

Sacramento County Public Health Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

March 3rd, 2021, 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Recording can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S2WFC-aT40>

Meeting Location

Zoom Meeting (Open to the Public)

Moderator: Dr. Farla Kaufman & Liz Gomez

Scribes: Liz Gomez

Board Attendees: Barbara Law, Tina Slee, Emanuel Petrisor, Phillip Summers, Sonal Patel, Steve Heath, Annie Tat, Farla Kaufman – these may not be spelled correctly I typed them from your verbal roll call

Guests: Jim Hunt, Dr. Olivia Kasirye, Pamela Gandy Rosemond, Dr. Sandy Damiano, Santos Ramos, Paul Belli, Mark Lopez, Ted Henry, Mark Hatzenbuhler, Brandon Luke, Bruce Wagstaff, Jim Hunt, Lynnann Svensson

Board Members Absent: Jofil Borja

Board Members Excused:

Meeting Opened: 12:05 PM

Welcome and Introductions: Dr. Kaufman welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the goal of our time together. She welcomed new members and introduced the facilitator, Liz Gomez.

Review of Minutes: Minutes of the February Meeting 2021 were approved as submitted.

Primary Health Update:

Sandy Damiano outlined a broad overview of what her team would be talking about today. She provided an update around the annex workshop that is scheduled on March 10th.

On the COVID dashboard there was net increase of 7 new cases at the main jail and 5 at the branch jail. We have positive 12,938 tests for COVID-19. In terms of staff vaccines, there are 772 who have been vaccinated, this doesn't include folks that got vaccinated off-site. For inmates 244 inmate vaccinations. We recently got approval from public health to get vaccinations to all inmates and not just those over the age of 65. We added more narrative to our Sheriff's COVID webpage.

Pamela Gandy Rosemond, Nursing Director, outlined the COVID-19 intake and booking process, testing policies, procedures and medical staffing availability at the jail. Dr. Babu, Medical Director, provided additional information around testing policies. Dr. Babu indicated that if someone is having an acute episode or an emergency, there is enough medical staffing to respond.

Sandy responded to a question about the outbreak. Sandy indicated that there was a lot of contact tracing and indicated that jails are more prone to outbreaks because of the congregate setting. Dr. Kasirye added that it can be difficult to determine where an outbreak started because there are multiple points of entry for inmates and staff. She also indicated that it's very difficult to control outbreaks in congregate settings and that we were fortunate that we were spared for as long as we were and that we had the outbreak at the same time as were vaccinating. Pamela then outlined the processes for how inmates can get access to a medical professional.

Sheriff Update:

Attending Chief Santos Ramos, Captain Todd Henry, Lt. Mark Lopez, Lt. Paul Belli
Chief Santos indicated he wanted to outline the systems for Rio Consumes Correctional Center (RCCC) and the Main Jail. The Main Jail acts as intake and houses mostly pretrial inmates. RCCC population is mostly comprised of sentenced inmates. They are very different in their physical plant make up one is a tower, the other is spread out.

January - December 2019, before the pandemic, our average daily population was 3,795 inmates between both facilities. Between March 2020 and the end of February 2021 our average intakes went down significantly. Over the past year our average daily population has dropped down to 3,124. Prior to COVID, in the Main Jail, average monthly intake was ~3,384, daily 112 inmates, fresh arrests. In April 2020 there was a sharp drop in bookings, ~ 1,000 inmates per month. Our population is driven by a number of different factors and not all of the inmates that are getting "dressed in" are staying with us for a significant amount of

time. We have seen an uptick in our population as the pandemic has progressed. From the beginning there were a number of court orders that led to a decrease in population. A number of court orders allowed release of offenders back out, including zero dollar bail. In addition, we have 593 inmates that we are awaiting transfer to State prison.

Decarcerate Update:

Two representatives from Decarcerate indicated that having loved ones who are pretrial and don't know their COVID status and can't social distance is problematic. These inmates need compassion, let their jail term not be a death sentence. Decarcerate Sacramento has three goals (1) reduce the jail population (2) stop all further jail expansions (3) reinvest in community based care and alternatives to incarceration. This presentation is from Decarcerate's inside-outside organizing team.

Decarcerate provided information around disparities, suicides and mental health support needs. They provided information broadly around the consent decree. Decarcerate then provided some recordings from two individuals inside of Sacramento County jail.

The individual from the recording outlined concerns about not having a plan, lack of cleaning supplies and concern that nothing will be done until someone dies. They provided information about individuals who are struggling within the jail and can't get out of bed. They indicated they are in a dorm with a lot of people and thinks it's likely that many people have COVID. Feels like an animal shelter, you get one pair of underwear, one shirt, and to treat people like this is horrible. I don't know what they should do, but something needs to be done, but I don't believe care should be done in a cage.

Decarcerate indicated that the emphasis is to start releasing people to make social distancing possible. Be aware of the immense trauma and pain that this is causing.

Another individual from a second recording was played of someone in RCCC who was COVID positive and had stage 4 cancer and what that experience was like. Decarcerate closed with that they feel there is a lack of compassion for incarcerated community members and their families.

Primary Health & Sheriff Response:

The outbreak was extremely difficult on everyone. The large preponderance has been those that are asymptomatic. Cleaning at Mail Jail was outlined by Lt. Belli. He indicated that since the beginning they have been operating additional cleaning crews. Each floor at the beginning of the pandemic was provided with backpack sprayers, in addition they ran additional cleaning as needed.

Public Comment:

Pamela Emanuel: I have experience from being in Sacramento County Jail and never got any reply back. These people are being treated like animals. We are given the wrong medical on various occasions, not designed to help inmates. Health requests (kites) were not answered. A lot of false things going on in this conversation.

Courtney: I spent one night at the Sacramento County Mail Jail and it was so horrible that I continued my advocacy. We have been tracing the negligence, Courtney outlined the documentation around this case and asked to stop putting inmate's lives in danger.

Ascribe: Three different occasions when community members have come to me and outlined their experience where no testing was offered, no social distancing, no cleaning supplies and at times exposed to many other individuals.

T: I do jail support and mutual aid which is a coalition of community members providing services to individuals getting released. Many times individuals coming out of the jail are left out to dry and released in the middle of the night and this doesn't make sense to me. Where is the CARES money going?

Sam: Member of Decarcerate and highlighted Lancet Public Health Journal and outlined association between incarceration and negative public health outcomes. Number one thing to do is reduce prison populations.

Sandy Moss: Sheriff Staff indicated COVID conditions are under control but my loved one from RCCC call me and refute that description. My loved ones outline great human suffering within their pod. A person who had a raging fever who was left in the pod. Demanding compassion and mass release.

Niki Jones: I'm disappointed in the presentation from Sheriff & Correctional Health. They very recently had a report from consultants on the consent decree that has some very real recommendations on gaps and a culture of violence. It would have been great to hear about how they will address those gaps. Reduce the jail population as soon as possible.

S. Brown: I have 2 children that are incarcerated, they have been there for 6 years and it's horrible conditions. They want to make it look like everything is under control and it's not. People who are COVID positive are serving food. It's disgusting and horrible conditions and something has to be done.

At 1:30pm Farla indicated that we may need to explore these issues further and determine how we move forward. Farla knows some people will have to drop off and send her concerns and she can let you know what we do moving forward.

Justice to Jobs: I have a lot of concerns. 40% of people inside the jail are black. There has been mask wearing non-compliance. I am also with Executive Committee with NAACP. Medical access is not working the way it's supposed to. There is a total disconnect between what is happening and what the protocol is.

Keyan: We have had issues with sheriff staffing not wearing their masks and UCD walked out because of that challenge. Why isn't jail staff and correctional health staff looking at how we can keep people out of the jail in the first place?

Cristina Bourne: I am a local physician and have worked inside the jail. Uplift some public health facts – racism is a public health issue, incarceration during a pandemic is asking to spread the virus. I have seen sheriffs routinely provoke individuals who are in a mental health crisis and use racial slurs.

Robin: I will read some statements from individuals inside. There is overcrowding in the holding tank. We don't get proper cleaning supplies. We have meals on the floor which is unsanitary. I haven't been tested for the virus. The staff say there is nothing they can do to protect us from COVID. The workers who pass out food don't wear a mask. You have to be close to death to get medical attention.

Sandy commented on the previous Public Comments – The COVID processes have been in evolution over time. There is a problem with social distancing because of the physical layout of the building. Inmates are getting masks. We are not saying the jail health standards are where they should be but it's an iterative process.

Farla indicated she will follow-up with Sandy and the Sheriff to talk about next steps.

Phil: Express gratitude for individuals who talked so far. The reports from jail leadership and community are very divergent. It's important that we as a Board need to amplify the voices of the most marginalized. Their ability to follow these practices doesn't appear to be possible within the current conditions.

Pamela: I wanted to show you guys that this is what the inmates are given to clean – a small bar of soap. The phones are not disinfected. There is no way to social distance. Phones are not disinfected. Form a committee with people who have been in the jail and folks that care.

Sandy Moss: I wanted to address a couple of things, individuals are still experiencing symptoms. Long haulers the effects can be long lasting. Sheriff staff acted with such negligence and we are not even talking about people who are pretrial. There has to be a shift in the way they treat these folks.

Ascribe: I wanted to go back to the point of nursing and medical staff to be instructed by their supervisors to not have conversations with the outside world. This is a matter of fear. We have to look beyond sheriff deputies. We also need to make sure that we understand that inmates there are experiencing retaliation – when you don't show up for someone experiencing a mental health crisis that's negligence. That means the tax payers are paying that cost when law suits happen.

Closing remarks from Farla – we need to understand what's going on and it is our intention to improve the conditions in the jail.

Other PHAB Items: We will continue to do Zoom meetings.

Adjournment The meeting was adjourned at 2:00PM

Submitted by Liz Gomez, scribe