



Executive Summary and Recommendations

Background:

The Coastside Clinic and its Pescadero Mobile Clinic have long served as essential health resources for the farmworker community on the south coast of San Mateo County. Over the past decade, the clinic received significant positive feedback; however, in recent years, increasing concerns have emerged regarding service delivery. Community members have raised issues such as long wait times, frequent appointment cancellations, limited access to Spanish-speaking staff, and poor communication, especially regarding test results and referrals. These concerns were voiced to local community organizations, including Puente de la Costa Sur, ALAS, and Coastside Hope, and have been shared with the Farmworker Advisory Commission (FAC), which was formed to address the needs of the farmworker community.

To address these concerns and create a space for open dialogue, the Farmworker Advisory Commission hosted a listening session on February 12, 2025. The session aimed to gather feedback on how the Coastside Clinic and its mobile clinic in Pescadero are serving residents and identify areas for improvement. The session, facilitated by Schechter Consulting, was attended by 24 community members, and supported by various community organizations and County staff.

Key Areas of Feedback

1. Service Delivery

- The Coastside Clinic provides a range of services, including wellness exams, regular checkups, dental services, lab tests, diabetes and cancer screenings, and medication refills.
- Many community members reported they have not visited the clinic recently due to long wait times for appointments, frequent cancellations, limited phone accessibility, and issues with prior authorizations. As a result, some have chosen to seek care elsewhere, traveling longer distances or paying out-of-pocket.

2. Positive Experiences

- Positive experiences were shared about the clinic's doctors and dentists, particularly regarding communication and follow-up.
- The clinic's proximity was noted as beneficial, especially for those without transportation.

3. Concerns and Challenges

- **Wait Times:** Community members expressed frustration with long phone hold times, delays in scheduling appointments (sometimes up to three months), and extended wait times at the clinic (up to five hours).
- **Appointment Cancellations:** Last-minute cancellations of appointments, often with no prior notice or explanation, were highlighted as a significant issue.
- **Lack of Follow-Up:** Many community members reported poor follow-up on test results and referrals, sometimes waiting months without receiving results at all.
- **Communication Issues:** The lack of Spanish-speaking staff and unreliable interpretation services were frequently cited as barriers to effective communication with Spanish-speaking patients.

- **Treatment and Staff Issues:** Some community members cited dismissive treatment by clinic staff, particularly regarding health concerns related to age or other factors.
4. **Suggestions for Improvement**
- **Expanded Hours and Capacity:** Community members recommended extending clinic hours and increasing mobile clinic availability, particularly in rural areas. When planning extended office hours, community input should be sought to ensure effectiveness.
 - **Improved Communication and Patient-Centered Care:** Enhanced communication, especially in Spanish, and the hiring of culturally competent staff were emphasized as key improvements. Community members also requested better responsiveness and more patient-centered care.
 - **Improved Follow-Up:** There was a strong emphasis on the need for timely follow-up on test results, referrals, and ongoing care.
 - **Prior Authorization Support:** Assistance with prior authorizations was requested to ensure medications are accessible and timely for all patients.

Based on the valuable insights gathered during the listening session, the following recommendations have been developed to address the long-standing concerns and improve the services provided by the Coastside Clinic and its Pescadero Mobile Clinic. These recommendations include actionable steps, clear timelines, and assigned responsibilities to ensure accountability and effective progress.

Recommendations

1. **Finalize Summary of Key Community Concerns**
 - **Action:** Finalize the summary report, incorporating feedback from the listening session and FAC members, and outline specific recommendations.
 - **Timeline:** Within 2-3 weeks (by March 31, 2025) – FAC: J. Guerrero and C. Rodriguez.
2. **Present Findings to District 3 Supervisor**
 - **Action:** Submit the final report and feedback gathered from the listening session to the District 3 Supervisor, Health Plan of San Mateo Commission, Healthcare for the Homeless Farmworker Health, and the San Mateo Medical Center board.
 - **Timeline:** Within 2-4 weeks (by April 15, 2025) – FAC: J. Guerrero and C. Rodriguez.
3. **Request Action from District 3 Supervisor's Office**
 - **Action:** Request a response from the District 3 Supervisor's office outlining the next steps and a timeline for an improvement plan.
 - **Timeline:** Within 3 months (by June 2025) – FAC: J. Guerrero and C. Rodriguez.
4. **Plan for a Follow-Up Listening Session**
 - **Action:** Plan a follow-up listening session one year from now to assess progress and evaluate improvements.
 - **Timeline:** Plan the session by March 2026, with the session taking place by April 2026 – FAC.
5. **Improvements for the Clinic**
 - **Action 1: Increasing Capacity:**
 - Expand office hours for both Coastside Clinic and mobile clinic to better meet community needs (e.g., after work and school hours).

- When improving and expanding office hours, patients should be part of the process and provide input on the suggested hours to increase the efficiency of the improvement.
 - Increase mobile clinic availability by adding one additional day at Pescadero.
 - **Timeline:** Within 6 months (by October 2025).
- **Action 2: Improve Communication and Cultural Competency:**
 - Hire more Spanish-speaking staff and ensure cultural competency training for all staff, with a focus on patient-centered care and communication.
 - Improved communication, especially for Spanish-speaking patients, and more responsive, patient-centered care.
 - Provide annual training in culturally competency, customer service with an emphasis patient-centered skills training.
 - Provide annual training on How to Access Interpreter devices to improve communication with non-English speaking community.
 - Ensuring the hiring of culturally competent staff will be vital to improve communication and patient centered care.
 - Develop a process for receiving feedback from patients to ensure patients receive quality healthcare and treated with dignity and respect.
 - **Timeline:** Within 3-6 months (by October 2025).
- **Action 3: Address Lack of Follow-Up:**
 - Implement a system for ensuring follow-up on test results, referrals, and ongoing care within 30 days or less.
 - **Timeline:** Within 3-6 months (by October 2025).
- **Action 4: Address Delay in Treatment and Medication:**
 - Complete pre-authorizations for medications and services within 5-10 business days to ensure timely access to care.
 - **Timeline:** Within 6 months (by October 2025).
- **Action 5: Prevent Appointment Cancellations and Mobile Clinic Inconsistencies:**
 - Ensure a backup system for physician coverage at the Pescadero mobile clinic to prevent last-minute cancellations and vacations.
 - **Timeline:** Within 3 months (by June 2025).
- **Action 6: Address Phone Line Issues:**
 - Ensure adequate staffing for phone lines and monitor call volumes to reduce wait times, aiming for hold times of no longer than 30 minutes.
 - **Timeline:** Within 3 months (by June 2025).
- **Action 7: Address Longstanding Community Concerns:**
 - Develop a formal improvement plan based on feedback from the listening session and report back to the Farmworker Advisory Commission for transparency and stakeholder input.
 - **Timeline:** Within 3 months (by June 2025).

Conclusion

By implementing these recommendations, the Farmworker Advisory Commission is committed to improving the healthcare experience for the farmworker community. Through continued engagement, transparency, and accountability, the Coastside Clinic and Pescadero Mobile Clinic can better meet the needs of those they serve, fostering a more accessible and responsive healthcare system for all.