

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
HEALTH POLICY & PLANNING COMMISSION

April 29, 2021

Santa Fe, New Mexico

1. OPENING BUSINESS

A. Call to Order: This meeting of the Santa Fe County Health Policy & Planning Commission (HPPC) was called to order by Health Services Division Director Patricia Boies at 10:00 a.m. on the above-cited date.

In accordance with the Public Health Emergency Order issued by the State of New Mexico, and pursuant to the New Mexico Attorney General's Open Government Division Advisory during Covid-19, public entities are authorized to conduct virtual meetings. All votes were conducted by roll call.

B. Roll Call:

Members Present:

Laurie Glaze
Steven Berkshire
Laura Brown
Christa Coggins
Nelsy Dominguez
Sandy Dransfield
Kim Straus
Antoinette Villamil

Member(s) Excused:

Barry Cooney

County Staff Present:

Patricia Boies, Director, Health Services Division
Rachel O'Connor, Director, Community Services Department
Jennifer Romero, Health Care Assistance Administrative Program Manager
Daniel Fresquez, IT

Others Present:

Elizabeth Peterson, City of Santa Fe, Children and Youth Program Manager
Tom Massaro, NM DOH, Chief Medical Officer

C. Introductions

Ms. Boies invited those present to introduce themselves and asked HPPC members to say a little bit about their background and experience:

Christa Coggins currently works with the Santa Fe Community Foundation and has a background and Master's degree in public health and previously worked in AIDs research.

Nelsy Dominguez is the program director at Con Alma Health Foundation where she has been for six years. Previous work history includes Farm to Table and New Mexico Foundation. Ms. Dominguez will be finishing her Master's in social work within the year.

Sandy Dransfield is a retired health care executive having worked with United Health Care and Optum Health New Mexico, a behavioral health managed care company, as well as an associate professor in academia and deputy commissioner of the New York Office of Mental Health.

Kim Straus recently retired after 19 years with the Brindle Foundation. He has a history in fundraising and currently serves as a board member on the New Mexico Children's Trust Fund.

Laura Brown works in public health family medicine and as an addiction medicine physician. She is also faculty at University of New Mexico Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

Laurie Glaze is a retired social worker with a background in healthcare public policy and prior to that worked in foster care and adoption.

Steven Berkshire is a health care executive and is remotely running the doctoral program in health administration at Central Michigan University. He has served as a hospital administrator and lobbyist for the health care industry. Currently, he serves on the board of New Mexico Health Executives, an ACHD affiliate.

Antoinette Villamil is executive director at Many Mothers and previously worked at Eight North Indian Pueblos Council running their Upward Bound Program and teaching college with a Master's in creative writing.

Rachel O'Connor is the Director of the Santa Fe County Community Services Department.

Jennifer Romero is the Health Care Assistance Administrative Program Manager and oversees CONNECT for the County.

Elizabeth Peterson is the City of Santa Fe Children and Youth Program Manager and oversees CONNECT for the City.

Tom Massaro is the NM DOH Chief Medical Officer and a pediatrician.

D. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Coggins moved to approve and Commissioner Glaze seconded. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Commissioner Coggins nominated Laurie Glaze to the position of Chair. Commissioner Brown seconded the nomination.

Commissioner Glaze confirmed she was willing to accept the position and Commissioner Berkshire moved to elect Laurie Glaze by acclamation. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown and Laurie Glaze was declared Chair and led the remainder of the meeting.

Prior to starting the presentations, Chair Glaze recognized Rachel O'Connor for her leadership throughout the pandemic and the entire staff for their dedication in caring for the residents of Santa Fe County.

3. PRESENTATION

A. Update of Activities Over the Past Year

Ms. O'Connor highlighted Chair Glaze's efforts from mask making to assisting at vaccination sites. Nelsy Dominguez was also recognized for her assistance.

Ms. O'Connor stated that 18 months ago the BCC and County Manager put together a Covid-19 Task Force. She and Assistant Fire Chief Martin Vigil took lead positions on how the County would address Covid. A great concern was the jail. She thanked Patricia Boies, who was instrumental in developing a structure and drafting the Action Plan for Santa Fe County's response to Covid-19, with a significant emphasis on potential impact areas. Community Services Department staff were repurposed to address Covid and maintain their position responsibilities. County staff transitioned to remote working, which was a large task. Kat Ramos was credited with keeping the County jail Covid outbreaks small.

The Task Force started their efforts with a full-scale public awareness campaign in English and Spanish. The campaign began with internal money and then CARES Act funds. Those materials were shared with others throughout the country. The awareness campaign focus has changed from mask wearing and social distancing to vaccinations.

The County received \$15 million was received in CARES funding; the City received \$17 million. Between the two entities, they were able to address comprehensive needs within our community. The problem was there was only 10 weeks to spend it, which was a difficult feat, but funds were fully expended. Money went to reimbursement of public safety expenses

including salary funding and PPE, and supported 168 local businesses with \$3.6 million. She mentioned the following for funds within CONNECT:

- \$923,000 supported 598 individuals with housing
- \$300,000 for 254 individuals with food assistance
- \$240,000 for 451 individuals for utility support
- \$186,000 for 142 individuals with childcare
- \$42,000 supported 44 people with transportation assistance
- \$16,000 supported 10 individuals with personal safety
- \$90,000+/- went to educational supplies and navigation assistance

The public awareness campaign advertised the CONNECT program, and although CONNECT was tailored for this type of crisis, the online process was barely off the ground when the pandemic hit. Jennifer Romero and her team worked 24/7 to process applications. It was a full-force effort, and the big star coming out of the effort is the CONNECT program.

- \$150,000 for distribution of grocery bags
- \$157,000 supported homeless individuals
- Rent and mortgages was paid for 147 individuals through the Housing Program
- \$1.3 million on broadband extending to northern Santa Fe County
- Additional funds went to at-home Covid care kits through Christus and La Familia

Ms. O'Connor said she has become a rabid advocate of CONNECT, with its nimbleness in serving people with needs.

Concurrent with the pandemic has been the development of the Santa Fe County's Behavioral Health Crisis Center, "La Sala." The building has been remodeled to provide co-located services: a detoxification center which can serve twice the number of people they could in the past and can medically manage clients; the other half is the crisis center to include the mobile crisis team as well as a living room model of service for people who have intermediate care needs. She lauded County Public Works project manager Barbara Herrera and her staff.

In terms of vaccinations, the County has partnered and hosted a number of mass vaccination events. The County's mobile health van has been renovated to serve as a vaccination unit.

The County is gearing up for another round of federal funding called the American Rescue Plan. Biden's administration has outlined a new set of priorities that includes behavioral health, community support, child care, etc. She expressed her gratitude for the support to all involved from the County Manager to President Biden.

The *New Mexican* published an article on the number of people served with CARES Act funds in the City and the County and that can be forwarded to Commissioners.

Commissioner Dransfield said Ms. O'Connor's report of what Santa Fe County was doing during the pandemic to serve the residents gave her "goose bumps." "The level of compassion and action and tireless work that Rachel and her team did ... was phenomenal." She mentioned that

she runs a local volunteer-led Indivisible chapter in Santa Fe and they are available to provide assistance.

Commissioner Dominguez echoed Commissioner Dransfield's observation regarding compassion and action as well as grace, accountability, and the commitment of Santa Fe County staff. At a time of so much instability, the CONNECT non-profits all came together to provide services.

Chair Glaze mentioned the monumental efforts of the County's IT department ensuring that 600 employees could work remotely.

Ms. Boies expressed her appreciation to Commissioners Glaze and Dominguez and the providers, staff and navigators who were able to assist in appropriately spending the multi-million dollar CARES Act funds over an extremely short period. She reminded the Commission of the major project that the Santa Fe County Census occurred last year during the pandemic. She oversaw the County's census outreach efforts, which despite the pandemic and changing direction from the federal government, culminated in exceeding the predicted self-response rate in Santa Fe County. Preliminarily, it appears that New Mexico's population grew by 2.8 percent; county breakdowns will not be available until September.

Ms. Boies noted that the HPPC was recomposed by BCC resolution, with nine rather than 13 members: one from each of the five Commission districts and four at-large. She was confident the new composition will help strengthen the work of the HPPC.

B. CONNECT

Ms. Boies introduced Elizabeth Peterson, who was a consultant under contract with the County for four years as the CONNECT project manager, and Jennifer Romero, who manages the program for the County.

Ms. Peterson provided the following overview of CONNECT:

In 2017-2018:

- A gap analysis was conducted to create an accountable health community – a model to address unmet social determinants of health needs
- The concept was to work with the many community organizations that were doing things that looked like navigation to create a model with their input and assistance
- The model would be scalable/growable and replicable and started with a toolkit
- The model required flexibility that could flow and be responsive at an individual or systems level
- The vision is that all city and county residents, regardless of income, have access to high quality health care and are linked to the resources that they need
- The model looks at providing services and resources to people who need them in a variety of ways
- Standards and protocols would guide the different organizations

- Discussions began with eight organizations and 13 navigators discussing how to get resources to people in need
- An accountable health community was created and based on an “any door” approach
- Navigator data was collected and reported through Excel spreadsheets

In 2019:

- An online referral management system was introduced and Unite Us went live, which made a remarkable difference
- The name CONNECT was coined
- A partnership with the City was developed which brought additional funding and 40 organizations

In 2020:

- A logo was developed and discussions evolved on how to formalize and publicize the program
- The pandemic hit, and with the help of the Unite Us platform an online referral portal was created for anybody with internet access to communicate their needs
- Those assistance requests were responded to by hub navigators which were County funded employees as well as volunteers

In 2021:

- CONNECT is now 200 navigators strong with over 60 community programs and organizations

Ms. Peterson said there are organizations that want to join and staff is determining how best to be nimble and support people and organizations as CONNECT evolves. She praised the incredible work of “our community.”

Ms. Romero provided the following data from the platform:

- Since launching the Unite Us platform, 5,539 individuals have been served
- Housing and shelter continue to be the greatest need
- The self-referral portal launched in response to the pandemic has already received 3,316 assistance requests
- The platform allowed for the continuation of services during the pandemic
- At the start of the pandemic, the County contributed \$305,000 and the City contributed \$275,000 to the CONNECT network. Those funds were distributed to a few of the organizations that were in the network
- In October of 2020 when the CARES Act money came through, there was a lot of funding to distribute quickly
- Of the City’s CARES Act money, \$3.5 million was used for direct cash assistance
- A lot of homebound individuals couldn’t get to the food distribution sites and did not qualify for Meal on Wheels. The County contributed funds for rural distribution to the homebound and partnered with the Food Depot and Youth Works to staff this – there was help from Public Works, Growth Management, Senior Services staff

- From April 2019 to February 2020 - 770 individuals made requests for assistance via CONNECT
- March 2020 to December 2020 – 4,014 individuals made requests for food, housing, income support – over a five-fold increase
- 75 percent of the housing and shelter requests for assistance were resolved
- Food assistance, 96 percent of requests were resolved
- Income support, 91 percent of requests were resolved
- Utility assistance, 90 percent of requests were resolved
- The self-referral portal is a large step forward and was put in place earlier than originally planned, in response to the pandemic
- Navigators can be found at any of the 60+ CONNECT organizations/programs

Ms. Romero said the current project is developing a 2-1-1 Center. This will ensure that anyone at anytime can access CONNECT. Ms. Peterson said the City is entering into a contract with the United Way of Central New Mexico to run a 2-1-1 Call Center. The call center would provide a direct referral to a hub center or a navigator within the network.

Chair Glaze requested that staff send out the presentation to the HPPC members.

Commissioner Berkshire noted that a great deal of need will continue after Covid is over. He asked about on-going funding needs and suggested that the County prepare a presentation on its work at a meeting of the American Public Health Association (APHA).

Ms. Boies said there are plans to employ County funds as well as the influx of funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. Santa Fe County is slated to get \$21.1 million of Rescue Plan money which can address economic losses and social challenges, including the social determinants of health. Guidelines on how the Rescue money can be spent are expected soon from the US Treasury. While there are many other needs in the County, a portion will go to CONNECT. The County will also likely do something similar to what the City funded, called the Family Independence Initiative. She noted that the pandemic exposed systemic difficulties and needs across the world and CONNECT is providing the framework to meet challenges in Santa Fe County.

Ms. Peterson said there is an ongoing discussion with the Santa Fe Community Foundation about hosting a wellness fund. This would open a venue for people wanting to give and the Foundation could accept and distribute those donations. The City is applying for a grant to develop an ambassador program to serve as an additional tier to promoting CONNECT.

Ms. Romero said other communities have inquired about CONNECT and conversations on how to expand are ongoing. Ms. Boies said the state should participate in funding for CONNECT through NM Department of Health and/or the Human Services Department. Staff has met with elected officials and state division directors to develop statewide partnerships. Commissioner Straus suggested national foundations may be interested in funding a replication model.

Ms. Peterson said DOH Epidemiology is applying for a grant that would support organizations straddling Santa Fe County and Rio Arriba to tie onto Unite Us. There are a number of organizations in Taos and the City of Albuquerque that are also interested.

4. **MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN** - None were presented

5. **MATTERS FROM STAFF**

Ms. Boies reminded the HPPC members who have not submitted their conflict of interest form to please do so.

Santa Fe County received a Department of Justice grant awarded through NM Behavioral Health Services Division for a new County program called “COSSAP” (Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program). The County is one of six site-specific grant recipients in New Mexico. Similar to programs known as LEAD, the program gives law enforcement discretion in lieu of arrest, prosecution and incarceration to divert individuals suspected of low-level non-violent crimes driven by a substance abuse disorder and other behavioral health needs. This program will be integrated with CONNECT. The first step is hiring a program manager, which the County is in the process of doing.

Ms. Boies said a professional evaluation of CONNECT is in process and should be completed soon.

6. **MATTERS FROM THE COMMISSION**

Commissioner Dominguez asked about public participation with virtual meetings. Ms. Boies said the meeting was noticed and also emailed to some former participants. If the next meeting is virtual she will send notice out to a broader list.

By resolution, the HPPC has to meet at least quarterly, and there has been discussion that it may be better to meet quarterly or every other month so members can participate on other committees. Following discussion, there was consensus that for the immediate future, HPPC meetings would be held every other month on the fourth Thursday at 10 a.m.

Regarding the Santa Fe Detention Center, Commissioner Brown understood that there have been significant ongoing issues related to policy, practice, and programming around substance use disorder treatment. She requested the inclusion of that as an agenda topic for the HPPC to address. Chair Glaze recommended having a conversation offline regarding this topic.

Chair Glaze recommended at the next meeting further exploring what the County is interested in doing and how the HPPC could participate including broadening the CONNECT model.

Commissioner Straus announced that he has termed-out of the HPPC and this would be his last meeting. He said he has always been a strong believer in the impact of health on lives and thanked staff and the Commissioners for their services to that end.

- **Next Meeting:** June 24, 2021 at 10 a.m.

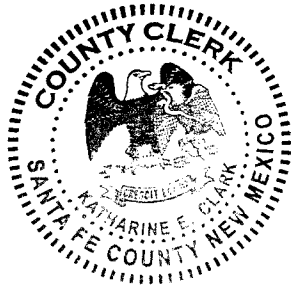
7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Glaze thanked everyone for attending and declared this meeting adjourned at approximately 11:45 a.m.

Approved by:

Laurie Glaze (pb)
Laurie Glaze, Chair
Health Policy & Planning Commission

Respectfully submitted by:
Karen Farrell (pb)
Karen Farrell, Wordswork



COUNTY OF SANTA FE) HEALTH POLICY & PLAN M
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss PAGES: 9

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 12TH Day Of August, 2021 at 11:10:19 AM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1962336
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Katharine E. Clark
Deputy _____ Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Katharine E. Clark
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

SFC CLERK RECORDED 08/12/2021