



**COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES**

February 25, 2021

Commissioners Present: Rachel Champagne, Dr. Michael Gollub, Dr. Robert Levin, Barbara Marquez-O’Neill, Dr. Cesar Morales, Bruce Stenslie, Dr. Christine Walker, Barry Zimmerman

Excused Absence: Matt LaVere

Staff Present: Petra Puls, Tyla Adams, John Anderson, Lauren Arzu, Sharon Elmensdorp, Fahim Farag, Heather Guerrero, Teresa Gutierrez, Jimena Hernandez, Jennifer Johnson, Sam McCoy, Grace Montejano, Nani Oesterle

Guests Present: Alice Lam

Public Present: Elizabeth Hardin Boyett, Andrew Huizar, Alicia McFarland, Mabel Munoz

OPENING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Marquez-O’Neill opened the meeting at 1:01 p.m., reminded attendees how to participate via public comment, and shared quotes from Maya Angelou and Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. Approval of Minutes from January 28, 2021 Commission Meeting

Commissioner Gollub noted paragraph 2 in section 12 of the minutes should be amended to state “a child’s brain develops postnatally faster from birth to age three” and reminded F5VC staff on the importance of prioritizing healthy development in the prenatal period.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stenslie, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to approve the minutes from the January 28, 2021 Commission Meeting with the revision requested by Commissioner Gollub. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Agenda Approval and Review of Commission Packets

Chair Marquez-O’Neill provided an overview of regular and supplemental packet items, noting materials were sent via email and are posted on the F5VC website.

A motion was made by Commissioner Zimmerman, seconded by Commissioner Morales, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments/Correspondence

There were no comments from members of the public.

5. Presentation: Strengthening the Social and Emotional Health of California’s Young Children: Medi-Cal Strategies and Options for Creating an Advanced Child Health Delivery System

Petra Puls noted that over the past year, F5VC participated in two projects to deepen our understanding of and engagement with local health care systems, particularly Gold Coast Health Plan (GCHP). Highlights of F5VC’s work with the Nemours Learning Lab were shared in January. Today’s presentation will focus on F5VC’s participation in a Pediatrics Supporting Parents initiative to identify opportunities for leveraging Medi-Cal to support child development in innovative ways with GCHP. Petra noted F5VC was one of four counties selected to participate, thanked the Packard Foundation for grant funding, and introduced Alice Lam, Managing Director for Manatt Health.

Alice Lam noted that the focus of the project was to leverage Medi-Cal to advance and support the pediatric primary care delivery system. California was the focus of this project because the Medi-Cal program reach, compared to other states, is staggering. Medi-Cal covers 1.5 million young children, and 2/3 are children of color. Alice highlighted California’s current steps to improve outcomes for early childhood, including supplemental provider payments for ACEs and developmental screenings, family therapy guidance, the CA Master Plan for Early Learning and Care, and the Roadmap for Resilience.

The PSP CA Options Paper outlines essential elements of an equitable, advanced child health system, actionable short- and long-term strategies, implementation approaches, and more. Alice outlined the key components: a whole child approach, family-centered care, and community-driven team based model. She concluded her presentation with an overview short- and long-term strategies and implementation approaches, such as Medi-Cal managed care re-procurement.

Commissioner Gollub recommended that Manatt Health add prenatal maternal health as a pillar to their long-term strategies.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Receive and File the First 5 Ventura County Financial Reports as of December 31, 2020

A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

7. Recommendation to Grant Authority to the Executive Director to Contract with the Mixteco Community Organizing Project (MICOP)

Chair Marquez O’Neill noted she has a conflict of interest and recused herself. Vice-Chair Stenslie introduced the item, reminding the commission that the item was also discussed in January.

Sam McCoy noted that F5VC has partnered with MICOP for the last 15 years to serve the local Mixtec population, one of the most vulnerable populations we serve. He detailed the history with MICOP of funding Promotores outreach workers to provide parent education, parent and child together classes and case management. As these services have been embedded within the NfL system, for the past two years F5VC has funded these services through ICFS, who subcontracted with MICOP at \$250,000 annually. Sam concluded that as F5VC's contract with ICFS will end in June the staff recommendation is to enter into a direct contract with MICOP as of July 1, 2021 for the next two years at \$250,000 annually. He added this allocation has been contemplated in the F5VC financial plan.

Commissioner Walker asked if the service level will remain the same. Sam confirmed it will.

Dr. Levin commented that he has been impressed with MICOP's growth and service over the years.

A motion was made by Commissioner Levin, seconded by Commissioner Morales, to grant authority to the Executive Director to enter into a direct contract with existing service provider Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project to ensure continued services for Mixtec children 0-5 and their families living in Ventura County. As a component of the Neighborhood for Learning initiative, the two year allocation would be \$500,000 for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023. The motion passed with Chair Marquez-O'Neill abstaining.

8. Recommendation to Maintain First 5 Ventura County's Help Me Grow Implementation Model

Sam McCoy noted that last month, Sharon Elmensdorp presented on Help Me Grow VC (HMGVC). F5VC has invested in early identification and linkage for more than 10 years and took on the role of the HMGVC organizing entity in FY 2019-20. Additionally, F5VC assumed responsibility of all components of HMGVC in FY 2020-21 as F5VC and local partners agreed that housing HMGVC under one entity would be best to centralize support, effectively coordinate, and pursue funding opportunities. Sam concluded the staff recommendation is to maintain the current HMGVC implementation model with F5VC serving as the organizing entity for FY 2021-23, with an allocation of \$613,460. He added this allocation has been contemplated in the F5VC financial plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner Stenslie, to maintain the current implementation model for Help Me Grow Ventura County and allocate \$613,460 for FYs 2021-23. In this model, First 5 Ventura County would maintain the role of organizing entity and responsibility for implementing all components of Help Me Grow Ventura County. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Recommendation to Fund Triple P Services, Training and Capacity Building through Challenge Grant Opportunities

Sam McCoy noted that F5VC has funded the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, an evidence-based program designed to enhance parents' knowledge, skills, and confidence, for 10 years including funding for training and direct services. Over the last year, F5VC and implementation partners have identified alternate funding sources for direct services including Medi-Cal and Beacon. However, funding is not available for training and materials. Sam noted F5VC staff recommends developing a Challenge Grant model with an annual allocation of up to \$100,000 for Triple P training and materials for clinicians and para-professionals, as well as services for families who otherwise would not be able to access Triple P.

He added Challenge Grants have been contemplated in the F5VC long-range financial plan through FY 2026 at an annual allocation of \$400,000. If this recommendation is approved, staff would come back to the Commission in subsequent months with parameters and more detail for the proposed Challenge Grants.

A motion was made by Commissioner Zimmerman, seconded by Commissioner Morales, to allocate up to \$100,000 in FY 2021-22 to develop a challenge grant model for funding Triple P and/or similar services for unserved populations, and training, capacity building and materials for local organizations providing clinical or educational support for families with children 0-5. The motion passed unanimously.

10. State of Child Care During COVID-19 and First 5 Ventura County's Continued Response to the Pandemic

Nani Oesterle provided a detailed overview of the results of a survey that F5VC and ECE taskforce partners (CDR, VCOE, and the LPC) administered to local child care providers in late 2020. She provided information on the need and availability of child care before the pandemic and emphasized high quality child care supports brain development, social skills, and later academic success in a safe, nurturing environment that allows parents to work. Nani noted there are about 23,000 licensed spaces in the county and approximately 54,000 parents in the workforce. She discussed two types of licensed child care – center based and Family Child Care (FCC) and the differences of each. The ECE Taskforce received responses from 337 providers, approximately half of the providers open at the time of the survey.

During the initial stay at home orders, about two-thirds of centers closed. While a larger percentage of FCCs remained open than Centers, they were only able to serve a small portion of the children they were licensed to serve due to additional safety procedures. By fall of 2020 less than half of the Centers open were fully enrolled. Nani noted providers are generally operating at a loss when not fully enrolled.

Nani detailed modifications most providers had to make during the pandemic. Almost half of Centers had to furlough staff, while FCCs were more likely to open for additional hours. FCCs continue to find it challenging to obtain supplies like PPE and cleaning supplies. Centers are experiencing reduced enrollment at a greater rate than FCCs. Additionally, providers are now serving older children during school hours and are struggling to support them during distance learning and keep children motivated while also caring for younger children.

Both FCCs and Centers need additional funding to support children. Nani noted some providers indicated they are not sure if they will be able to reopen. Of providers surveyed, 41 providers (14%), indicated they may close in the near future if they don't receive funding, which equates to 1,200 licensed spaces. Nani reiterated this number is only based on those providers that completed the survey and added this mirrors events across the country. She added the enclosed NAEYC national survey shows 56% of providers are operating at a loss, with many concerned about the ability to stay open. Nani noted more recent data obtained by the CDR shows additional closures since the survey that continues to impact FCCs more than Centers.

Nani detailed ECE taskforce support including supply distribution (diapers, PPE, thermometers, books, etc.), education and support on re-opening, technical assistance to apply for small business grants (123 providers received a total of \$615,000), and vaccine education. Child care providers need more support to

continue to stay open and operate. Nani noted recent support from the State was focused on subsidized programs, which is about two-thirds of those in the county. Nani proposed additional support that can be provided, including advocating that privately funded programs should be able to access federal funds. Additionally, local cities can support childcare through CARES funding and F5VC is launching a Child Care Management Software pilot to support childcare providers. Nani concluded our economy cannot recover without childcare and asked the Commissioners to help staff find opportunities to support the child care sector through education, partnerships, and more.

Commissioner Stenslie thanked Nani for the great presentation and data and noted that there is \$20 million in grants to be released by the County and \$2 billion by the State that can be accessed by childcare providers. He offered to see if the EDC can provide technical assistance again for providers to apply.

Commissioner Champagne commented that the presentation was excellent. She noted as our most vulnerable children have less access to quality licensed childcare, we must support FCCs to stay open and meet the needs of our youngest children. She expressed concerns on the ability to retain a quality workforce as employees in the childcare sector are furloughed or let go.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill thanked Nani for the presentation and the ECE taskforce for their work to support to sector. She highlighted the stress on families when they can't access high quality childcare that can result in traumatic experiences.

Commissioner Morales congratulated Nani on the excellent presentation and will look to bring this information to a bigger audience in partnership with VCOE.

Commissioner Champagne thanked Community Care Licensing, F5VC, and VCOE for being amazing partners.

11. Report from Executive Director

Petra Puls delivered highlights from her written report, welcoming Tyla Adams to the F5VC team as the new Program Manager for Communications and Advocacy. F5VC has met with the current NfL staff, shared their job descriptions, and is now evaluating lease agreements. She noted the enclosed CHDP newsletter includes a feature on the HMG call line. Petra outlined recent ECE taskforce efforts and noted as of March 1 the state will allocate 10% of available vaccines for teachers and childcare providers. She reported SB 395, known as the Vape Tax, was reintroduced with a 15% equivalency for First 5 Commissions, and F5VC successfully advocated for Senator Limon to become a co-author. Petra concluded her report detailing provisions in the recently approved Golden State Stimulus Package, which includes support for low-income families and small businesses and extending subsidized child care for essential workers and at-risk children through June 2022.

12. Commission Member Comments

There were no comments from members of the Commission.

13. Next Meeting

Thursday, March 25, 2021, format TBD.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.