

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2019

Present: Suad Bisogno, Deborah Cutter, Bob Erio, Mariela Feldman, Cynthia Fernandez, Sharoll Jackson, Staci Jordan, Dana Kalek, Don Lucas, Jenni Moran, Sonia Ojeda, and Nick Vukotic - Committee Members

Jennifer Kaiser, George Stevens, Ruth Janka, Kim Rolfes, Arsho Garlanian, Lisa Mayti, Teresa Rathsam, Cathy Robinson-Learn, Anna Polin, Sonja Chapman, and Erin Broughton-Rodriguez – Staff Members

Thomas Iland, Emily Iland, Gabriela Sanchez, Rebecca Lienhard, Erica Beall, Alona Yorkshire, Tania Bartolo, Dennis Rutnam, Kenneth Lane, Steve Miller, Lisa Fisher, Terrence Carson, Roberta Terry, Leticia Leon, Sharon Weinberg, Michele Linares, Pamela Arturi, John Brauer, Alexandra Rivera, Olga Reyes, Pat Walsh, Fred Rockwood, Bruce Wilson, Lori Sivazlian, Debra Dinielli, Hal Kirklin, Howard Grossman, Kristine Cu, Haley Rhyne, Alisha Turner, Claire Moynihan, Debra McCurry, Jessica Ochoa, Ashley Colis Farag, Joseph Rosales, Lisa Peterson, Bob Myatt, Yanira Magana, Lily Handley, John Francis, Verjine Egian, Rebecca Holik, Cyndi McAuley, Tanga Shirley, Brenda Watts, Andrea Devers, Maria Ortiz, Yolanda Bosch, Nikisia Simmons, Susie Pittman, Scott Cross, Annie Cox, Andrea Arambula, Neomi Garzon, Margie Meza, Maryanne Sawoski, Kendra Espinoza, Saeda Farah, Melissa Nishimoto, and Cathy Carpenter – Guests

Absent: Orli Almog and Kristin Laurino

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Sharoll Jackson, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. and introductions were made.

II. Public Input

- A. Sharoll Jackson announced that it is National Be Heard Day - an occasion for small businesses owners and aspiring owners to make their voices heard. So let's get our voices heard!
- B. 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 is holding trainings on a monthly basis. Terence can be reached at tcarson@hipaasap.com and his website is getstarted.hipaasap.com.

- C. Bruce Wilson provided fliers on products people can purchase that help identify people if they become lost; for more information go to info@IfINeedHelp.org.
- D. Loreena Garcia announced that ETTA is having an open house on March 15th for anyone interested in finding out more about life planning and CalABLE accounts; for more information go to info@jlatrust.org.
- E. Thomas and Emily Iland made the following announcements:
1. As an advocate with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Thomas is a professional presenter and trainer educating, inspiring, and motivating anyone impacted by ASD. He can be reached at tom@thomasiland.com.
 2. Thomas has a new award winning book out called *Come to Life*, a prequel to transition planning and can help youth with or without special needs. It's available in English and Spanish at www.thomasiland.com.
 3. Thomas and his mother Emily have developed the following products that help people with disabilities interact safely and communicate with police:
 - *Be Safe* the movie uses video modeling to show how to interact with police. It can also be purchased with a companion CD called *Be Safe Teaching Edition*.
 - Autism safety card which provides key information to first responders in an emergency.
 4. Thomas is scheduled to speak on assistive technology at the United Nations on April 2nd, World Autism Awareness Day.
- F. Dana Kalek announced that the Early Learning Center will be holding a training for parents of Early Start consumers on March 15th; for more information contact Dana at DKalek@CDIKids.org.

III. Consent Items

- A. Approval of Agenda
Items VI.A. and VIII.A. were deferred to next month's VAC meeting.
M/S/C (J. Moran/S. Bisogno) To approve the agenda as amended.
- B. Approval of Minutes from the February 7th VAC Meeting
M/S/C (J. Moran/S. Ojeda) To approve the minutes as presented.

IV. Executive Director's Report (George Stevens)

- A. Assembly Budget Hearing: The Assembly Budget Committee met yesterday and heard testimony in support of the 8% across-the-board increase for service providers and regional center operations; it seemed well supported by everyone.
- B. Behavioral Health Transition: The center is about 75% done with transitioning consumers from regional center funded behavioral health services to managed care. Please contact Dr. Arpi Arabian at AArabian@nlacrc.org with any questions.
- C. Purchase of Service (POS) Disparity Public Meeting: Each year, the center is required to hold a public meeting to present data on how money is spent on consumer services based on age, race or ethnicity, language, residence, disability, and insurance-related data. It also includes the number of consumers without services. The center will be holding 2 such public meetings:
 - 1. 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 7th (Chatsworth office)
 - 2. 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 14th (Lancaster office)

This data is also posted on the center's website.

V. Deputy Director's Report (Ruth Janka)

- A. Self-Determination Program (SDP): A consumer enrolled in the SDP is able to purchase services from vendored and non-vendored service providers, but they must use a financial management service (FMS) to do that. Service providers will need to consider how they will handle those separate agreements. The center will be hiring a SDP supervisor for the main office and a SDP specialist for each of the 2 branch offices. We will be creating centralized SDP units over time.
- B. Service Coordinators: The center is focused on hiring service coordinators to reduce caseload size. The center has hired 44 new service coordinators since January 1! This will result in several new caseloads being created.
- C. Antelope Valley Branch Office Supervisor: Mandy Flower is leaving the center and her last day will be tomorrow. Sheila Calove can be reached in her absence at SCalove@nlacrc.org.
- D. Community Placement Plan (CPP) Manager: Megan Mitchell has been promoted to CPP manager. She can be reached at MMitchell@nlacrc.org.

- E. Community Coffees: At last month's VAC meeting, Sharoll Jackson asked providers to contact Ruth's assistant Sandra Rizo if they were interested in hosting a community coffee. Partners for Potential hosted one last week. The purpose of these events is to have an open dialogue with members of our community; to hear about any issues, and to find out what's working and what isn't. Any providers interested in hosting a community coffee for their consumers, staff, families, etc. should contact Sandra at SRizo@nlacrc.org.
- F. Advocacy: It is up to all of us to see our system into the future. To that end, the center is providing legislative trainings (for consumers and families especially) and are posting sample letters and legislators' contact information on our website.
- G. POS Disparity Projects: DDS has approved POS disparity proposal from 4 of our providers: Integrated Community Collaborative; Learning Rights Law Center; Autism Society of Los Angeles; and PathPoint. NLACRC has 2 of its proposals approved as well, the first for a parent mentorship program and another for the continuation of our Family Empowerment Team in Action (FETA) program.
- H. Assembly Hearing: The center was planning to hold a town hall meeting in the spring, but Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian offered instead to hold an Assembly Hearing to hear testimony about the developmental disabilities system from our community. We took him up on his offer! The hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 18th, at New Horizons in North Hills. Fliers for the event were made available. One of the VAC's priority issue teams have offered to help the center's legislative educators (Steve Miller, Michelle Heid, and Raquel Armendariz) with planning the event.
- I. Rallies: The Lanterman Coalition is holding a rally at the State Capitol on Wednesday, April 3rd. Steve Miller reported that the legislative educators would like to help plan a local rally, but are too busy making plans for the assembly hearing on April 18th. It would be best to hold a rally on a Friday as that is when legislators come home to their district offices. Many service providers present offered their help in planning a local rally. A sign-up sheet was circulated for volunteers.

Action: The service providers who sign up will help Steve Miller plan a local rally on Friday, April 5th, from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. at the Van Nuys state office building, 6150 Van Nuys Boulevard.

VI. Chief Financial Officer's Report (Kim Rolfes)

- A. Funding for Purchasing EVV Mobile Devices – *Deferred*
Kim asked DDS about this and they haven't gotten back to her with a response, so this agenda item was deferred to next month's VAC meeting.
- B. Visitor Badging Policy: The center will soon be implementing its new visitor badging policy. All visitors will need to sign in and be given a badge to wear while visiting. VAC and Board members can use their identification lanyards and do not have to sign in.
- C. Auto Attendant: The center will soon begin using a system at all 3 NLACRC offices where callers can select options in order to reach a specific person or can press "O" to speak with an operator. We are hoping that this new system will expedite peoples' phone calls.
- D. Money Management Service: The center is finalizing its contract with FACT to assume the duty of representative payee services for our consumers. The transition from the center providing this service to FACT should take about 18 months.
- E. NLACRC's Budget: So far, the center's operations budget for this fiscal year is about \$51.8 million, our POS budget is \$430.5 million, and our family focus resource center budget is \$200,000 for a total budget of \$482.5 million. We are projecting a POS deficit of about \$26 million, the highest in the state, but DDS will be providing us with additional allocations that will cover the shortfall.

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

- A. Burns & Associates' Rate Study: Last week, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) presented Burns & Associates' vendor rate study results and draft rate models to the DS Task Force Rates Workgroup. The entire study is 2,800 pages! Comments will be accepted through March 22nd. Evelyn gave a PowerPoint presentation with the highlights of the study and developed a survey monkey to enable providers to more easily provide their feedback to the center.

VIII. Committee Business

- A. Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (Attachment) – *Deferred*

IX. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek): The group's goals are to continue strengthening and enhancing the social-emotional development of children by

supporting the family system in alignment with the State Systematic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and to advocate and educate the medical community in early intervention and available services to support optimal development of every child. To that end, the group has been holding trainings for regional center staff on how to write IPPs that will promote social/emotional development for children 0-3. The next step is to provide training to Early Start parents and Early Start service providers and outreach to the medical community – primarily pediatricians.

- B. School Age Services (Mariela Feldman): The group is making efforts to increase collaboration between service coordinators and providers. Service code 102 for parent education is disappearing. There has been low attendance at those trainings anyways, so the group is going to try providing trainings on other subjects.
- C. Adult Services (Jenni Moran): The group is working on developing a policy statement on best practices – especially case management for older consumers with future planning. Once the policy statement has been drafted, it will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- D. Implementation of Legislative Changes (Sharoll Jackson): This group is focused on helping providers comply with legislative changes, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), mandated reporting, zero tolerance, cyber insurance, etc.

X. Report on Board Committee Meetings

- A. Administrative Affairs (Cynthia Fernandez): The committee reviewed the center's annual audited financial statement, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- B. Board of Trustees (Sharoll Jackson): The board took action to approve the annual board retreat topics (responsibilities of nonprofit boards and the executive director transition plan) and several contracts. They also discussed the center using a new auto attendant system for its reception areas, were given an update on the SDP, and each board subcommittee chairs gave their reports.
- C. Consumer Services (Sonia Ojeda): The committee discussed the SDP and reviewed the quarterly consumer diagnosis, exceptions/exemptions, and appeals/hearings reports.

- D. Government & Community Relations (Sonia Ojeda/Orli Almog): The committee was given an update on the center's grassroots visits with local legislators, reviewed their current bill file, were given updates on the center's social media plans, including an in-depth look at posting and demographics of the center's English and Spanish Facebook pages. Also, Steve Miller attends the monthly committee meeting and provides an update on the legislative educators' activities.
- E. Nominating (Bob Erio): The committee spent 2 evenings in February interviewing candidates for the Board of Trustees and 2 evenings in March interviewing candidates for the VAC. The center received a letter from DDS about how the board did not have enough Hispanic/Latino members. As such, the committee is going to recommend to the Board of Trustees that they fill 2 of the 3 current openings with a Hispanic applicant and a consumer and continue recruiting to find a qualified Hispanic applicant to fill that last remaining position. The committee will be recommending the nomination of 5 new VAC members to begin serving July 1st.
- F. Strategic Planning (Suad Bisogno): This committee meets on a quarterly basis; their last meeting was held February 4th. They committee generally oversees the center's performance-based contract with DDS, reviews quarterly reports on community integrated employment, paid internship program, new vendorizations, and program closures. They also are kept current on the activities of the National Core Indicators program.

XI. Open Issues for Discussion – No further issues were identified for discussion.

XII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

The following item was identified for the VAC's section of the March 13th Board of Trustees meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the March 7th VAC Meeting

XIII. Announcements/Information/Public Input

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, April 4th (break out groups will meet)

XIV. Adjournment

Sharoll adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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