

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
**Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

August 1, 2019

**Present:** Erica Beall, Suad Bisogno, Catherine Carpenter, Cynthia Fernandez, Loreena Garcia, Sharoll Jackson, Dana Kalek, Ken Lane, Don Lucas, and Kevin Shields - Committee Members

Pati Johns, Trudy Callahan, Jon Francis, Sharon Weinberg, Raquel Armendariz, Dana Hart, Tania Bartolo, Dennis Rutnam, Tina Castro, Nicole Veno, Arlene Tapia, Jennifer Mentado, Glynda Givens, Tara Estrella, Cindy Kozlowski, Alexandra Stix, Cheryl Keehne, Alba Esqueda, Rafael Carbajal, Linda Cobuzzi, Debra Dinielli, Lori Sivazlian, Vi Le, Marcela Castanos, Allie Stix, Reginald Baker, Haley Rhyne, Uju Okeke, Kenny Ha, Terrence Carson, Adam Stokes, Emily Owens, Katherine Farren, Alisha Turner, Caleb Logan, Jr., April Godales, Hal Kirklin, Theresa Havell, Ann Moore, Ivanna Ayala, Nicholle Cash, Stephani Anderson, Fred Rockwood, Leticia Leon, Miguel Aguilar, Kim Lee, Monique Lopez, Alexandra Rivera, Kristine Cu, Lori Resnick, Lisa Peterson, Idris Danesi, Dana V. Andrews, Christian Depaz, Saeda Farah, Maria Slinn, Margie Meza, Andrea Lewis, and Maryanne Sawoski - Guests

Ruth Janka, Jennifer Kaiser, Cathy Robinson-Learn, Elisa Hill, Sheila Calove, Arpi Arabian, Evelyn McOmie, Kim Rolfes, Venus M. Rodriguez-Khorasani, Lisa Mayti, Jesse Weller, Maria Bosch, Jenny Dao, Stephanie Margaret, Olsa L. Ruiz, and Laura Morton – NLACRC Staff

**Absent:** Orli Almog, Deborah Cutter, Bob Erio, Mariela Feldman, Staci Jordan, Jenni Moran, Sonia Ojeda, and Nick Vukotic

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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Sharoll Jackson, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. and introductions were made. Sharoll welcomed 5 new members to the VAC: *Erica Beall, Catherine Carpenter, Loreena Garcia, Ken Lane, and Kevin Shields!*

**II. Public Input**

A. Reginald Baker works for a company called Enterprise Fleet Management. His company provides car sharing, trucks, and fleets. He is available to work with service providers to help them find cost-effective solutions to their transportation needs. He can be reached at [Reginald.S.Baker@EFleets.com](mailto:Reginald.S.Baker@EFleets.com).

- B. Sharoll Jackson announced that it is National Respect for Parents Day and she encouraged everyone to celebrate it with a least 1 person today. 😊

### III. Consent Items

- A. Approval of Agenda

A new item VI. was added to the agenda.

**M/S/C** (K. Shields/C. Fernandez) To approve the agenda as modified.

- B. Approval of Minutes from the June 6<sup>th</sup> VAC Meeting

**M/S/C** (S. Bisogno/D. Kalek) To approve the minutes as presented.

### IV. VAC Group Photograph

**Action:** The group photograph was postponed to next month as so many VAC members were not present.

### V. Executive Director's Report (Ruth Janka)

- A. New Promotions: Dr. Jesse Weller was promoted to chief of program services and Kim Rolfes, chief financial officer, has been promoted to deputy director/CFO.

- B. State Budget and Trailer Bill Language: The FY 2019-20 state budget includes:

1. \$7.8 billion for the regional center system as a whole which represents an increase of \$356.9 million; \$122.2 million for purchase of service (POS) growth and utilization; the main cost drivers are support services, in-home respite, and miscellaneous services.
2. \$1.6 million for regional center staffing to support new family home agency (FHA) development and additional oversight/monitoring.
3. An increase of \$163.7 million to implement provider rate adjustments and activities related to regional center and service provider accountability.
4. \$4.5 million for regional center operations to implement rate increases and increase transparency and accountability.
5. \$2.1 million for minimum wage increase (\$12 to \$13 per hour).
6. \$404.4 million for developmental centers, a net increase of \$10 million.

7. \$70.9 million for DDS headquarters to implement the electronic visit verification (EVV) system, to implement Trauma Informed Service for Foster Youth, relocate to a new building, update statute and regulation in response to the rate increases, and add 54 new positions dedicated to regional center monitoring, oversight, and support.

Trailer Bill Language passed establishing rate increases for several services types, mandates related to transparency requiring regional center posting of a variety of information, board composition and activities, and mandates on DDS for quarterly reporting to the Legislature, and monitoring and technical assistance to the regional center system. Camp and social recreational activities were not restored; half day billing was not repealed; and the uniform holiday schedule was suspended until January 1, 2022.

- C. Continued Legislative Advocacy: We must continue to engage with and educate our legislators until the new rate plan is implemented. The state's developmental disabilities system is \$1.2 billion short – the 8.2% increase is just a fraction of what is truly needed. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) needs accurate data from service providers on how the inadequate rates are affecting consumers, families, and providers. Also, if you haven't signed up to receive Marty Omoto's frequent email updates you should do so! Marty Omoto watches the inner workings of the Sacramento governmental structure as an advocate/reporter, particularly as it affects people with disabilities. He advises and reports on this through his California Disability-Senior Community Action Network (CDCAN), an e-mail list that now serves 65,000 subscribers. To add your name to the CDCAN email list, email Marty Omoto: [martyomoto@att.net](mailto:martyomoto@att.net)

**Action:** Evelyn McOmie will determine if NLACRC can establish a section on the center's website focused on legislation with hyperlinks to CMS final rule information, EVV updates, etc.

D. Legislation

1. **AB 261** would repeal the suspension of a regional center's authority to purchase camping services and associated travel and social recreation activities; two year bill.
2. **AB 311** would repeal provisions mandating service providers to bill for a half-day when consumers are not able to attend a full day of program; two year bill.

3. **SB 412** would sunset the family cost participation program.
  4. **AB 438** would repeal the uniform holiday schedule and allow regional centers to compensate programs and transportation for providing services on any of the specified 11 holidays on which a program operates; two year bill.
  5. **AB 536** redefines the statutory criteria for determination of a developmental disability from 18 to 22 years of age; two year bill.
- E. Disparity Funding: Disparity funding for FY 2019-20 is now available which must be used to provide greater access to regional center services; proposals are due to DDS by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- F. Community Coffees: Ruth continues to hold community coffees in all 3 valleys at various service providers' sites. The next one will be held at The Adult Skills Center at 9:00 a.m. on August 7<sup>th</sup>. We have also begun holding Cafecita Entre Nous, community coffees for our Hispanic community, in the San Fernando Valley and now also in the Antelope Valley.
- G. Disability Benefits Site: If you Google DB101.org, it will take you to a site with the disability benefits that are provided by each state. It is user-friendly and has lots of good information posted. There is a chart posted there that helps consumers understand that working really will get them ahead.
- H. Legislative Educators (Michelle Heid and Raquel Armendariz): Raquel was present and provided everyone with an updated report from Pathways to Advocacy. The report included information on the state budget, rate study and associated rate models, HCBS settings final rule, legislative calendar, pertinent bills, voting solutions, and the California tax on commercial and industrial properties for education and local government funding initiative (2020). This ballot initiative would amend the state constitution to require commercial and industrial properties (except commercial agriculture) to be taxed based on their market value. In California, the proposal to assess taxes on commercial and industrial properties at market value, while continuing to assess taxes on residential properties based on purchase price, is known as "split roll."
- I. Behavioral Health Care Services Transition: Dr. Arpi Arabian reported that this will be the last update on the behavioral health care services to managed care as the last 7 consumers are in the process of being transitioned.

## VI. Chief of Program Services Report (Dr. Jesse Weller)

- A. CalFresh: DDS is partnering with the the California Department of Social Services (DPSS) to help connect consumers and families with the new CalFresh food stamp program. Eligible families can apply to get up to \$193 for an individual and up to \$353 for 2 individuals (based on income). The approval process is fairly simple. Our services coordinators will be trained on how to help families connect with this program. For more information go to GetCalFresh.com.
- B. Self-Determination Program (SDP): Seven orientations have been held so far at various times of the day and on Saturdays. We currently have 168 active consumers with an additional 39-40 consumers who still need to participate in their orientation. A tool is being developed to help set a consumer's budget. We are fully staffed for the SDP with specialists in the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita Valley offices and a supervisor at the San Fernando Valley office. Our service coordinators have been trained and informational meetings are held every month – one in each valley. The Self-Determination Advisory Committee continues to meet on the third Thursday of each month at one of the center's 3 offices. Two financial management service providers have been vendored so far: Accredited Nursing and Premiere.

**Action:** Jesse Weller will make sure that service coordinators continue to send out informational SDP fliers with their mailings to consumers and families.

- C. NLACRC's POS Disparity Projects:
1. Parent Mentor: We are still recruiting for a parent to serve as a parent mentor to help other parents navigate the service system. If we are not able to recruit a full-time person, we will try hiring 2 part-time parents.
  2. Family Empowerment Team in Action (FETA): The center received approval from DDS to continue our FETA program for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year. We are currently assisting about 35 families to help increase their access to services. This is managed by MSW students at CSUN.

The Family Focus Resource Center continues to do a lot of work to reduce service disparities.

## VII. Chief Financial Officer's Report (Kim Rolfes)

- A. Fun Fact! Inland Regional Center is the largest of the 21 regional centers with 1,369 intakes in June. NLACRC is not far behind – we had 892 intakes in June!

**Action:** Kim Rolfes will find out how many of the intakes resulted in consumers becoming actual consumers and report back at next month's VAC meeting.

B. NLACRC's Budget

1. FY 2018-19: The center's budget for last fiscal year is currently at \$499,262,939, but with projected expenditures, we are anticipating that we will need an additional funding allocation from DDS that will take us over the half billion dollar mark!
2. FY 2019-20: Kim explained that the center has a 5-year contract with DDS which have a corresponding letter for the year and a corresponding number for each allocation. The center is starting its first year of a new 5-year contract and we are expecting our A-1 (contract year one; allocation 1) very soon. We received our advance from DDS one day before our check run so we didn't have to borrow from our credit line.

C. Audit Updates

1. DDS Audit of NLACRC: DDS is currently auditing our FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19; they have been here for 3 weeks and will be here for a total of 5 weeks. We meet weekly with the auditors and no findings as yet!
2. NLACRC Required Audits for FY 2019-20: We have been informed by DDS that we must perform 12 service provider audits this fiscal year.
3. DDS Audit of Family Home Agencies Final Audit Report: We recently sent our response to DDS on their audit of our 2 family home agencies. Staff have reviewed the findings and have taken the necessary steps to bring the areas identified into compliance.
4. DDS Early Start Monitoring Review: Will be conducted September 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>.

- D. 2.1% Bridge Funding: We are in the process of making payments to service providers.
- E. Money Management Transition: The center finalized its contract with FACT to assume the duty of representative payee services for our consumers and it was anticipated that the transition from the center providing this service to FACT would take about 18 months. However, the Social Security Administration (SSA) recently reported to the center that they do not have the staff resources to support the 18 month transition timeline and reported that SSA can only support transitioning approximately 20 consumers per month to FACT starting in April 2020. Therefore, NLACRC is now on a six year transition plan rather than an 18 month transition plan. As a result of the change in timeline, NLACRC will be recruiting for staff since the transition has been delayed. Kim reported that FACT will only disburse SSI/SSA funds to residential providers that they actually receive, which means for consumers who have no SSI/SSA benefits there will be a payment shortfall to the residential provider, until the SSI/SSA benefits are set up for the consumer. The center is working on a solution to address this issue for consumers that have no SSI/SSA benefits to minimize the fiscal impact on our residential service providers as we want this transition to FACT to be seamless for our consumers and service providers. For consumers for which NLACRC is the representative payee, NLACRC will continue to pay the residential service provider the SSI/SSA portion until such time FACT becomes the representative payee.

### **VIII. Community Services Director's Report (Evelyn McOmie)**

- A. Request for Vendorization (RFV): The summer RFV cycle starts today. In conjunction with the center's FY 2019-20 resource development plan, we are seeking proposals for the following projects. Applicants being sought for an area specific service must have a physical office located in the requested area.
1. Community Integration Training Program (SCV and AV)
  2. Speech-Language Pathologist (SC and AV)
  3. Occupational Therapist (SC and AV)
  4. Physical Therapist (SC and AV)
  5. Infant Development Program (SC and AV)
  6. Residential Facility for Adults with Mild to Moderate Support Needs (Level 2, Level 3)

An applicants' conference will be held from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, and the deadline for submission of proposals is Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>.

- B. Vendor Newsletter: Copies of the most current vendor newsletter are on the information table and it will also be posted on our website.
- C. DDS Supplemental Rate Increases: Information about the rate increases was available on the information table. The rate increases start January 1, 2020 and end December 31, 2021. Information about the rate increases is also posted on DDS's website.
- D. Health & Safety Waivers: The only tool the center has to assist providers who are unable to meet client needs due to inadequate rates is the health and safety waiver, which must be submitted individually for each consumer.
- E. Electronic Visit Verification (EVV): This is a federal mandate that will go into effect January 1, 2020. DDS is working with DSS and the Department of Public Health to delay the implementation date to January 1, 2021.
- F. Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Final Rule Trainings: DDS is going to be holding webinars to provide an overview of the HCBS settings final rule on 4 different dates this month. Fliers with more information about these webinars are on the information table.
- G. Annual Vendor Fair: Sign-ups will begin Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, for this year's vendor fairs. Registration will be organized by service type. The fairs will be held on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12, and 24<sup>th</sup> (SFV office) and on October 9<sup>th</sup> (Chimbole Center in the AV). You should bring copies of a 1-page informational handout about your agency and the services it provides along with any other pamphlets, brochures, etc. RSVP through Eventbrite on our website.

## **IX. Committee Business**

- A. Annual VAC Orientation: Review Policies & Procedures - *Attachment*
- B. FY 2018-19 VAC Action Log – *Attachment*
- C. FY 2019-20 VAC Meeting Schedule – *Attachment*
- D. FY 2019-20 VAC Roster & Terms – *Attachment*
- E. Board Approved VAC Priorities for FY 2019-20 – *Attachment*

The information above was provided to the VAC for their information. Any questions should be directed to Jennifer Kaiser at [jkaiser@nlacrc.org](mailto:jkaiser@nlacrc.org).

- F. Volunteers Needed to Represent the VAC on Board Committees



1. Administrative Affairs: Kevin Shields volunteered
2. Consumer Services & Government/Community Relations: Loreena Garcia volunteered
3. Nominating: Catherine Carpenter volunteered

## **X. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups**

The work groups meet every other month after the VAC meetings.

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek): The 805 service code was not included for an increase in the trailer bill language, which is a huge issue. The work group will be reaching out to legislators and the governor about this. The work group is updating its pediatrician list. The statewide infant development association conference will be held on September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> in San Jose. Dana and Elisa Hill, consumer services manager, will be presenting at that conference.
- B. School Age Services (Mariela Feldman): Mariela was not present to give a report.
- C. Adult Services (Don Lucas for Jenni Moran): The group is working on a policy on providing supports to older consumers (45 years and over) as they require additional supports and services. The work group will present the draft policy to the VAC later this year.
- D. Implementation of Legislative Changes (Sharoll Jackson): This work group partnered with the Adult Service work group last month.

## **XI. Report on Board & Board Committee Meetings**

Minutes from the NLACRC Board of Trustees meetings and minutes from all of its subcommittee meetings are posted on the center's website under the "Governance/ Board of Trustees/ Approved Meeting Minutes" tab.

- A. Administrative Affairs: This committee oversees the center's financial reports, contracts, insurance, and human resources.
- B. Board of Trustees: The board generally meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the center's main office, but the board meets in the Antelope Valley in September and in Santa Clarita in February.

- C. Consumer Services: This committee is responsible for reviewing all consumer-related matters, including changes to the service standards and reviewing data from case management to aid the board in policy determinations. They are also overseeing the center's implementation of the self-determination program.
- D. Government & Community Relations: This committee tracks legislation that would have an impact on our consumers and oversee legislative outreach and events. They also are responsible for review the center's public awareness materials.
- E. Strategic Planning: This committee oversees the implementation of the center's performance-based contract, identifies gaps in the service delivery system and recommends alternatives to close those gaps, and investigates possible housing options for our consumers.

## **XII. Open Issues for Discussion**

- A. Suad Bisogno reported that the Employment Resource Group will hold their next meeting at noon on Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, at The Adult Skills Center.
- B. An appreciation luncheon is being held to honor Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian and Senator Henry Stern by NLACRC and the LA Coalition of Service Providers. We want to thank them for their strong leadership and support of our system. The luncheon will be held Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, from noon to 1:00 p.m. at New Horizons. Information about the event is on the information table. Please RSVP to Sara Iwahashi at [SIwahashi@nlacrc.org](mailto:SIwahashi@nlacrc.org). For more information, please contact Steve Miller at [steve.sj.miller@gmail.com](mailto:steve.sj.miller@gmail.com). Please attend and show your support!

## **XIII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting**

The following item was identified for the VAC's section of the August 14<sup>th</sup> board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the August 1<sup>st</sup> VAC Meeting

## **XIV. Announcements/Information/Public Input**

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup> (break out groups will meet)

## **XV. Adjournment**

Sharoll adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

Submitted by,

*Jennifer Kaiser*

Jennifer Kaiser  
Executive Assistant

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