



VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER BOARD FY 2022-23 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

September 2023

*"The CHC Board shall assist and advise the Ventura County Health Care Agency
in promoting its vision of healthy people in healthy communities."*



VENTURA COUNTY
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER BOARD



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following Annual Activity Report provides a summary of the Ventura Community Health Center (CHC) and the Community Health Center Board projects, programs, and activities for FY 2022-23; and projects, programs, and activities currently planned for FY 2023-24.

Highlights from this report include:

- CY 2022 Community Snapshot.
- Operational Improvement Initiatives
- COVID-19 response and community support.
- FY 2023-24 planned projects and activities.

The Ventura County Community Health Center and the Community Health Center Board continue to promote the vision of healthy people in healthy communities and to uphold its mission to provide high-quality, comprehensive, compassionate, and cost-effective care for Ventura County residents regardless of ability to pay; and to demonstrate organizational resilience and responsiveness in meeting the challenge of caring for and supporting the Ventura County community.

INTRODUCTION

Ventura County Community Health Center

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Health Center Program, authorized by Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 254b), provides federal grant funding to community-based healthcare organizations designated as community health centers (CHCs) to improve the health of underserved and vulnerable populations. CHCs can leverage a variety of federal programs otherwise unavailable, including access to higher Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates, 340B Drug Pricing Program pharmaceutical discounts, free vaccines through the Vaccines for Children Program, and primary care provider recruitment and retention assistance through the National Health Service Corps.

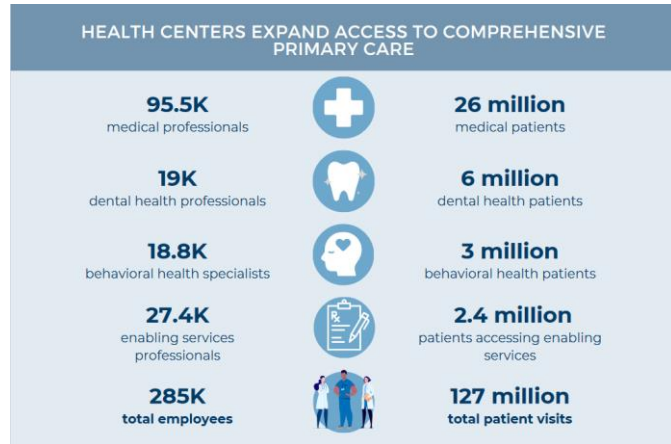


Figure 1. Health Center Services

The County of Ventura's designation as a section 330(e) CHC is thus critical to its continued ability to provide high-quality, patient-centered healthcare. Eighteen (18) Ventura County Health Care Agency (VCHCA) primary care clinics operate under the CHC as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). In CY 2022, the VCHCA FQHCs provided care for approximately 95,000 patients over 348,000 clinic in-person and telehealth visits, including more than 5,600 patients experiencing homelessness¹.

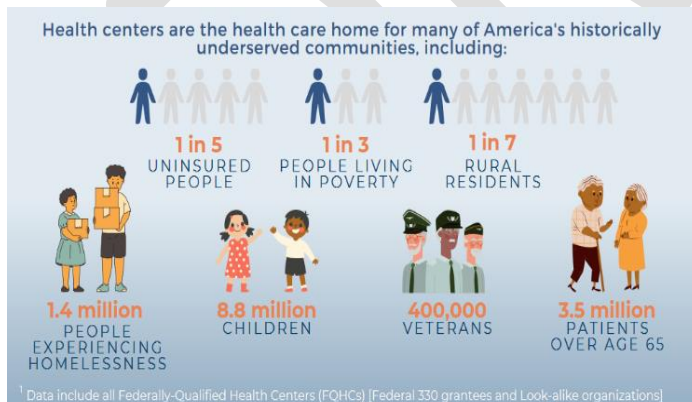


Figure 2. FQHC patients served in America. 2022

CHC FQHCs play vital role as the healthcare "safety net" for underserved communities in Ventura County by providing high-quality, culturally competent, comprehensive primary and preventative healthcare services, promoting community health and well-being, and facilitating equitable access to care. HRSA supplemental funding, again available only to Section 330-designated

CHCs, makes possible a variety of other projects including dental care for children and adults

¹ [HRSA Unified Data System \(UDS\) 2022.](#)

experiencing homelessness, mental health services, substance use disorder screening and treatment, and HIV programs.

Ventura County Community Health Center Board

The Ventura County Community Health Center (CHC) Board was established in May 2015 by Ventura County Board of Supervisors in collaboration with leadership from the Ventura County Health Care Agency (HCA) and Ventura County Counsel. The CHC Board is the governing body that provides oversight of the CHC as required for compliance with the HRSA Health Center grant. It promotes the VCHA mission to provide high-quality, affordable healthcare to the Ventura County community, advances its vision of healthy people in health communities, and ensures Ventura County residents access to comprehensive, compassionate, and cost-effective healthcare regardless of ability to pay. The CHC Board guides the CHC in the development and furtherance of patient-centered, integrated care that is responsive to the unique and dynamic needs of diverse medically underserved areas and populations.

Organizational Structure

As a public entity, the Ventura County CHC ensures compliance with HRSA Health Center grant requirements and all federal, state, and local regulations through a “co-applicant” organizational structure that combines independent oversight with public accountability. Under the co-applicant structure, the County of Ventura receives and manages the awarded federal funds while the CHC Board provides the governing oversight of CHC activities, projects, programs, and services carried out by the FQHCs.

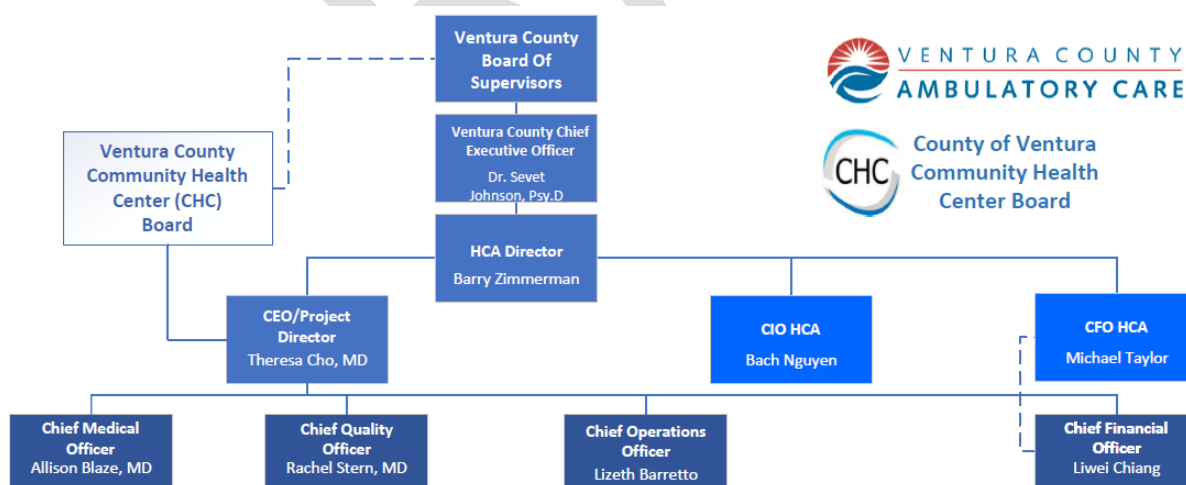


Figure 3. Ventura County Community Health Center Structure.

VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

CY 2022 Community Snapshot

The CHC FQHCs provided services to 95,017 individuals through 269,695 clinic in-person visits and 78,569 telehealth visits in CY 2022². Approximately 5,600 of those served were persons experiencing homelessness. The following sections describe selected patient demographics, diagnoses, and health indicators for CY 2022.

Map of Ventura County CHC FQHCs

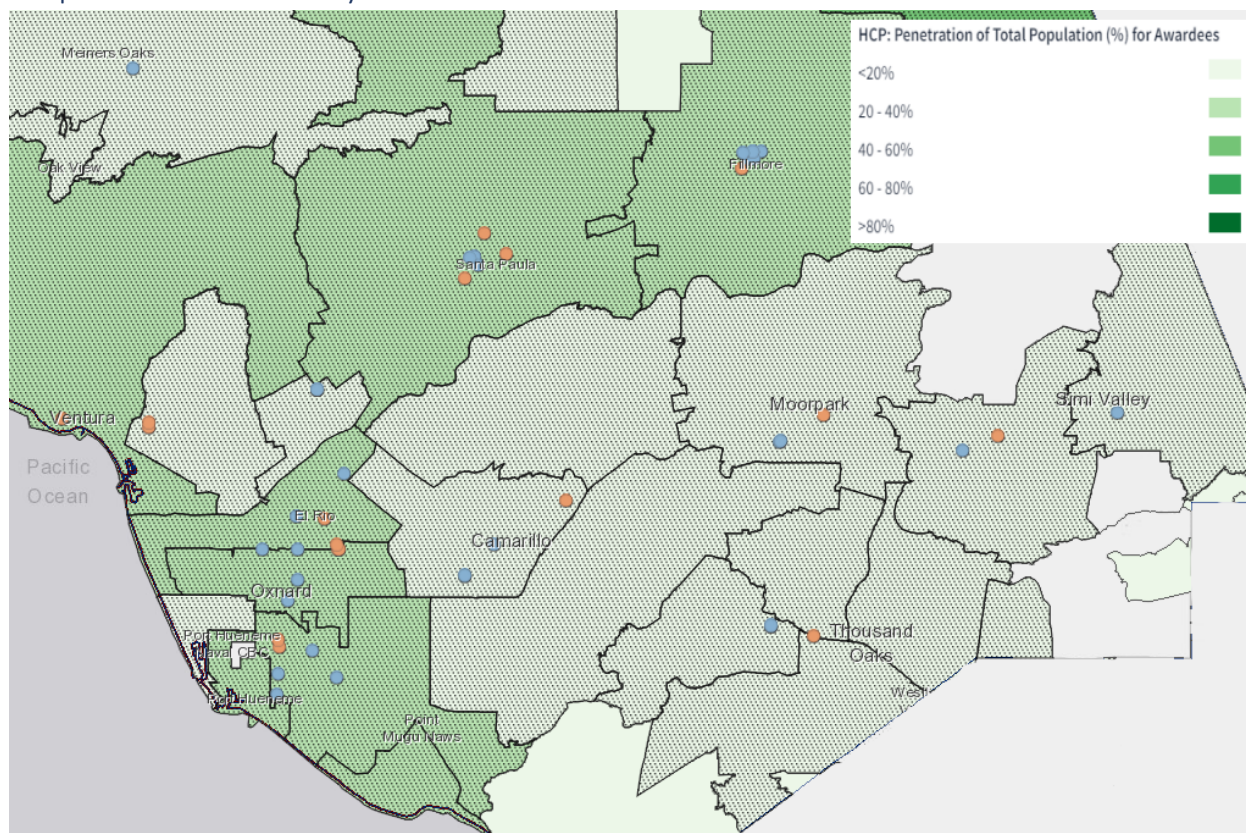
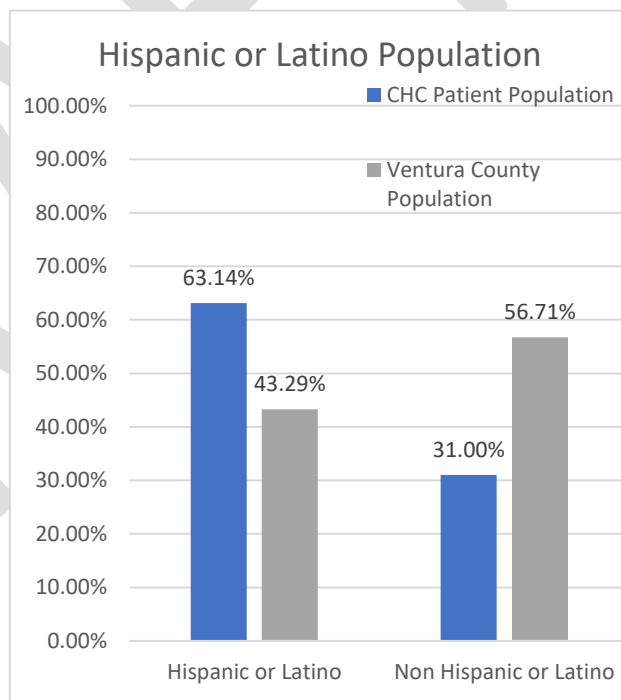
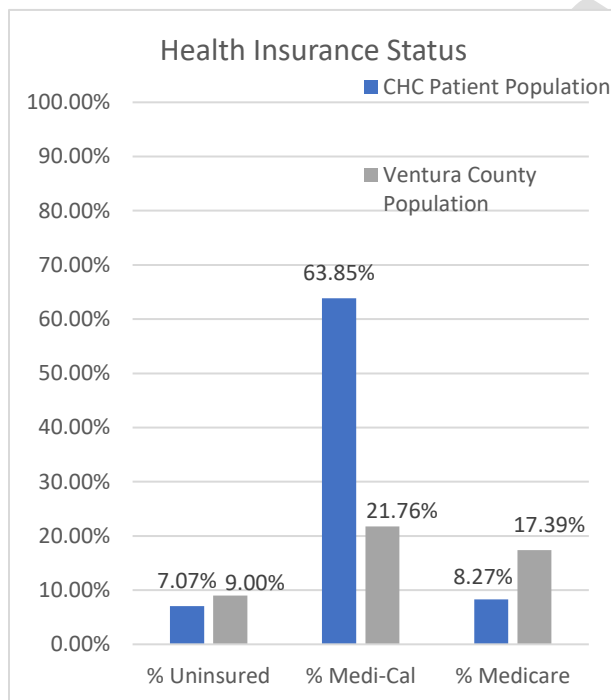
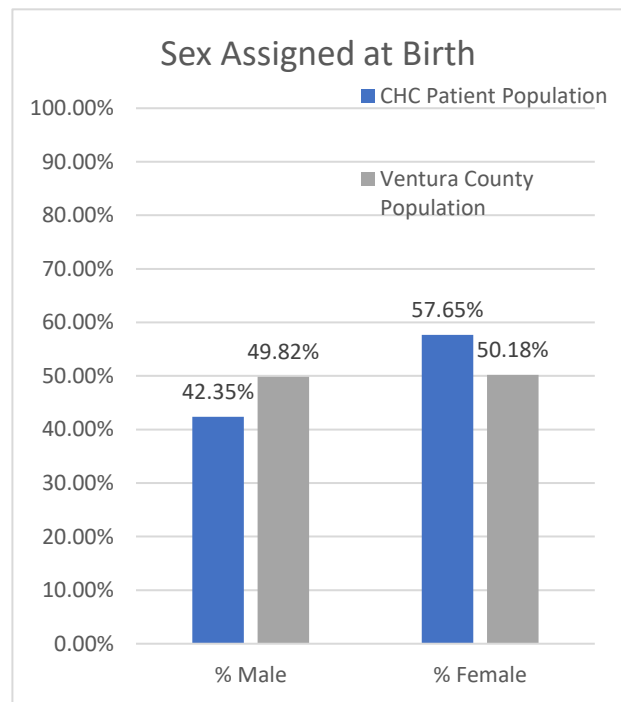
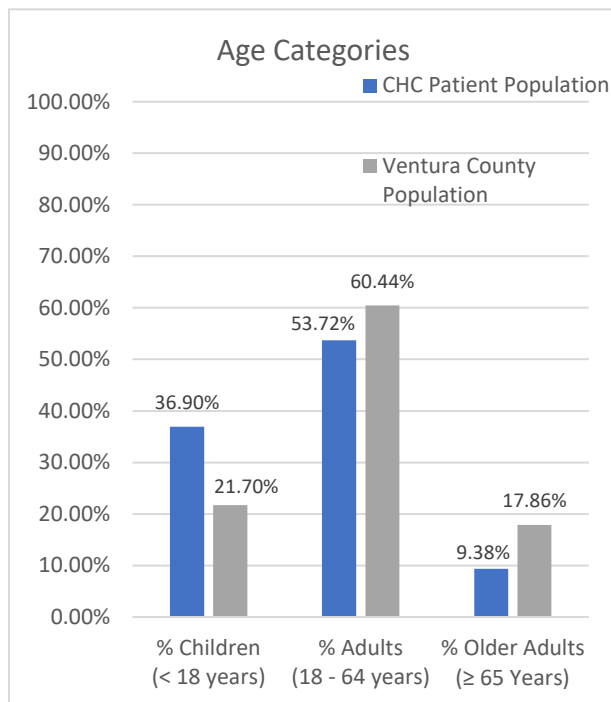


Figure 4. Map of Ventura County CHC FQHCs and patient population by ZIP Code.

² [HRSA UDS 2022](#).

CY 2022 Population Served by Age, Sex, Health Insurance Status and Ethnicity³⁴⁵⁶



³ [HRSA UDS 2021.](#)

⁴ [US Census. Age and sex. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables](#)

⁵ [US Census. Selected characteristics of health insurance coverage in the United States. 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables](#)

⁶ [US Census. 2020 DEC Redistricting Data](#)

CY 2022 Top 5 Diagnoses

Table 1. CY 2022 Top 5 Diagnoses.

TOTAL PATIENT POPULATION			PATIENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS		
Diagnosis	# Pts	% Pts	Diagnosis	# Pts	% Pts
1. Overweight/Obesity	19,641	20.40%	1. Hypertension	1,422	23.11%
2. Hypertension	13,713	14.24%	2. Overweight/Obesity	1,344	21.84%
3. Diabetes	9,394	9.76%	3. Diabetes	855	13.89%
4. Anxiety Disorders (incl. PTSD)	7,335	7.62%	4. Anxiety Disorders (incl. PTSD)	761	12.37%
5. Other mental health disorders, excluding drug or alcohol dependence	5,573	5.79%	5. Depression & Other Mood Disorders	633	10.29%

VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER BOARD

Purpose and Authority

The CHC Board purpose and authority are described in the CHC Board Bylaws and the Co-Applicant Agreement. Revision to the Bylaws require approval by at least two-thirds of the CHC Board; the revised Bylaws must then be approved by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors.

As required for compliance with HRSA Health Center grant requirements, CHC Board responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Holds monthly meetings and maintains public records to document all CHC Board activities in compliance with the Brown Act.
- Reviews applications and any requests involving changes in scope or services related to the HRSA Health Center grant and makes its recommendation re: approval to the Board of Supervisors.
- Reviews the annual CHC budget and independent audit.
- Engages in community health assessments and long-term strategic planning as appropriate.
- Evaluates the CHC's performance in meeting the healthcare needs of the community and its progress toward long-term and strategic goals.
- Recommends services beyond those required by law to be provided by the CHC, as well as the location and mode of delivery of those services.
- Reviews hours during which services are provided at the CHC FQHCs for appropriateness and responsiveness to community needs and makes its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors re: approval.
- Ensures that the scope of the CHC is consistent with the needs of the community.
- Approves FQHC provider licensing and credentialing applications.
- Facilitates and coordinates collaboration with other service provider organizations.
- Reviews general CHC policies and procedures for consistency and ensures compliance with the requirements of the HRSA Health Center grant and all applicable local, state, and federal laws.

Compliance Oversight

One of the most significant CHC Board responsibilities is to provide oversight of CHC compliance. The CHC FQHCs are required to maintain compliance with all regulations applicable to healthcare organizations, including new regulations and any changes to existing regulations; these regulations include, but are not limited to, those related to patient safety, occupational safety, protected health information, billing and financial, and transparency and accountability. In addition, the CHC FQHCs must demonstrate compliance with HRSA Health Center grant requirements to remain eligible for this important designation.

HRSA

In 2018, HRSA released an update to the [Health Center Program Compliance Manual](#), which all HRSA-designated CHCs are required to follow. Failure to demonstrate compliance may result in HRSA placing a condition on the grant award; if areas of non-compliance are not addressed and failure to demonstrate compliance continues, then HRSA may take further action, up to and including terminating the award.

The Compliance Manual contains 21 chapters that describe Health Center Program requirements and guidance on how to demonstrate compliance as well as the relevant statutory and regulatory citations. Per the Compliance Manual, Chapter 19, the CHC Board is to provide oversight and ensure compliance in each of the areas described in the Compliance Manual chapters. Compliance Manual chapter content follows; Chapter 21 does not apply to the VCHCA CHC.

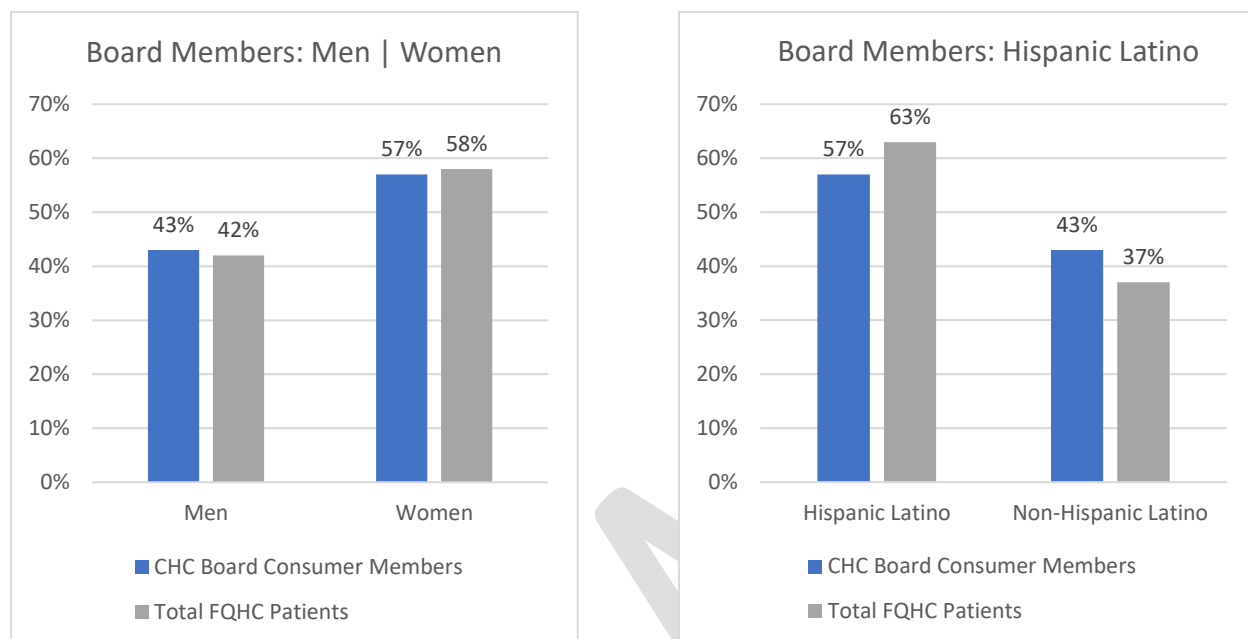
1. HRSA Health Center Program eligibility.
2. Health Center oversight.
3. Community health needs assessment.
4. Required and additional health services.
5. Clinical staffing acuties and provider credentialing.
6. Accessible locations and hours of operations.
7. Required coverage for during and after-hours medical emergencies.
8. Continuity of care and hospital access.
9. Sliding Fee Discount Program.
10. Quality Improvement/Assurance Program.
11. Key health center management staff.
12. Provision of appropriate services via contract.
13. Conflict of Interest (consistent with Ventura County Conflict of Interest code).
14. Collaborative relationships between the CHC and community partners.
15. Fiscal management systems.
16. Billing and collection for CHC provided services.
17. CHC annual budget.
18. CHC program monitoring and data reporting.
19. CHC Board.
20. CHC Board composition.
21. Federal Torts Claims Act.

Membership

HRSA Health Center grant requirements specify that at least 51% of the CHC Board must be patients of the CHC FQHCs (consumer members); the remaining CHC Board must be from the community that the CHC serves (community members). CHC Board members shall have expertise in community affairs, local government, finance and banking, legal affairs, trade unions, and

other commercial and industrial concerns, or social service agencies within the community. No more than two (2) community members may derive more than 10% of their annual income from the healthcare industry.

The FY 2022-23 CHC Board is comprised of 63.6% consumer members. CHC Board members are recruited and carefully vetted for their unique and diverse skillsets and evaluated for their ability to contribute to the oversight activities and responsibilities of the CHC Board. The consumer Board members closely reflect the composition of the community served.



CHC Board members receive no compensation for their participation. They serve two- to three-year terms as specified in the Bylaws. CHC Board members receive mandatory two-hour ethics training and must maintain regular attendance at the CHC Board meetings, held monthly. The CHC Board includes an Executive Committee of four CHC Board members, who are elected by the other members each June to a one-year term.

Beginning in FY 2020-21 and continuing through early 2023, due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, CHC Board meetings were held virtually in accordance with state and local guidance on social distancing and per temporary suspension by Executive Order of the Brown Act requirements. In March 2023, due to the lifting of the California State of Emergency, CHC Board Meetings resumed in person, with exceptions for 'just cause' and 'emergency' situations.

FY 2023-24 CHC Board Members



David Tovar
District 3
Chair



Ralph Reyes
District 3
Vice Chair



Espy Gonzalez
District 2
Secretary



Rena Sepulveda
District 1
Treasurer



Manuel Minjares
District 3



Renee Higgins, MD
District 3



Melissa Livingston
District 4



James Mason
District 5



Robert Rust
District 3



Monique Nowlin
District 1



Susan White Wood
End of Term – Sept. '23

FY 2022-23 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Operational Improvement Initiatives

In FY 2020-21, ECG Management Consultants, LLC (ECG) contracted with VCHCA to design an integrated, efficient, and accountable clinic business model to improve financial performance and patient access. The integration has provided an opportunity to make improvements to operational efficiencies with the focus on increasing access to care, by enhancing clinic workflows allowing for standardization. All activities align with VCCHC's Strategic Plan (2021-2023) and its core initiatives that include Financial Stability and Performance, Quality and Safety, Service Excellence, Growth and Innovation, Staff Engagement and Leadership Development, and Patient and Community engagement. Continued activities during this reporting period include:

Artera Text Messaging: Artera bi-directional text messaging for appointment scheduling and reminders has been fully implemented at all sites. Over 55,000 messages are sent through Artera every month. The sites have started using Artera for focused campaigns to address any gaps in preventative health, such as cancer screenings and well exams.

Dental: A manager for dental services was hired to continue efforts in dental expansion, including opening the new Magnolia dental site. The renovation for the site will be completed by the end of 2023. Additionally, VCCHC signed a contract with Sugarbug Dental to provide dentists for Pediatric Diagnostic Center and Magnolia Dental.

Cerner Practice Management (CPM): The system upgrade was initially set to go live in October of 2023. Due to shifts in project management resources by Cerner (the current electronic health record software), the go live has been rescheduled to February of 2024. Much of the preparation was completed during this reporting period, but the team will now have additional time to test the new configurations and train staff. This upgrade will provide added efficiencies in patient appointment scheduling, check-in, registration, and check out processes.

Call Center: The centralized call center has added West Ventura and Magnolia to their current call queue and assists the Las Islas clinic with calls. The centralized call center team has been actively recruiting call center agents to continue taking over the clinic calls. The team is working closely with human resources to find innovative strategies to improve recruitment efforts.

Tonic: Tonic is a real-time mobile patient intake and contactless check-in platform that provides a seamless, easy, and engaging way for patients to fill out surveys and sign consent forms. This provides the ability to capture patient questionnaire data and consents at the point of care using iPads and interfaces into the EHR for provider and staff review. FY 22-2023 was Phase 1 of Tonic. VCCHC expanded on the four screening forms that were deployed in Phase 0 to include additional questions. We implemented consent forms for a variety of different services, authorization for use and disclosure of PHI and acknowledgement of receipt. In addition to consents, we deployed multiple new questionnaires for children, adolescents, and adults.

In the upcoming year, Phase 2 will include a variety of forms in three main categories: patient demographics, additional screeners, and CalAIM/ Whole Person Care consents. These new additions will offer patients the ability to review and update their information, consent to additional services and answer sensitive health questions easily and privately.

Behavioral Health Integration: The Ventura County CHC continues to provide integrated behavioral health services to increase patient access to mental health and social services. The program currently has 17 Behavioral Health Clinicians that provide short-term psychotherapy at the patient's medical home. An additional 10 Clinical Care Managers complete screenings and linkage to mental health and substance use services. Three Community Health Workers dedicated to the behavioral health services meet with patients to provide health education and case management. All the sites have the services in place. Between July 2022 and June 2023, the therapists completed a total of 5,733 counseling sessions across the clinic system. Care managers and community health workers completed over 5,000 case management services during the same period. Behavioral health providers continue to strive towards working collaborative relationships with providers to help improve patient outcomes.

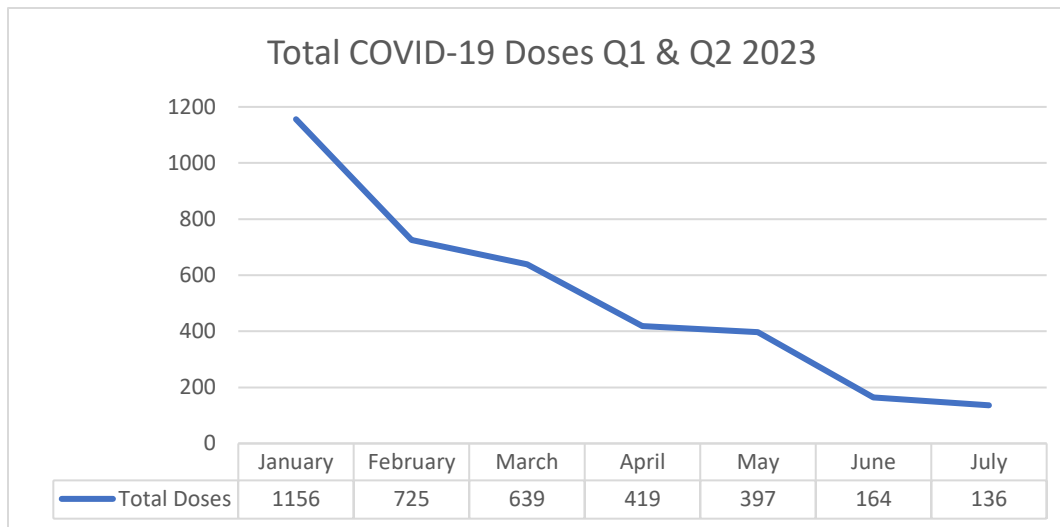
Referral Module Clean-Up: Ambulatory Care leadership has worked closely with the informatics team to review configuration of the current referral module within the Cerner electronic health record system to streamline workflows and create a standard process to track and complete specialty referrals. The new, standard process will be implemented in November of 2023.

HRSA Operational Site Visit

HRSA conducted their Operational Site Visit (OSV) in May of 2023. The site visits occur every three years, but it was scheduled one year later due to the pandemic. The OSV took place virtually for three days and was conducted by three individuals with expertise in administrative, clinical, or fiscal compliance requirements. In addition to reviewing documents previously uploaded by VCCHC, the HRSA surveyors interviewed the leadership team, clinical staff, CHC Board Members, and other key staff to review all areas of the Health Center Compliance Program.

During the visit, there were five areas of non-compliance cited that were addressed during the Compliance Resolution Opportunity (CRO) process. The areas of non-compliance cited were administrative corrections to program scope, additional language on financial policies, and providing an updated charge schedule. The CRO process starts after the OSV surveyors submit a draft site report and provides the grantee fourteen calendar days to submit a response. VCCHC was able to submit acceptable responses and information to HRSA within the 14 calendar days. HRSA finalized the site visit report that confirmed overall compliance of all requirements.

COVID-19 Response and Community Support



Since the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency (COVID-19 PHE) in FY 2019-20, the CHC Board and the CHC FQHCs have continued their efforts to maintain community access to primary care and preventative health services and continued to provide COVID-19 response and community support. The Ventura County CHC received \$15.6 million from HRSA, through the American Rescue Plan (ARP-COVID-19), to be dispersed over two years, budget period ending in March 2023.

The funding over the past three years provided testing, vaccines, and treatment. The health centers focused on increased COVID-19 response efforts for vulnerable populations, including individuals experiencing homelessness and agricultural workers.

Through the first half of 2023, the FQHCs administered a total of 3,636 COVID-19 vaccine doses. This included the booster vaccines and vaccines given to children under the age of 18. Additionally, through the first half of 2023, it was noticed that there was a decrease in vaccines distributed – staff assumed this was due to vaccine burnout and hesitation.

Beginning in 2022, the FQHCs began treating COVID-19 with anti-viral medication. From January to July 2023, VCHCA distributed over 370 anti-viral medication courses, Paxlovid and molnupiravir. Simultaneously, VCHCA continued the Test-to-Treat initiative, where the FQHCs are able to test and begin COVID-19 treatment in the same visit. A CDC study showed a disparity between the lowest rates of Paxlovid prescribing and zip codes with the highest social vulnerability, therefore the VCHCA Test-to-Treat initiative was implemented at all clinics, and most notably, those in the highest quartile of social vulnerability - Oxnard and Santa Paula. These efforts were continued through 2023 with a grant received from California Department of Public Health.

HRSA Quality Awards

In 2022, the Ventura County CHC FQHCs received two Community Health Quality Recognition awards. The first for advancing health information technology (HIT) for quality, which required VCCHC to adopt an electronic health record system, offer telehealth services, exchange clinical information electronically, engage patients through health IT, and collect data on patient social risk factors. The second award was for addressing social risk factors, which also required VCCHC to collect data on patient social risk factors and increase the proportion of patients receiving enabling services between consecutive reporting years. The Ventura County CHC's goal is to eventually earn the Health Center Quality Leader bronze, silver, or gold award. To do so VCCHC needs to land in the top 30% of AQR (Adjusted Quartile Rankings) – which assesses and compares the health center's clinical quality performance to that of similar health centers⁷.



Figure 6. 2022 HRSA Quality and Addressing Risk Factor Awardee.

Active HRSA One-time & Supplemental Funding: Summary

HRSA Funding	Amount	Budget Period	Description
330 Block Grants	\$1,861,900	Mar 2020 – Feb 2023	Base award with an additional supplemental award focused on Quality Improvement
ARP-Capital	\$1,660,000	Sept 2021 – Sept 2024	Health center capital improvement and infrastructure
ARP- UDS+	\$65,500	Apr 2021 – Mar 2023	Helps to improve IT to get better information reporting for the UDS.
ARP-COVID-19	\$15,600,000	Apr 2021 – Mar 2023	Provides funding for COVID-19 response and community support, maintenance of staffing levels for continuity of operations, COVID-19 staff training/technical assistance, and patient outreach
NHCI-HC	\$392,400	Jan 2021 – Dec 2023	Self-monitoring blood pressure equipment and training/technical assistance for improved blood pressure control
ECV	\$941,805	Dec 2022 – Dec 2023	Provides funding for expanding COVID-19 vaccinations through staffing help and community outreach.

Total Funding **\$20,521,605**

⁷ [Community Health Quality Recognition \(CHQR\) awards.](#)

FY 2023-24 CHC BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Meeting Location:

2240 E Gonzales Rd
Suite 200
Oxnard, CA 93036

THE VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER BOARD MEETS THE
FOURTH (* EXCEPTION) THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH @ 12:30 PM

January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November*
December*

For information about CHC Board meetings, please contact the CHC Board Clerk at (805) 677-521 or by email at CHCBoardClerk@ventura.org.

CHC Board meetings are open to the public.

The CHC Board will determine by formal vote at each meeting whether the conditions for meeting virtually still exist. Each determination will be made no later than 30 days from the previous determination. The results of this determination will be available from the CHC Board Clerk, contact information above. Notification of changes to the meeting location occurring at least one month in advance of the meeting date.

REFERENCES

Health Resources and Services Administration. (2022). Community Health Quality Recognition (CHQR) Overview. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<https://bphc.hrsa.gov/initiatives/advancing-health-center-excellence/community-health-quality-recognition-chqr-overview>

Health Resources and Services Administration. (2018). Health Center Compliance Manual. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Health Resources and Services Administration. (2022). Health Center Program Uniform Data System (UDS) data overview. <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/data-reporting/program-data?grantNum=H80CS00247>

US Census Bureau. (2018). Table P2: Hispanic or Latino, and not Hispanic or Latino by Race. 2020: DEC Redistricting Data (PL 94-171). US Census Bureau.

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=United%20States&t=Hispanic%20or%20Latino&g=050000000US06111>

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<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=United%20States&t=Health%20Insurance&g=05000000US06111&tid=ACST1Y2021.S2701>