



September 10, 2024

Mendocino County Grand Jury  
501 Low Gap Road  
Ukiah, CA 95482

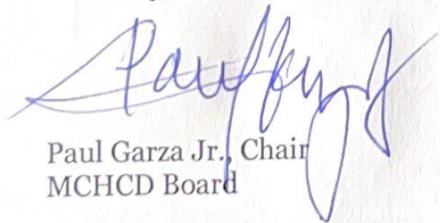
Members of the Grand Jury:

The Mendocino Coast Health Care District has received the 2023-2024 Mendocino County Grand Jury's Report, titled "*MENDOCINO COAST HEALTH CARE DISTRICT Sick, but Returning to Health*"

The Board has considered the report with attention and regard for the work the Grand Jury has done on behalf of our community, and with gratitude for the time each of the esteemed members of the Grand Jury has spent thoughtfully considering the ways in which the District can improve.

The Grand Jury's report highlighted crucial issues affecting our community's healthcare. We take these findings seriously and are committed to transparency, integrity, and accountability. We've engaged expert consultants, initiated Board discussions, and are actively working with stakeholders to address the recommendations. Most of the recommendations have significant merit, and we plan to implement them as detailed in our response. We appreciate the Grand Jury's efforts to help us improve our healthcare operations on the Mendocino Coast.

Sincerely,



Paul Garza Jr., Chair  
MCHCD Board

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**Grand Jury Report  
REQUESTED RESPONSE FORM**

**Grand Jury Report Title :** “MENDOCINO COAST HEALTH CARE DISTRICT  
Sick, but Returning to Health”

**Report Dated :** June 12, 2024

**Response Form Submitted By:** Paul Garza Jr., Chair, Mendocino Coast Health Care District Board

***I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the FINDINGS portion of the report as follows:***

I (we) agree with the Findings numbered:

F1-F5, F7-F13, F15-F20.

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered below, and have *attached* a statement specifying any portions of the Findings that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons therefore.

F6, F14.

***I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the RECOMMENDATIONS portion of the report as follows:***

The following Recommendation(s) have been implemented, and **attached as requested** is a summary describing the implemented actions:

R1, R2, R6-R9, R13, R14.

The following Recommendation(s) have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future; **attached as requested** is a time frame for implementation:

R3-R5, R10-R12, R15-R17.



GRAND JURY REPORT  
REQUESTED RESPONSE FORM  
PAGE TWO

*I have completed the above responses, and have attached as requested the following number of pages to this response form:*

Number of Pages attached: 12 pages

I understand that responses to Grand Jury Reports are public records. They will be posted on the Grand Jury website: [www.mendocinocounty.org/government/grand-jury](http://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/grand-jury). The clerk of the court is required to maintain a copy of the response.

*Please submit this signed response form and any attachments as follows:*

First Step: E-mail (word documents or scanned pdf file format) to:

- The Grand Jury Foreperson at: [grandjury@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:grandjury@mendocinocounty.gov)
- The Presiding or Supervising Judge: [grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov](mailto:grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov)
- Please also send a courtesy copy to: The County's Executive Office:  
[ceo@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:ceo@mendocinocounty.gov)

Second Step: Mail all originals to:

- Mendocino County Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 939  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Printed Name: Paul Garza Jr., MCHCD Board Chair

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Garza Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Date: September 10, 2024



Pursuant to California Penal Code § 933 and 933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requests each entity or individual named below to respond to the enumerated Findings and Recommendations within specific statutory guidelines.

## FINDINGS

We disagree wholly or partially with Findings 6 and 14.

### **Finding 6**

*“Some agendas and many meeting minutes were missing from the website and Board records. This delayed and could jeopardize the audits and, therefore, the retrofit project.”*

#### MCHCD Response:

All meeting Agendas and Meeting minutes of Regular Board meetings are available to the public on the district’s website. Information for the 2020 and 2021 years are consolidated into large files that contain all information for that year. The district staff intends to separate these files by month, for ease of accessibility to the public.

### **Finding 14**

*“The Board has not proactively reached out to the general public in an open forum for their input and discussion regarding the public needs, the future of healthcare at the coast, or the role of the MCHCD.”*

#### MCHCD Response:

The MCHCD Board held a series of seven community engagement forums throughout the district this year, on March 26, Westport Fire Station; April 2 (English) and April 4 (Spanish), Fort Bragg Town Hall; April 10, Caspar Community Center; May 15, Mendocino; May 22, Comptche; and June 25, Elk. A summary of meeting feedback from those community listening sessions is attached to this report response. The Board also hosted a Community presentation on May 31, 2024, where community health data was presented and discussed. A second Community health presentation is scheduled for September 6, 2024, at Fort Bragg Town Hall.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation 1**

*“Update Bylaws, vote for approval and document in minutes, sign, date, and post on the MCHCD website. Distribute to all Board Directors.”*

#### MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The ad hoc Policy/Bylaws committee has created



a draft update of the Board Bylaws, currently under review by Board Counsel, and scheduled for approval at the September Regular Board meeting. Updated Board Bylaws will be posted at the District’s website, <http://MendocinoChCd.gov/>.

**Recommendation 2**

*“Include in MCHCD Bylaws or Policies a requirement that all Board members take a Brown Act and Ethics training that meets AB1234 requirements upon taking office, and post verification of completion on the website.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The ad hoc Policy/Bylaws committee has added a training requirement for Board members. The draft update of the Board Bylaws, currently under review by Board Counsel, is scheduled for approval at the September Regular Board meeting.

**Recommendation 6**

*“Complete an educational campaign for the public to help them understand the Mission and scope of authority of MCHCD.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. A ‘Did you know’ social media campaign is underway with regular information posted to the public. The Agency Administrator and Board chair are exploring ways that the board may reach out to the public for input, including convening additional listening sessions and regular board meetings throughout the district's boundaries. A copy of social media postings is attached to this response.

**Recommendation 7**

*“Initiate community outreach as outlined in Discussion to gain insight into public priorities and needs.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The board has conducted seven community listening sessions (summary of feedback is attached), and plans to continue public outreach sessions and convene regular board meetings throughout the district, beginning in January 2025.

**Recommendation 8**

*“Post minutes and agendas in a timely manner, and adhere to Brown Act requirements regarding agendas, and meetings.”*



MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. Since professional Regional Government Services staff was contracted, Board Meeting Agendas and Board Meeting minutes have been published according to the requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

**Recommendation 9**

*“Provide adequate professional staffing (i.e., a full-time general manager, and part time admin and finance support) to support the Board. This could be accomplished using a consultant model, hiring support staff, or some combination of the two.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Board has contracted with two professional consulting firms, Regional Government Services, (December, 2023), to provide professional Agency Administrative services, and Silverton Financial Management Services (February, 2024), to act as the Chief Financial Officer for the district. A longer-term staffing options study is in progress for Board consideration when planning the next Fiscal Year Budget.

**Recommendation 13**

*“Create a public advisory committee of 10-20 members of the public as described in the Discussion section.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Board chair has convened a 2030 Hospital working group composed of community members, with a responsibility to make recommendations for board consideration and action, concerning seismic upgrade of the hospital facility and possibilities for increased access to outpatient services.

**Recommendation 14**

*“Review other health care district’s websites and open dialogue with other health care district boards and the CSDA regarding ideas for policies, bylaws, and best practices.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. District consultants have provided updates to the District’s website that provide more information and better site navigation to district information.

Recommendations that have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a time frame for implementation:



### **Recommendation 3**

*“Update or create MCHCD Policies, including, but not limited to: IT and Security, Document Retention and Handling, Financial Record Keeping and Reporting, Board Administration, and Comity. Approve, sign, date, post on the website, and distribute to all Board Directors.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has not been implemented. The ad hoc Policy/Bylaws committee will consider additional policies re: IT and Security before the end of this calendar year. The board has approved policies re: Conflict of Interest, Internal Controls, Investment of Funds, Credit Card Use, Records Retention, Purchasing, Accounts Receivable, and Code of Ethics. All board policies may be found in both English and Spanish at:

<https://www.mendocinohcd.gov/board-policies>

### **Recommendation 4**

*“Agree and vote upon the mission statement of MCHCD. Post it on the website and include it in the MCHCD Bylaws and in the Policies Manual.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has not been implemented. The board will consider updated mission and vision statements in a strategic planning session, after receiving public input, when the new board is seated after the November elections, and post any updates to the district’s website.

### **Recommendation 5**

*“Complete all tasks needed to enable auditors to complete audits for the last three years (this includes providing all missing minutes and agendas, approved, signed, and posted on the website).”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has not been implemented. The board has contracted with DZA Auditors for completion of the 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 Fiscal year audits. The CFO estimates the audits for Fiscal year 2020-21 to be completed by the end of this year, and the remaining fiscal year audits to be completed in the first ½ of the 2025 calendar year.

### **Recommendation 10**

*“Take advantage of CSDA certification programs.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has not been implemented. The Agency Administrator and Board chair are exploring ways that board members may encourage board members to receive continuing





education on the responsibilities of the administration of the district through various trade organizations.

**Recommendation 11**

*“Gather and provide training options to new Board members upon election or appointment, as outlined in Discussion.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has not been implemented. The Agency Administrator and Board chair are exploring ways that board members may receive continuing education on the responsibilities of the administration of the district through various trade organizations. A new Board orientation will be scheduled immediately after the elected directors are seated.

**Recommendation 12**

*“Define and vote on the guidelines for using funds from all budgets.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has not been implemented. The Agency Administrator and the CFO are exploring ways that board members may receive continuing education on the responsibilities of the fiscal administration of the district. A public board budget workshop is planned for January 2025, possibly in conjunction with new Board member orientation.

**Recommendation 15**

*“Clarify and develop the facilities plan before lease negotiations begin later this year.”*

MCHCD Response:

The Board chair is gathering information to bring before the board, in consultation with Regional Government Services staff and the 2030 Hospital team, to establish a process for creation of a facilities plan. RGS staff will assist the board in establishing a process to negotiate any changes to the lease agreement

**Recommendation 16**

*“Develop a five-year MCHCD Strategic Plan.”*

MCHCD Response:

The recommendation has not been implemented. The Board chair is gathering information together with the 2030 Hospital team to bring before the board, for the creation of a 5-year strategic plan for the district in the first quarter of Calendar year 2025.



**Recommendation 17**

*“Develop an onboarding process and manual that outlines the expectations of Board members (roles and responsibilities), requirements (such as Brown Act and Ethics), and resources available (such as training).”*

**MCHCD Response:**

The recommendation has not been implemented. Regional Government Services staff are developing an onboarding process that outlines the expectations, roles and responsibilities of Board Members.

The District Board and staff wish to extend our appreciation and gratitude for the Grand Jury’s attention to these important matters of this district.



## Summary of Information Received at MCHCD Community Meetings

The Mendocino Coast Health Care District (MCHCD) is focused on supporting thriving, health communities on the Coast by ensuring continuous, accessible, high quality, sustainable healthcare.

In Spring 2024, MCHCD Directors held a series of Community Meetings with the goal of connecting with Coast residents and hearing their priorities and needs for quality healthcare on the Coast.

Over 50 residents attended one of the seven Community Meetings held in Elk, Caspar, Comptche, Fort Bragg (2 meetings), Mendocino, and Westport. Primary concerns shared with the Board were around geriatric care and, from the Latino community at the Fort Bragg bi-Lingual meeting concerns were about family care.

The below common themes highlight the community's primary concerns regarding healthcare on the Mendocino Coast.

### Common Themes and Comments:

#### 1. Healthcare Accessibility and Specialist Care

- Overall concern about the availability of specialist care (e.g., cardiologists, neurologists, urologists).
- Emphasis on the need for accessible healthcare services and shorter wait times for appointments.

#### 2. Transportation Challenges

- Significant issues with transportation for medical appointments.
- Need for rideshare options, HandiVan services, and better ambulance services.

#### 3. Support for Medical Staff

- Need for more doctors, nurses, and trained personnel.
- Housing difficulties for medical professionals.
- Importance of retaining medical staff and reducing reliance on locum tenens (temporary) professionals.

#### 4. Financial Support and Resources

- Financial support needed for emergency services and medical facilities.
- Interest in bond measures and finding additional funds to support healthcare services.

#### 5. Community Engagement and Communication

- Importance of community involvement in healthcare planning.
- Need for better communication and information about healthcare services, particularly in Spanish.

#### 6. Holistic and Preventive Health Initiatives

- Interest in Blue Zones initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Emphasis on preventive care and holistic health approaches, including diet and exercise.

#### 7. Barriers to Good Health

- Transportation and access to food as major barriers.
- Lack of fresh vegetables in local stores, and difficulty accessing prescriptions and medical services.
- Importance of public awareness campaigns to educate about healthcare resources and safety.

The MCHCD Board appreciates those residents who attended the Community Meetings and looks forward to holding more in the near future.

## MCHCD Did You Know? Proposed Posts and Timing

1. New Staff – 3 times in August



Last month, Adventist Health Mendocino Coast, our partner in providing quality healthcare on the coast, welcomed Dr. Mauricio Heilbron, MD, Cathy Boyle, PCPNP-BC and Caroline Wells, PA-C, to our team!

Dr. Heilbron brings extensive experience and expertise in general, trauma, and vascular surgery, making him a valuable addition to our healthcare family. With over 26 years of dedicated service in the medical field, Dr. Heilbron specializes in both General and Vascular Surgery. We are honored to have Dr. Mauricio Heilbron with us, dedicated to delivering outstanding surgical care, personalized treatment plans, and compassionate attention to every patient.

Cathy Boyle is a board-certified pediatric nurse practitioner specializing in pediatric care and forensic nursing. We're honored to have Cathy on our team! Her expertise, extensive experience, and commitment to her patients, she will be an invaluable addition to our provider team at Adventist Health Mendocino Coast Medical Offices.

Caroline Wells holds a Masters of Medical Science in Physician Assistant from Emory University School of Medicine and a Master of Public Health in Community Health Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Caroline's dedication to her field is evident through her certifications and memberships, which include the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) and memberships in professional organizations such as the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), Georgia Association of Physician Assistants (GAPA), and American Public Health Association (APHA).

2. Instagram – 4 times throughout August

## DID YOU KNOW?

**MENDOCINO  
COAST HEALTH  
CARE DISTRICT  
IS ON  
INSTAGRAM!**



Follow us on Instagram at @MendocinoCoastHCD today!

3. Training Programs – 3 times throughout the month of August.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**ADVENTIST  
HEALTH OFFERS  
MEDICAL ASSISTANT  
TRAINING  
PROGRAMS**



Earlier this month Adventist Health Mendocino Coast, our partner in delivering quality healthcare on the coast, celebrated another graduating class from their COPE Medical Assistants training program! Are you interested in becoming a Medical Assistant and making a difference for our community? Learn more about our COPE Program today here: <https://ahlink.org/4cWkwuS>

4. Measure C – Once a week for the month of August

## DID YOU KNOW?

**MEASURE C  
DOLLARS BOUGHT  
OUR NEW  
AMBULANCE!**



The funds levied by 2018's Measure C parcel tax were used to purchase a new ambulance! This ambulance will help emergency services get to patients faster in emergencies, ensuring quicker response times and better care when you need it most. Our community's safety is MCHCD's priority, and this new addition is a huge step forward in serving our rural community.

5. Community Benefit – Once a week for the month of August

## DID YOU KNOW?

**THE SCALE  
OF ADVENTIST  
HEALTH'S  
COMMUNITY  
BENEFIT**



In 2022, Adventist Health, MCHCD's partner in providing healthcare on the coast, provided:

- \$67.5 million in charity care
- \$25.5 million in community health improvement
- \$28.8 million in education and research
- \$287.9 million in Medicaid
- \$442.2 million in Medicare
- \$206.4 million subsidized health services
- \$1.058 billion total

Learn more: [adventisthealth.org/mendocino-coast/about-us/community-benefit/](https://adventisthealth.org/mendocino-coast/about-us/community-benefit/)

- District – Every other week for the month of August

## DID YOU KNOW?

**MCHCD  
SPANS THE  
COAST FROM  
ROCKPORT  
TO ELK**



The Mendocino Coast Health Care District, formed in 1967, was created to support thriving healthy communities along the Coast. MCHCD owns and oversees the property and buildings of our hospital to ensure continuous, accessible, high-quality health care. Learn more about the district at [MendocinoCHCD.gov](http://MendocinoCHCD.gov)

- Hiring – Every other week for the month of August

## DID YOU KNOW?

**ADVENTIST  
HEALTH  
MENDOCINO  
COAST  
IS HIRING**



Learn more about the exciting career opportunities at Adventist Health Mendocino Coast!  
<https://ahlink.org/4c8SWtl>

- Monthly Meetings – Twice a month through the end of the year

## DID YOU KNOW?

**MCHCD  
HOLDS A  
PUBLIC BOARD  
MEETING  
EVERY MONTH**



Find information on our monthly meetings at [MendocinoCHCD.gov](http://MendocinoCHCD.gov) or follow us on Instagram at @MendocinoCoastHCD and on Facebook at @MendocinoCoastHealthCareDistrict

9. Benefit Sponsorships – Every other week for the month of August

## DID YOU KNOW?

**ADVENTIST  
HEALTH OFFERS  
COMMUNITY  
BENEFIT  
SPONSORSHIPS**



Adventist Health, MCHCD's partner in providing healthcare to the coast, provides sponsorships to support projects and programs that address mental health, substance use or domestic abuse. Learn more: [adventisthealth.org/mendocino-coast/about-us/community-benefit-sponsorship/](http://adventisthealth.org/mendocino-coast/about-us/community-benefit-sponsorship/)