

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
September 5, 2019

Present: Orli Almog, Erica Beall, Suad Bisogno, Catherine Carpenter, Bob Erio, Mariela Feldman, Cynthia Fernandez, Loreena Garcia, Sharoll Jackson, Dana Kalek, Ken Lane, Don Lucas, Jenni Moran, Sonia Ojeda, Kevin Shields, and Nick Vukotic - Committee Members

Ralph Stokes, Freddie Berger, Ken Lane, Pat Walsh, Raquel Armendariz, Michelle Heid, Lorn Hubert, Tina Castro, Dana V. Andrews, Sharon Weinberg, Howard Grossman, Alona Yorkshire, Johnny Palacio, Dennis Rutnam, Lily Handley, Alisha Turner, Barak Almog, Zankyaw Oo, Glynda Givens, Lea Munoz, Jon Francis, Leticia Leon, Gabriela Sanchez, Teresa Rathsam, Ashely Colis Farag, Cheryl Keehne, Debra Dinielli, Lori Sivazlian, Linda Cobuzzi, Fred Rockwood, Cindy Kozlowski, Tara Estrella, Haley Rhyne, Darrell Bunch, Kenny He, Melissa Nishimoto, Kati Johns, Maryanne Sawoski, Bonnie Schlachte, Saeda Farah, Emily Owens, Uju Okeke, Tanya Burstinov, Neomi Garzon, Michael Davidov, Lorri Hubert, Ingrid Rushing, Nicholle Cash, Scott Cross, Doris Longmire, Emmanuel Gutierrez, Yolanda Bosch, Dana Williams, Nelly Nersisyan, Michael Roll, Anna Polin, Ian Durner, Hal Kirklin, Jorge Rodriguez, Lori Resnick, Andrea Lemus, Michele Linares, Rafael Carbagal, Terrence Carson, Laura Schnieder, Rita Zelaya, Tarun Abhichandam, Michael D. Duff, and Kendra Espinoza – Guests

Kim Rolfes, Jennifer Kaiser, Arlayn Ladson-Castle, Venus Khorasani, Lisa Mayti, Arpi Arabian, Elisa Hill, Cathy Robinson-Learn, Erin Broughton-Rodriguez, Olga L. Ruiz, and Sonja Chapman – Staff

Absent: Deborah Cutter

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 - There was no public input.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Two items were added to the agenda: VIII.B. and VIII.C.

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

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

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

IV. VAC Group Photograph

The VAC left the conference room briefly to have a group photo of them taken to post on the center's website.

V. Executive Director's Report (Kim Rolfes for Ruth Janka)

A. Staffing Changes:

1. Arlayn Ladson-Castle has been hired as the center's new contract administration and privacy manager. She will oversee privacy and security practices and HIPAA breach prevention. Arlayn was present and introduced herself. Service providers needing advice from her should feel free to contact her at ACastle@nlacrc.org.
2. Gabriela Eshrati has been promoted to branch supervisor of the Antelope Valley office.
3. We are currently recruiting for an Early Start/school age consumer services director (Jesse Weller's former position).

B. FY 2019-20 Trailer Bill Language Implementation: The trailer bill language has passed and we have received a summary of it from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). There are significant actions that the center will need to take. To this end, the center has developed a matrix which lists all of the actions that will need to be taken and which person/department is responsible for taking those actions.

Action: Jennifer will forward a copy of the DDS trailer bill language summary to the service providers on her email list.

C. Legislative Update:

1. Appreciation Luncheon: A luncheon was held on August 23rd at New Horizons to honor Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian and Senator Henry Stern. The event was hosted by NLACRC and the LA Coalition

of Service Providers. The luncheon was a huge success and standing room only. The legislators were genuinely touched by our show of appreciation.

2. SB 412 (Stone): This bill would have ended the family cost participation program and the annual family program fee; unfortunately, it did not pass.
3. SB 1004 (McCarty): This bill would require the commission, on or before January 1, 2020, to establish priorities for the use of prevention and early intervention funds and to develop a statewide strategy for monitoring implementation of prevention and early intervention services, including enhancing public understanding of prevention and early intervention and creating metrics for assessing the effectiveness of how prevention and early intervention funds are used and the outcomes that are achieved.
4. AB 1351 (Lackey): This bill would change eligibility criteria to make paratransit more accessible.
5. City of Los Angeles Resolution: A resolution was approved on August 27th to support and promote any legislation that addressed the local minimum wage issue so service providers could seek an adjustment. Currently, no such legislation exists.

- D. Community Coffees & Cafecito Entre Nos: Emmanuel Gutierrez, consumer services supervisors, reported that The Adult Skills Center (TASC) was the most recent service provider who hosted a community coffee. Cafecito entre nos events (community coffees for Spanish-speaking families) are held every second Thursday at 11:00 a.m.; we had 25 families attend the last one!

Action: Anyone interested in hosting a community coffee or cafecito entre nos event should contact Sandra Rizo, Dr. Jesse Weller's administrative assistant, at SRizo@nlacrc.org.

- E. CalFresh: SSI and SSP recipients can now apply for CalFresh benefits. We are partnering with the family focus resource center to provide outreach to consumers and families about this new food stamp program. A training for the Southern CA regional centers is scheduled to be held later this month. For more information about the program go to GetCalFresh.com.

- F. Self-Determination Program (SDP) Update: Doris Longmire, the center's new SDP, reported that the center now has 158 active consumers in the program, 2 financial management services have been vendored, and the budget tool has been finalized.
- G. NLACRC's POS Disparity Projects:
1. Family Empowerment Team in Action (FETA): The center received approval from DDS to continue our FETA program for a 3rd year. We are currently assisting about 35 families to help increase their access to services. This is managed by MSW students at CSUN. The program is currently offering cultural competency training for service providers who serve consumers under 18 years of age; the next one will be held Thursday, September 12th. They are also planning to develop 15-minute video clips to post on YouTube for those consumers and families who find it difficult to physically get to trainings.
 2. Parent Mentor: We are still recruiting for a parent to serve as a parent mentor to help other parents navigate the service system. We were unable to recruit a full-time person, so we are now recruiting for 2 part-time positions (20 hours per week); one position in the San Fernando Valley and the other in the Antelope Valley.
- H. Service Provider Disparity Funding: Disparity funding for FY 2019-20 is now available for service providers to be used to provide greater access to regional center services; proposals are due to DDS by September 30th.

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

- A. Follow-up on Number of Intakes: NLACRC has the 2nd largest number of intakes of all 21 regional centers in the state behind Inland Regional Center, which is the largest of all of the centers. In follow-up to a question asked at last month's VAC meeting, over 90% of our Early Start intakes are found eligible for services and over 60% of children of the age of 3 are found eligible for services.
- B. Fun Fact!: The center's purchase of service (POS) budget has increased by \$180 million during the 5-year period from FY 2013-14 to FY 2018-19. However, service expenditures have substantially decreased in 2 areas: behavioral health services and work activity programs.
- C. NLACRC Budget: We received our E-1 allocation from DDS and our budget is \$534.4 million – we made it to over a half a billion dollars!

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

- A. Website: The community services department is finding ways to maximize the use of the center's website, including the posting of information on:
1. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services/Home and Community-Based Services
 2. Electronic visit verification
 3. Risk management resources with forms and safety tools
 4. A fillable special incident reporting form

Action: Evelyn will have a "show and tell" at next month's VAC meeting.

- B. Annual Vendor Fairs: Registration for the vendor fairs at the SFV office will be organized by service type; the fairs will be held on September 4th, 10th, 12, and 24th. The vendor fair for the AV will be held at the Chimbole Center on October 9th and all service types are welcomed as the space is so large. 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. Please RSVP through Eventbrite on our website. We have received feedback that 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. is too long of a time slot for the vendor fairs so we will shorten them in the future.

VIII. Committee Business

- A. Service Provider/Consumer Appreciation Event – Attachment: Loreena Garcia is the VAC's representative to the NLACRC board's Consumer Services Committee. At the last Consumer Services meeting, the committee discussed the idea of NLACRC holding an event like Westside Regional Center's annual "Westside Jam." Their event is held by consumers with support from the service provider community. It is held in a local park with music, dancing, games, a resource fair, and prizes. The Consumer Services Committee asked for the VAC's input on this idea. Westside's event is held on a Friday evening, but Loreena thought that if NLACRC held on it would be better to have it on a Sunday from late morning to early afternoon. No further input was given.
- B. Resignation of Staci Jordan: Unfortunately, Staci has resigned from her position on the VAC and her contributions will be missed.

C. Legislative and Community Educators Report: Michelle Heid and Raquel Armendariz are NLACRC's legislative and community educators. They were both present and gave the following reports:

1. Grass Roots Visits: Plans for our visits with local legislators is underway. All of our local senators and assembly members will be visited by a group representing NLACRC which will include a staff lead, board member/parent, consumer, and service provider. The visits will begin in mid-September and will continue through January.
2. Councilman John Lee: A special election was held on August 13th with John Lee running against Loraine Lundquist for a position on the L.A. City Council. The 12th district includes Chatsworth, Granada Hills, Northridge, Porter Ranch, West Hills, Sherwood Forest, and sections of North Hills and Reseda. John Lee won the election and his community swearing in ceremony will be held this Saturday from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Please plan to attend and start developing your relationship with our local councilman! His office is right across the street from the regional center.
3. State Budget/Rate Increases: The state budget is problematic for service providers. Although some providers received an 8.2% rate increase (time-limited), other providers received minor rate increases, while other providers received no rate increases – including Early Start! We know how important those services are and we need to make our legislators aware of these oversights.
4. Trainings: DDS provided an all-day training at South Central Regional Center on person-centered planning and service provider self-assessments; they are also offering the training via webinars. For more information, please go to DDS's website at dds.ca.gov.

Action: Michelle and Yolanda Bosch will meet with Lisa Mayti and Venus Khorasani to see if another in-person meeting can be held.

5. Legislative Calendar

September 3rd: Last day for bills to be presented.

September 13th: Last day for each house to pass bills

October 13th: The deadline for the governor to pass or veto bills

January 1st: Statutes take effect

January 6th: The legislative reconvenes

We need to take the opportunity to meet with our local legislators while they are out of session and are at their local offices.

6. New and Improved Voting: After 10 years and \$100 million, Los Angeles County is ready to unveil its brand new voting system in hopes of bringing more voters to the polls. Mock elections will be held later this month to give voters a chance to get familiar with the 31,000 iPad-like devices that the county purchased. Please take consumers on a field trip to see how it works for them! Elections will be held in March.
7. Split-Roll Initiative: This proposal would split property tax rules between homes and businesses with businesses paying higher property taxes. This would be bad for service providers and their locations – and another unfunded mandate. Michele has reached out to the Valley Industry Commerce Association (San Fernando Valley) and the Valley Industry Association (Santa Clarita) to take a position on this proposal.

IX. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

The following agenda item was identified for the VAC's section of the September 11th board meeting:

- A. Minutes of the September 5th VAC Meeting

X. Announcements/Public Input

- A. Suad Bisogno announced that the last Employment Resource Committee meeting was held on August 27th at TASC. The next one will be held at Jay Nolan Community Services at noon on Monday, October 14th.
- B. Bebo Saab, the center's clients' rights advocate, will be holding trainings on Social Security and employment. It is important for families to attend if they are afraid if consumers are working they could lose benefits.
- C. Loreena Garcia announced that the last 10 consumers who came to her program at ETTA had significant systematic delays in receiving services.

Action: This situation will be forwarded to next month's VAC meeting for discussion.

- D. Next Meeting: Thursday, October 3rd (full meeting)

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

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek)
- B. School Age Services (Mariela Feldman)
- C. Adult Services (Jenni Moran)
- D. Implementation of Legislative Changes (Sharoll Jackson)

XII. Adjournment

Sharoll adjourned the meeting at 11:03 and the break out groups met.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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