

Maternal Child Adolescent Health Advisory Board Minutes

May 1, 2025

Members	
Present	Absent
Erin Reed Catherine Barrisford Dr. Jeff Miller Gina Cuclis Dr. Elizabeth Vermilyea Allison Murphy Stephanie Montez Melissa Apuya Taylor Anderson-Stevenson** Kathy Reynolds Dr. Milana PeBenito**	Alexandra Rios** Dr. Michael Perry* Flora Henningsen*

*Excused absence

**Pending Approval by Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Staff Present Brittany Lobo, MCAH Director, Janette Allee, Administrative Aide, Nicole Bonkrude, Health Information Specialist II (Zoom), Ariel Thomas-Urlik, Program Planning and Evaluation Analyst (Zoom) Laura Turner Senior Public Health Nurse/MCAH Coordinator.

Call to Order Dr. Elizabeth Vermilyea called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. and introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes Gina Cuclis motioned to approve the March minutes, Kathy Reynolds seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

New Chair and Vice Chair Gina Cuclis motioned to nominate Dr. Elizabeth Vermilyea as Chair Dr. Jeff Miller seconded the motion and the membership voted to approve. Gina Cuclis nominated Catherine Barrisford as Vice-Chair, Allison Murphy seconded the motion, and the membership voted to approve.

Advocation on the Fluoridation of Water Kathy Reynolds led the discussion by stating that she believed this fight although important will end up being futile especially when we now have an effective alternate option in this expansion of coverage for fluoride varnish. Gina agreed with this statement adding that she is familiar with the politics in the county, and she knows the supervisor who represents the Sonoma Valley very well, but there are two supervisors who are not on board. Kathy added that to ask Public Health to do a study on the importance of fluoride in water, when there is already a limited budget, when there are more important things on which to focus may not be the best idea. Brittany Lobo stated that we don't have funding to do additional work and if we were given a directive, we would be at risk of putting our current work on hold. Gina proposed a gentler approach with the BOS in which they draw their attention to a report showing that one in four children experience tooth decay because they are unable to easily access dental care. Others agreed. Discussion continued regarding writing a letter to the BOS and including in the letter that the one probable cause of the decay in children's teeth is the lack of fluoride. Gina volunteered to draft the letter and Brittany will have the dental team assist with sending the data.

Assembly Bill 350 Ariel Thomas-Urlik presented information on the new bill proposed to expand the coverage of fluoride varnish in primary care and public health settings for Medi-Cal and commercial health care insurance. Melissa Apuya added that this bill will likely receive support and pass at the end of May.

The Wrong Steps for More Babies Allison Murphy spoke about the new policies affecting women in the perinatal period some of which are draconian and frightening. Some programs are even being eliminated. Allison asked what this membership can do? Kathy suggested rather than focusing on the negative perhaps we can urge the BOS to support the most important programs. Elizabeth noted that Head Start should be the safety net, because that also supplies nutrition. Kathy added that WIC is vital. Allison asked if there is any clarity on what is getting cut. Elizabeth said that she follows the National Council on Non-Profits, and they have been tracking who have been cut. Stephanie Montez said that in her agency

they have been instructed to continue to work as usual, stay flexible, don't try to anticipate what might happen.

State Legislation Melissa Apuya reported that SB 626 passed appropriations yesterday for perinatal mental health. And AB 342 which proposes extending alcohol serving hours to 4 a.m. on weekends and holidays through "hospitality zones".

Correspondence Kathy Reynolds swore in before the meeting today becoming a full-fledged member, applications were received from Alexandra Rios from 4Cs for the position of Child Care and Development, Taylor Anderson-Stevenson for the position of Safety and the Prevention of Violence, and Milana PeBenito for Child Health, and they have all already been submitted for appointment to the BOS.

Staff Report Brittany Lobo reported that one of our new public health vending machines is currently in our lobby and she encouraged the members to take a look. When planning this project they looked at others similar in Chicago and Las Vegas that performed well with numbers like 1200-1500 items per year, Public Health's have been in use for one month and have supplied 400 in the first month!

Announcements Dr. Vermilyea notified the members a maternal behavioral health RFP from CPI was approved and together with Mothers Care and ELI (Early Learning Institute, and West County Health Centers and Doulas were given 3 million dollars for a three-year period. This will be a beautiful project, to interface with Healthy Families America from 0-2 years old and will follow the family up to three years. This area has approximately 100 babies every year. This involves nutrition and health, they include input from the families, they built a park with their input, and it includes a stipend for their partner's interaction.

Erin Reed announced that she will be going on maternity leave and this will be her last meeting for a while.

Brittany asked for feedback about common barriers that parents experience when bringing their children to well child visits. Dr. Miller said transportation is an issue for some. Taylor said many people have a lack of trust in big pharma and may have a level of suspicion, there is a lot of conflicting data which causes some to simply opt out. Sometimes people have a mistrust in government, there needs to be more community education. Erin added that some are fearful and have delayed their vaccination schedule. Kathy stated that some mothers don't want their babies to have so many shots at once, saying they will come back later. Elizabeth said this is a good job for motivational interviewing. Stephanie said if you miss your cycle of appointments your insurance won't cover it. Dr. Milana PeBenito added that they are working against TikTok, we need a public campaign.

Public Comment None

Meeting Adjourned The meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

Passed Motions			
The March minutes were approved. Dr. Vermilyea was voted in as Chair. Catherine Barrisford was voted in as Vice-Chair			
Handouts			
Action Items			
2025 Meeting Dates			
June 5	Thursday	12:30-2:00 pm	463 Aviation Blvd, Live Oak Room
August 7	Thursday	12:30-2:00 pm	463 Aviation Blvd, Live Oak Room
September 4	Thursday	12:30-2:00 pm	463 Aviation Blvd, Live Oak Room
October 2	Thursday	12:30-2:00 pm	463 Aviation Blvd, Live Oak Room
November 6	Thursday	12:30-2:00 pm	463 Aviation Blvd, Live Oak Room
December 4	Thursday	12:30-2:00 pm	463 Aviation Blvd, Live Oak Room
MCAH AB Website			
https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/health-and-human-services/health-services/divisions/public-health/maternal-child-and-adolescent-health/maternal-child-and-adolescent-health-advisory-board			