adult and Children, there are several walk-in crisis service locations in North and South county, an after-hours crisis line, Mobile BH office in South county, and Dominican Telepsych services. Mr. Riera noted that the facilities in Santa Cruz County are not allowed to exceed their licensed capacity, and that capacity for psychiatric services statewide is very limited; there are bottlenecks at all counties and many patients are held in the Emergency Departments and jails waiting for beds to become available. In addition to limited beds being available, there is decreased capacity at hospitals due to nursing shortages, and the acute needs of the population have increased, with overdoses also increasing. All of these factors impact the CSP.*
 - ii. **Review of diversion data for CSP from EMS Director:** *The EMS Director share the interim spreadsheet tracking when the PHF goes on diversion.*
 - iii. **Review of data from the ED regarding the number of 5150 patients kept at the ED instead of transferring to the CSP due to diversion.** *Data was not provided.*
 - iv. **Identify a viable short-term plan to mitigate the ongoing impact to the ED's and EMS:** *Motion to approve a letter from the EMCC in support of the county obtaining funding to help improve BH capacity in the county. EMS Director to work with Reddinet to provide an easier method for tracking PHF diversions. BH will provide an update to the EMCC after six months, in January 2023. Funds have been received to add staff to co-respond with AMR , expand services in Watsonville, and expand MERT in north county. Funding is also available for a new peer crisis response team.*
 - v. **Identify a long-term plan to resolve BH challenges for the ED:** *New capacity coming in the county: the county is working on funding to set up a new 16-bed crisis facility which will include 8 beds dedicated to children. They also plan to add an adult crisis residential program near the current CSP.*
5. **The Commission received an update about the COVID-19 pandemic and impact to the hospitals:** *We are experiencing a surge of COVID illness, schools are seeing cases. Hospitals are doing OK. Omicron is thought to not be less severe, but vaccines and boosters are thought to be positively impacting how ill patients become. Assuming the new BA2, 4 and 5 may be more severe.*
- a. Information link:
<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/PublicHealth/CommunicableDiseaseControl/CoronavirusHome.aspx>

6. Watsonville Community Hospital

- a. *The EMCC will receive an update on WCH's status and consider taking action if necessary: No updates available. The WARN notices were extended, they are continuing to conduct fundraising to meet financial sustainment goals.*

No additional time was remaining, the items below are carried forward to the June 2022 meeting.

7. EMS Administrator Report

- a. *The Administrator will report on issues of interest such as the implementation of the ambulance contract, challenges, progress, concerns, for the Commission to consider for action if necessary.*

8. Prehospital Advisory Committee

- a. *The Emergency Medical Services Medical Director will provide an update of actions taken by the Prehospital Advisory Committee.*

9. ET3

- a. *The Commission will receive an update from AMR about the program.*

10. Innovator report

- a. *The Commission will receive an update about the work of the EMS Innovator.*

11. Radio system infrastructure report

- a. *The Commission will receive an update about the radio system infrastructure to consider for action if necessary.*

12. Air Ambulance closest unit response and staffing/Watsonville Base:

- a. *The Commission will receive an update about staffing and response by CALSTAR from the Watsonville Base and discuss air ambulance closest unit response.*

13. Items for June Agenda.

- a. *Items for June Agenda will be proposed.*

14. Adjournment

Commissioner in attendance:

Chris Clark, S.O.
Marcus Kwan, MD
Jason Nee, EMSIA
Greg Benson, AMR

Kent Benedict, MD
Eric Conrad, RN
Celia Barry
Michael McGannon, MD

Amy Grooters, RN
Marc Yellin, MD
Arnold Leff, MD
Rich Rubin

Commissioners Excused:

Dan Quinto, AMR

County Staff present:

Monica Morales, HSA Director
Emily Chung, Public Health Director

Dr. Gail Newel, Health Officer
Dr. David Ghilarducci, EMS Medical Director
Brenda Brenner, EMS Director
Claudia Garza, EMS Coordinator
Shelley Huxtable, EMS Office Administrative Asst.
Erik Riera, Behavioral Health Chief

Dr. Alex Threlfall, Behavioral Health

Cassandra Eslami, Behavioral Health

Michael Esslinger, AMR

Jeff Horner, CALSTAR

Alex Aste, AMR

Greg Benson, AMR

Eric Conrad, Dominican Hospital

Paul Angelo, Dominican Hospital

Jerry Souza, Dominican Hospital

Babs Kingsley, Dominican Hospital

Chief Rob Oatey, Santa Cruz Fire

Chris Stubendorff, Scotts Valley Fire

Dan Chavez, SCHIO

Amethyst Uchida, Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1