

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2019

- Present:** Orli Almog, Suad Bisogno, Deborah Cutter, Bob Erio, Mariela Feldman, Cynthia Fernandez, Sharoll Jackson, Staci Jordan, Kristin Laurino, Don Lucas, Jenni Moran, Sonia Ojeda, and Nick Vukotic - Committee Members
- Absent:** Dana Kalek
- Guests:** Loreena Garcia, Rebecca Lienhard, Alona Yorkshire, Terrence Carson, Dana V. Andrews, Debra McCurry, Jason Walker, Hal Kirklin, Lauren Bishop, Kevin Shields, Jamie DeWitt, John Brauer, Maria Ortiz, Linda Cobuzzi, Debra Dinielli, Christian Sanchez, Jennifer Grabot, Gabriela Sanchez, Lisa Peterson, Wayne Tashjian, Carole-Ann Scott, Brian Otchis, Byron Robinson, Sean Gordon, Fred Rockwood, Kendra Espinoza, Cathy Carpenter, Anna Swift, Haley Rhyne, Johnnie Martinez, Tanga Shirley, Andrea Devers, Bruce Wilson, Nikisia Simmons, Yolanda Bosch, Harry Bruell, Olga Reyes, Tina Castro, Kristine Dickson, Anna Bakuntz, Erica Beall, Edwardo Lemus, Chelsea Rivera, Rebecca Holik, Jon Francis, Alisha Turner, Lisa Fisher, Lily Handley, Tania Holguin, Joanna Valdez, Saeda Farah, Leticia Leon, Rick Macken Chilvers, and Tania Bartolo
- Staff:** George Stevens, Jennifer Kaiser, Lisa Kimura, Mandy Flower, Kim Rolfes, Stephanie Margaret, Anna Polin, Arpi Arabian, Evelyn McOmie, Lisa Mayti, Jesse Weller, Emmanuel Gutierrez, Cathy Robinson-Learn, Jenny Dao, Lauren Morton, and Sonja Chapman
-

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Sharoll Jackson, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and introductions were made.

II. Public Input

- A. Terence Carson, from 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. His company held a HIPAA training last month and received positive feedback from those who attended. For more information on how to get your company in compliance with HIPAA regulations, Terence can be reached at tcarson@hipaasap.com and his website is getstarted.hipaasap.com.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Item VIII.C. was deferred to next month's meeting and item VIII.D. was added to the agenda.

M/S/C (J. Moran/M. Feldman) To approve the agenda as modified.

B. Approval of Minutes from the November 1st VAC Meeting

The minutes were amended to reflect that Mariela Feldman was in attendance.

M/S/C (J. Moran/M. Feldman) To approve the minutes as amended.

IV. Executive Director's Report

George Stevens gave the following reports:

A. Community Coffees at Vendor Sites

Ruth Janka began holding community coffees in all 3 valleys as an open forum for consumers, family members, service providers to bring up any issues or concerns and to get any questions they have answered. The meetings were well attended at first, but now the attendance has been dropping off. As such, we are looking for providers who would like Ruth to come to their program sites to talk with their consumers, families, staff, and others.

Action: Any service provider interested in having Ruth Janka come to their program site should contact Ruth directly at RJanka@nlacrc.org.

B. New Community Services Director

George was pleased to announce that Evelyn McOmie has accepted the position of community services director at NLACRC. She has been working at the center for the last 13 years in a variety of positions in the community services department.

C. Community Engagement

With the new proposed state budget coming out next week, it is imperative

that all stakeholders, service providers included, connect with our local legislators to get the message out that the system needs an immediate 8% increase in service provider rates and in regional center operations dollars to hold them over until the Burns & Associates' rate study comes out in March.

D. Legislative Advocacy

Steve Miller, 1 of the center's 3 legislative educators, continued the discussion about the rate study saying that getting enough funding to sustain our system is a marathon – not a race – and we must remain vigilant. After 26 years, a study of our rate system is finally being conducted. And when it comes out, we need to be prepared to respond to it. We need to connect with our legislators now so they understand how serious our situation is. Adequate funding must be included in the May Revise. Personal visits with legislators will be followed up with mass phone calls, letter writing, and rallies. Also, Steve also urged anyone who has not signed up for the center's email bulletin ("News you can use") to do so. Updates about rate reform will be included in those bulletins. The legislative educators are also holding legislative advocacy trainings in all 3 valleys; the next ones will be held on February 23rd (Santa Clarita Valley office) and March 9th (Chatsworth office).

E. Behavioral Services

Dr. Arpi Arabian reported that we continue to have issues with parents who are not responding to our requests for signed release forms; this results in their child not being able to be transitioned to managed care for their behavioral health services. Notice of Actions are being sent to those parents, letting them know that their behavioral services will be discontinued if they do not submit the release form.

F. Self-Determination

Mandy Flower reported that last month the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) provided the regional centers with directives and guidelines for the financial management service (FMS) and independent facilitators. NLACRC has decided to decentralize consumers who participate in the self-determination program; the 184 cases will be distributed among our service coordinators. We continue to hold informational meetings for anyone interested in learning more about the program. The next meeting will be held from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 15th, at the center's Chatsworth office. The center also has an internal work group that meets twice a month to oversee the center's implementation of the program.

G. Festival Educativo

This event is held annually for the center's Spanish speaking families. This year's event will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 26th, at New Horizons and a free lunch is included. Fliers for the event were made available.

H. Purchase of Service (POS) Disparity

The center's POS data has been posted on our website. Our public meetings will be held on March 7th (Chatsworth office) and March 14th (Santa Clarita Valley office). We have not heard back from DDS as yet regarding our POS disparity reduction proposals, which are the continuation of our Family Empowerment Team in Action (FETA) program and the implementation of a family navigator position.

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

A. Legislation (Fun Facts!)

Over 1,000 new bills went into effect January 1st, including:

1. AB 485 – Prohibition of selling animals at pet stores that have been bred– they must be rescued animals.
2. AB 1884 – Bans the use of plastic straws
3. AB 3098 – Enhancement of disaster preparedness/response plans.
4. SB 826 - Requires that at least 1 woman must be on the Board of a publicly held corporation.

B. Electronic Visit Verification: As reported in previous VAC meetings, EVV is a telephone and computer-based system that electronically verifies service visits; all states must implement EVV for Medicaid-funded personal care services by January 2020 and home health care services by January 2023. Under the act, an EVV system must verify the following service components:

1. Type of service performed
2. Individual receiving the service
3. Date of the service
4. Location of service delivery
5. Individual providing the services

DDS and other departments, including the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), will be holding stakeholder meetings to involve consumers and their family members, service providers, and the regional centers in discussing options for EVV implementation. They are hoping to delay the implementation of this until January 2024. For more information you can visit DHCS's website at dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/Pages/EVVMeetings.aspx.

C. Mileage Reimbursement Rate Increase: The IRS increased their mileage reimbursement rate from 54.5 cents/mile to 58 cents/mile effective January 1, 2019. We are currently updating our claim forms to reflect the new rate.

D. Minimum Wage Increase & the Look Back Period

Effective January 1, 2019, the state minimum wage increased to \$12.00/hour. Service providers seeking a rate increase due change in the state minimum wage must submit payroll records during calendar year 2018 that demonstrate workers who were paid less than \$12.00 per hour to be eligible for a rate increase effective January 1, 2019. However, due to local minimum wage requirements, service providers who employ 26 or more employees have been paying \$12.00 per hour since July 1, 2017. These same service providers will not have any calendar year 2018 payroll records that demonstrate workers were paid below the state minimum wage due to the local minimum wage requirements. This will result in many service providers not being eligible for a rate increase on January 1, 2019 since they will not have any workers paid below minimum wage during calendar year 2018 due to local minimum wage mandates. Kim prepared a handout that can be shared with legislators that shows how service providers in LA County are being affected by the minimum wage increases and how they do not have the ability to seek a rate increase due to the restricted look back period. In addition, effective July 1, 2019, the minimum wage for agencies in LA County who have 26 staff or more will increase from \$13.25/hour to \$14.25/hour and for agencies who have less than 25 staff the minimum wage will increase from \$12.00/hour to \$13.25/hour.

E. NLACRC's Budget

We completed our first POS expenditure projection (PEP) and submitted it to DDS last month. Our operations budget is \$51,477,247, our POS budget is \$429,084,330, and the family resource center budget is \$207,187 for a total budget, at this point, of \$480,768,764. We are currently projecting a deficit in our POS budget of \$33,416,979 – the highest POS deficit of all 21 regional centers. However, we are an entitlement program so all this means is that DDS will have to allocate us additional funds to cover our shortfall.

F. Money Management Services

NLACRC has been the representative payee for nearly 1,500 of our consumers. The center, through its RFP process, has selected FACT to provide money management services for all of our consumers in residential settings. FACT will support adult consumers who reside in residential placement and who require assistance in managing third-party benefits, such as Social Security and Medi-Cal benefits. We are currently finalizing the contract and anticipate that the transition will take about 18 months.

VI. Community Services Director's Report (Evelyn McOmie)

A. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Final Rule Compliance

Proposals for funding compliance with CMS Final Rules were due to DDS on December 14, 2018. We received instructions from DDS after our November VAC meeting and since we were dark in December we were unable to bring it to VAC prior to the deadline. We did reach out to and spread the word to our vendor community through email blast and posted it on our website. We also held workshops at our San Fernando Valley and Antelope Valley offices. We are currently reviewing the proposals and will be reaching out to providers by tomorrow who might have missed a section in the proposals. Regional centers must submit their service providers' proposals to DDS January 18th. We received a total of 15 proposals.

B. Community Placement Plan (CPP)/Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP)

The center's start-up funding request has yet to receive approval from DDS. As soon as we are notified by them about which requests were approved, we will prepare the related requests for proposals (RFPs).

C. New RFP Cycle

The open proposal period used to run from December 3rd through March 30th. RFPs for this open cycle will run from December 3rd through January 11th.

D. Non-Compliance Activities

1. Devendorization letters were sent out at the beginning of December to providers who have not provided services in the last 2 years. Providers

who wish to keep their vendorization open they will need to respond to those letters by contacting the center's community services department.

2. We have slightly under 100 DS 1891 forms left/pending. If you have any questions please contact us so we can assist you. Thanks to the providers who have updated their forms; we are almost at the finishing line!
3. A reminder will be going out this month to providers who have not submitted their annual program evaluations for in-home respite.

E. 637 Proposal - Community Based Integrated Support Services (CBISS)

DDS has contacted us and wants more information. We are setting up a meeting with the providers who participated in developing the proposal to gather the information being requested.

F. New Employment Specialist

Lauren Morton has been hired as the center's new employment specialist. She will be overseeing the competitive integrated employment (CIE) and paid internship programs (PIP).

G. Quarterly Vendor Newsletter

Our quarterly newsletters go out in February, May, August, and November.

H. Gas Company Workshop

NLACRC is bringing a Southern CA Gas Company workshop that will offer information on eligibility, how to apply, and qualifications for the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program. Supported and independent living providers are encouraged to attend. The workshop will be held from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 8th, at the center's Chatsworth office. For more information contact Sonja Chapman at Schapman@nlacrc.org.

I. Service Provider Training Opportunities

1. Vendor fairs will be held in the fall of 2019.
2. Residential service orientations (RSOs) will be held in February.

3. The center held 12 risk mitigation trainings last year with over 200 vendors in attendance. The 2019 trainings will be geared toward direct care staff. There is heightened awareness regarding risk mitigation given incidents at the developmental centers and in the community, as such there are higher expectations in regards to the activities that are taken to mitigate risk. In preparation of these higher expectations, NLACRC will be putting together a training for our staff and service providers.

VII. Consumer Services Report

A. Modified Admission Agreement – *Attachment*

Copies of the center's modified agreement were provided. The agreement was modified to reflect changes to Title 17 and Title 22 regulations and to reflect both short term and long term placements.

B. AB 637 Proposal: Mileage for Antelope Valley Assessments – *Attachment*

NLACRC conducts approximately 300 psychological assessments each month throughout the catchment area. About 1/3 of the requests for psychological assessments come from people in the Antelope Valley. Most of our psychologists are unwilling to drive to the AV and back because they are not compensated for mileage. In addition, appointments can sometimes be “no shows” which makes the journey even less inviting. We are proposing to provide our psychologists with a travel premium to provide an incentive for psychologists to travel to the AV. The amount of the travel premium would be determined in collaboration and partnership with our vendored psychologists. This proposal will be presented to the NLACRC Board of Trustees next week for approval. If approved by the board, the proposal will need to be submitted to DDS for their approval.

VIII. Committee Business

A. Resignation of Marina Pink

Marina had to resign from her position on the VAC due to excessive absences.

B. Application for Legislative Advocacy Trips in March & April – *Attachment*

Board and VAC members who are interested in participating in ARCA's Grassroots Day activities at the State Capitol or the Arc/UCP developmental disabilities public policy conference should complete an application for the legislative academy and submit it to Jennifer Kaiser (who will forward it to Steve Miller and Michelle Heid). VAC members were provided with application forms. It would also be beneficial to encourage family members to attend the annual Arc/UCP conference as it would help prepare them to become more legislatively active.

- C. Purchase of Service Disparity (Patricia Herrera) – *Deferred*
- D. Sacramento Trip (Sharoll Jackson)

Sharoll went to Sacramento with a group of advocates to meet with representatives from Senator Holly Mitchell's office. The group talked with her representative about the need for rate reform and the needed 8% interim funding. Sharoll talked with her from a parent's perspective about the need for stable support for her son. After the meeting was over, Sharoll was waiting for an elevator with the Senator's representative and they had quite a bit of time to talk personally; it was very meaningful.

IX. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek)

No one present had attended the Early Start break-out meeting, so no report was given.

- B. School Age Services (Mariela Feldman)

Dr. Arpi Arabian gave the group a presentation on the transition of behavioral health services from NLACRC to managed care.

- C. Adult Services (Jenni Moran)
- D. Implementation of Legislative Changes (Sharoll Jackson)

These 2 break out groups met together last month. Steve Miller and Michelle Heid joined the group discussion. We don't want legislators to see the same people over and over again - we need new folks, especially consumers and their family members, to get involved.

X. Report on Board Committee Meetings

- A. Administrative Affairs (Cynthia Fernandez)
- B. Board of Trustees (Sharoll Jackson)
- C. Consumer Services (Sonia Ojeda)
- D. Government & Community Relations (Sonia Ojeda/Orli Almog)
- E. Nominating (Bob Erio)
- F. Strategic Planning (Suad Bisogno)

[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.]

XI. Open Issues for Discussion

A. NLACRC Board Member Visitations

Sharoll reported that board members are encouraged to visit service providers' programs for educational purposes.

Action: Any service providers who would like NLACRC board members to visit their program should contact Jennifer Kaiser at jkaiser@nlacrc.org.

B. Closure of New Horizons' Sheltered Workshop

New Horizons closed their sheltered workshop which had 200 consumers who are now working in the community. Congratulations New Horizons!

XII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

The following item was identified for the VAC's section of the January 9th board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the January 3rd VAC Meeting

XIII. Announcements/Information/Public Input

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, February 7th (break out groups will meet)

XIV. Adjournment

Sharoll adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

[vacmin.jan3.2019]

