**North Los Angeles County Regional Center**  
**Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
February 1, 2018

**Present:** Orly Almog, Fredlyn Berger, Deborah Cutter, Bob Erio, Mariela Feldman, Michelle Heid, Sharoll Jackson, Staci Jordan, Kristin Laurino, Don Lucas, Jenni Moran, and Marina Pink - Committee Members  
Jenifer Kaiser, George Stevens, Evelyn McOmie, Arsho Garlanian, Yolanda Bosch, Kim Rolfes, Ruth Janka, Arpi Arabian, Erin Broughton-Rodriguez, Jenny Dow, Cristina Perez, and Dann Castanon - Staff  
Elena Tabach, Sonia Ojeda, Sharon Weinberg, Suad Bisogno, Terrence Carson, Ken Lane, John Brauer, Roschell Ashley, Jessica Ochoa, Chelsea Rivera, Mark Steidl, Glynda Givens, Bob Myatt, Alisha Turner, Debra Dinielli, Linda Cobuzzi, Lori Sivazlian, Alexandra Rivera, Haley Rhyne, Mike Stephens, Cristina Preuss, Claire Moynihan, Darrell Bunch, Rebecca Holik, Tanya Brustinov, Taguchi Artunian, Fred Rockwood, Leticia Leon, Tina Castro, Galina Ragozin, Diane Geany, Scott Shepard, Jon Francis, Neomi Garzon, Katina Powe, Kendra Espinoza, Annie Dox, Saeda Farah, Tessa Graham, and Lauren Bishop – Guests

**Absent:** Cynthia Fernandez, Tyler Ternus, and Nick Vukotic

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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Michelle Heid, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. and introductions were made.

**II. Public Input**

Terence Carson, of Strategic Technology Solutions, announced that his company provides viable solutions to get service providers into HIPAA compliance and ongoing support to keep them up to date with any changes. Any service providers interested should contact him directly at tcarson@investapex.com.

**III. Consent Items**

A. **Approval of Agenda**

Item VII.D. was added to the agenda.

**M/S/C (J. Moran/S. Jackson) To approve the agenda as modified.**
B. Approval of Minutes from the January 4th VAC Meeting

M/S/C (S. Jackson/K. Laurino) To approve the minutes as presented.

IV. Executive Director’s Report

George Stevens gave the following reports:

A. Behavioral Health Services: The managed care plans do not currently have a process in place for accepting consumers under the age of 21 who do not have an autism diagnosis. However, NLACRC will continue to provide assessments and services until they have their process in place.

B. Town Hall Meeting: Steve Miller and Michelle Heid are finishing compiling the data from their needs assessment survey and will summarize the results in a report. Over 1,600 surveys were completed! A town hall meeting will be held Thursday evening, April 5th, at New Horizons to bring the issues identified in the survey to the attention of representatives from each level of government. Please plan to come to the town hall meeting and bring people with you – we want standing room only. We want to show our elected officials that these issues are important to us, we are engaged, and that we are a powerful voting force!

Purchase of Service (POS) Disparity Proposals: The center submitted the following proposals to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to receive funding to reduce POS disparity:

1. Cultural and linguistic competency training.
2. Community legislation and education project.
3. Translation equipment.
4. Publication: Commonly coordinated services brochure.
5. Publication: Consumer and family service guide.

DDS did not approve funding for any of our proposed projects. In addition, we also requested continued funding for social media outreach – which they also did not approve. However, 6 of our community-based organizations had their proposals approved and we will be working with them to help them implement their plans. We want to reach out to all of our under-served consumers and families and get them into the system.

C. Governor’s Proposed Budget for FY 2018-19: The only increase for regional centers included in the proposed budget was for growth. There were no
increases for hiring more service coordinators or funding for additional staff needed to implement self-determination, quality assurance, or case management activities. But the budget did include the reinstatement of the 14-day uniform holiday schedule, which would not only have a financial impact on our providers, but would be detrimental for our consumers and families. The 14-day closure is based on programs closing, but would preclude supporting our consumers who work on those days and that is wholly inconsistent with our philosophy of finding jobs for our consumers and the state’s Employment First policy. We need to make that argument at all levels of our system. The governor is also proposing that $35 million be taken out of the regional center budget because it is “not needed.” These funds were originally earmarked to cover minimum wage increases but because service providers were given MCO funds for their staff, wages were increased beyond the state’s minimum wage so this money could not be accessed. The Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) opposes this; we want the money to stay in the system.

D. **Budget Subcommittee Meetings:** Everyone should get involved in the budget process by going to the meetings where our budgets will be discussed and by providing testimony. The meetings will be held:

1. **Assembly Budget Subcommittee:** Wednesday, March 7\(^{th}\), at 2:30 p.m.
2. **Senate Budget Subcommittee 3:** Thursday, March 15\(^{th}\) (time TBD)

They will be discussing such issues as the reinstatement of the 14-day holiday schedule and bridge funding for providers. Southwest has fares to Sacramento for just $29 each way. This will probably be our only opportunity to provide testimony on these issues. Michele added that they should not call it a uniform holiday schedule – there is nothing “holiday” about providers not getting paid; it should be called the “forced closure schedule.”

E. **Statewide Rate Study:** DDS has selected Burns & Associates to conduct the rate study that they must submit to the legislature by March 2019. They will be sending surveys to service providers; please complete them! As a stakeholder, let them know how poor rates and the rate freeze have affected your organizations. You can attend their meetings.

A. **Self-Determination:** DDS has reported that they will be resubmitting the waiver application this week to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). DDS is confident that the application will have responded adequately to CMS’s questions (e.g. how critical incidents will be reported). Two services we know that won’t be funded are crisis services and conference-related fees.
Once CMS approves the waiver (they have 90 days to review it), we can proceed with getting the program going. We will have 174 consumer positions to fill for the 3-year pilot program. After that, the program will be open to all eligible consumers. In the meantime, our staff have been trained and we are doing a lot of community outreach so everyone knows the program is coming. This program will give consumers the ability to use non-vendored services to meet their IPP goals. Anyone interested in participating in the program must first attend one of the center’s informational meetings which are being held in all 3 valleys. Also, our Self-Determination Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis. For more information, please go to the center’s website, or you can go to DDS’s website for information and see a short video about the program.

V. **Chief Financial Officer’s Report** (Kim Rolfes)

A. **NLACRC’s FY 2017-18 Budget**: The center’s operations budget is just under $50 million with no surplus or deficit projected. The POS budget is $392.4 million with a projected deficit of $27.7 million (the highest projected deficit of all 21 regional centers). As the center is part of an entitlement program, the deficit just means that our current allocation from DDS is not enough to cover our projected expenses. We will continue to fund needed services for consumers as identified in their IPPs. Eventually, DDS will give us enough money to cover our expenses.

B. **Closing Out FY 2015-16**: DDS is closing out that fiscal year. Providers who have any bills from that fiscal year should submit them to us ASAP. Once the fiscal year is closed, we can no longer pay bills from that period.

C. **Audited Financial Statement**: The center’s audited financial statement was completed and it was a good audit with no findings and no management letter. Once it is presented at the February 14th board meeting and accepted by the board, it will be posted on our website.

D. **Largest Nonprofit (by budget)**: It was just announced in the LA Business Journal that NLACRC is the largest nonprofit agency in the San Fernando Valley and the 2nd largest nonprofit in LA County!

VI. **Community Services Director’s Report** (Yolanda Bosch)

A. **Paid Internship Program (PIP) & Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)**: A question and answer session will be held after next month’s VAC meeting about these 2 programs. Information is also posted on our website. You can
also contact Danny Castanon, the center’s new employment specialist at dcastanon@nlacrc.org. Addendums for both programs have been posted on our website.

B. Disability Rights California (DRC): In addition to the regular reporting requirements, providers now need to report all of their special incidents to the DRC within 24 hours. Please contact your quality assurance liaison with any questions.

C. Special Incident Report (SIR) Trainings: We hold several SIR trainings for our service providers every year; the next one will be held on Wednesday, March 7th, at our Antelope Valley office.

D. CMS Compliance Proposals: DDS offered $15 million again this year to help providers come into compliance with the CMS final rule. Last year, our providers submitted over 100 proposals to receive some of this funding, but this year our providers only submitted 13 proposals. The decrease in proposals submitted was a statewide trend and we aren’t sure why more proposals weren’t submitted. DDS will announce the proposals that were approved for funding at the end of March.

Also, DDS has extended the CMS final rule compliance to March 2022, but we are still focusing on having our providers come into compliance by March 2019, the original deadline. The new rules are not as strict as they initially were; they are now more person-centered.

E. HIPAA Compliance: Our current contact with DDS contains more robust requirements for us and our providers to follow in protecting confidential consumer data. We are updating our business associate agreements with our providers to reflect the following changes:

1. The establishment of a generic e-mail address where breaches should be reported: privacyofficer@nlacrc.org.
2. The requirement that we will report all breaches to DDS within 3 days.
3. Training must be held for staff once a year and upon hire and this must be documented in their personnel file.

The revised business associate agreements will be mailed out to our providers this week.

F. DS 1891 Forms: The new 2-year cycle began January 1st. Providers must update their 1891 forms which can be easily done using the center’s portal.
Please contact Stephanie Margaret with any questions at smargaret@nlacrc.org.

G. Annual Self-Evaluations: Day programs and infant programs need to submit their annual self-evaluations; this is a regulatory requirement. The self-evaluations were due to us in November.

H. Independent Audits/Reviews: Service providers are now required to submit their audits to us 9 months after the end of their fiscal year. In the past, we were able to offer extensions. New rules have been put into place which no longer allows us to extend the deadlines. Service providers whose annual budgets are over $500,000 must submit an independent review and providers whose annual budgets are over $2 million, must submit an independent audit.

I. Service Provider Newsletter: The next issue of the center’s newsletter will be going out this month. It has lots of good information in it about Title 22 regulation changes, links to emergency planning sites, HIPAA compliance information, and lots of other helpful information.

VII. Committee Business

A. Follow-up: VAC Letter to the Board of Trustees re: Bridge Funding: Per the VAC’s request, the board’s Executive Committee sent a letter to Nancy Bargmann, director of DDS, asking them to develop written procedures for DDS, regional centers, and service providers to follow in order to providers to receive a rate adjustment after each local minimum wage increase. Copies of the letter were made available at the VAC meeting.

B. Assembly Member Holden’s Budget Request Letter (Attachment): Assembly Member Holden represents the northern San Gabriel Valley and last year authored AB 279 that would have addressed the L.A. County minimum wage increases for service providers in that county. Unfortunately, the bill died in the senate. This year, Assembly Member Holden wrote a letter to the 4 budget chairs requesting $25 million in temporary bridge funding be added to the state budget to address local “operating cost pressures.” This money would not only address the minimum wage issue, but would also address cost increases for labor, housing, fuel, etc. Assembly Member Holden is hoping that these funds will help preserve essential services and maintain critical relationships that service providers have with their consumers and families until comprehensive funding reform can be completed. Michele urged service providers to write letters supporting the temporary bridge funding to the 4 budget chairs that Mr. Holden addressed his letter to and then copy him on
those letters. It is extremely important for our system to see the $25 million come to fruition. Write letters and have everyone you know write letters! Let the budget chairs know how the increasing minimum wage and other unfunded mandates have affected your organizations! Copies of NLACRC’s letters to the budget chairs were made available at the VAC meeting. Steve Miller added that Assembly Member Holden also needs hard data. Elle Hoxworth, from his office, is sending out a survey to find out how service providers have been impacted by years of rate freezes along with increased inflation. It is imperative that every service provider complete that survey and include personal stories on how your organization has been affected and what you could accomplish if your organization was adequately funded.

Action: Jennifer Kaiser will forward Assembly Member Holden’s survey to all of the providers on her e-mail list.

C. Preliminary Needs Assessment Survey Responses: [See Section IV.B. above.]

D. Resignation of Shelly Briggs: Unfortunately, Shelly had to resign from her position on the VAC due to increased work duties.

VIII. Agenda Item for the Next Board Meeting

The following item was identified for the VAC’s section of the February 14th board meeting agenda:

A. Minutes of the February 1st VAC Meeting

IX. Announcements/Public Input

A. Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian will be hosting a “meet and greet” on Thursday, February 22nd, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at New Horizons. Please come.

B. Next Meeting: Thursday, March 8th (full meeting)

X. Committee Work (The committee breaks into their workgroups)

A. Early Start Services (Fredlyn Berger)
B. School Age Services (Mariela Feldman)
C. Adult Services (Jenni Moran)
D. Implementation of Legislative Changes (Sharoll Jackson)
XI. Adjournment

Michele adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m. and the committee broke into their workgroups.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser
Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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