

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
**Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
October 3, 2019

**Present:** Erica Beall, Suad Bisogno, Catherine Carpenter, Deborah Cutter, Bob Erio, Mariela Feldman, Cynthia Fernandez, Sharoll Jackson, Dana Kalek, Don Lucas, Jenni Moran, Kevin Shields, and Nick Vukotic - Committee Members

Pat Walsh, Michelle Heid, Sharon Weinberg, Laura Schnieder, Limoran Chiprut, Alona Yorkshire, Dennis Rutnam, Lizeth Corral, John Brauer, Emerald Lewis, Harry Bruell, Glynda Givens, Leticia Leon, Gabriela Sanchez, Teresa Rothsam, Haley Rhyne, Lori Sivazlian, Debra Dinielli, Linda Cobuzzi, Pat Night, Beatriz Contreras, Emily Owens, Rebecca Holik, Tara Estrella, Alexandra Rivera, Tina Castro, Kenny Ha, Debra McCunz, Saeda Farah, Dana V. Andrews, Claire Moynihan, Monique Lopez, Maria Davila, Tania Holguin, Annie Dox, Darrell Bunch, Yolanda Bosch, Anna Polin, Nicholle Cash, Eden Garcia, Scott Shepard, Andrea Lemus, Jorge Rodriguez, Lori Resnick, and Nelly Nersisyan - Guests

Ruth Janka, Jennifer Kaiser, Lisa Mayti, Venus Rodriguez-Khorasani, Kim Rolfes, Elisa Hill, Sheila Calove, Cathy Robinson-Learn, Arpi Arabian, Olga L. Ruiz, Lauren Morton, Nancy Salyers, Jenny Dao, and Stephanie Margaret - Staff

**Absent:** Orli Almog, Loreena Garcia, Ken Lane, and Sonia Ojeda

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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Sharoll Jackson, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and introductions were made.

**II. Public Input**

- A. Bob Rojas, CPA, introduced himself. He is available to help service providers with their audit/review requirements. He can be reached at (213) 283-9500.
- B. Theresa Quarry from the Family Focus Resource Center announced that they are holding their 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Special Needs Resource Fair at CSUN on Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. There will be music and other entertainment. Please encourage consumers and families to come.
- C. Michelle Heid reported that there are new voting machines available to try out in many different locations. We want our consumers to become familiar with

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.

### III. Consent Items

#### A. Approval of Agenda

Item VII.C. was added to the agenda.

**M/S/C** (J. Moran/D. Kalek) To approve the agenda as modified.

#### B. Approval of Minutes from the September 5<sup>th</sup> VAC Meeting

**M/S/C** (J. Moran/S. Bisogno) To approve the minutes as presented.

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

A. Budget & Trailer Bill Language: Co-payments, co-insurance, and deductibles for Early Start consumers have been eliminated retroactively to July 1<sup>st</sup>. We are in the process of drafting our IPP list of agree-upon services and supports that will be provided to consumers and families and the conclusion of an IPP meeting. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has formally requested assessment tools and any related policies from each regional center; they also want to see all 4731 complaints back to 2017. The center will be establishing a caseload with a 1:25 ratio to provide services to consumers with "complex needs." DDS will not be sending us our project money until January.

B. Developmental Services Task Force: DDS has undertaken a new application process to find members for the DS Task Force and its related workgroups. They are re-establishing the DS Task Force and DS Workgroups to make sure the groups reflect our diverse community and services. Decisions regarding the new DS Task Force members and work group members are due November 1<sup>st</sup>.

C. Legislative Advocacy: The Southern CA regional center directors have partnered with the L.A. Coalition of Service Providers to develop an advocacy message and implementation plan. Legislators tend to be on our side, but we need to garner the support of the governor, his administration, and the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Dr. Mark Ghaly. The collaborative message is: 1) the importance of regional center service coordination and the need for additional operations dollars to support them;

and 2) the need for increased rates for service providers (and how both of these are inter-dependent). We need for him to understand the challenges and value of both of these. To this end, Dr. Ghaly has agreed to come to L.A. County to visit programs and participate in a question and answer forum afterwards.

D. Community Coffees & Cafecito Entre Nos Events:

1. Ruth apologized because a community coffee was scheduled for this morning at Orli Almog's program, Caring Family Supports, which conflicted with this VAC meeting. The next community coffee will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, at Desert Haven Enterprises in Lancaster. Another one will be held Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, at New Horizons.
2. 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! These events are held in the San Fernando and Antelope Valleys and are a great way to receive information from our community and to have a dialogue. The next one will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, at our Antelope Valley office.

**Action:** If you would like to host a coffee event, please contact Jesse Weller's administrative assistant Sandra Rizo at: [SRizo@nlacrc.org](mailto:SRizo@nlacrc.org).

E. CalFresh: SSI and SSP recipients can now apply for CalFresh benefits. Under the direction of DDS and the Department of Social Services, we are partnering with the family focus resource center to provide outreach to consumers and families to help them connect to this new food assistance program. All of the center's supervisors and service coordinators have had training about this program and our interagency agreement has been signed. For more information about this program go to [GetCalFresh.com](http://GetCalFresh.com).

F. Purchase of Service (POS) Disparity Projects: The center currently has 2 disparity projects:

1. The Family Empowerment Team in Action (FETA): This program uses MSW students from CSUN to provide outreach to families who are not using regional center services.
2. Parent Mentor Program: We have 2 part-time positions (20 hours per week) for parents to help other parents navigate the regional center

system. This will also include a customer care phone line. The position at the San Fernando Valley office has been filled; the position at the Antelope Valley office is still pending.

- G. Self-Determination Program: We now have 156 active participants, 27 participants have withdrawn, and 24 still need to attend the orientation. We continue to hold orientations on a monthly basis. The next ones will be held October 23<sup>rd</sup>, November 27<sup>th</sup>, and December 18<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We are also now offering one to one orientations for those who cannot attend the group orientations. We have 3 financial management services vended. We have developed our individual budgeting tool and have 9 consumer budgets developed so far. We held our first self-determination program resource fair on September 28<sup>th</sup>. We continue to hold monthly informational meetings at all 3 of our offices. We are waiting for DDS to contact us with the names of the consumers who will replace those who have withdrawn from the program.
- H. Audit: DDS recently audited the center's home and community-based services (HCBS) and 1915i plan. They reviewed consumers' individual program plans, targeted case management time, quarterly reports, and special incident reports. The center was found to be in substantial compliance.
- I. Legislative Update: Michelle Heid, one of the center's legislative educators, gave verbal highlights from her written report which included:
1. NLACRC's grass roots visits with local legislators
  2. The rate study and associated rate models
  3. The developmental services task force
  4. HCBS settings final rule
  5. Legislative calendar
  6. Pending bills and priority legislation
  7. Voting solutions for all people
  8. Split roll property tax
  9. Safe sidewalks L.A. rebate program
  10. CSUN seeks supports for transportation solutions (see Section VIII.C. below for further details)
  11. Upcoming events

**Action:** Michelle Heid is looking for volunteers to join teams visiting legislators! Please contact her at: [MHeid@abpathways.com](mailto:MHeid@abpathways.com).

**Action:** Please contact Michelle about the split roll property tax and how it would affect you or your program.

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

- A. New Resource Developer: Kim introduced Nancy Salyers, the center's newest resource developer; Nancy was formerly Evelyn McOmie's administrative assistant.
- B. Vendor Fairs: Kim expressed her appreciation to all of the service providers who participated in the recent vendor fairs. Meeting you and getting the information you provided was extremely valuable to our staff.
- C. Performance-Based Contract: Three public meetings were held to present the center's draft 2020 performance contract; one was held on September 26<sup>th</sup> and 2 more were held yesterday (one here and one at the Antelope Valley office). We received some good feedback from the participants which we will share with DDS.
- D. NLACRC's Budget
  - 1. FY 2018-19: The center's operations budget is \$52,140,197, the family resource center budget is \$207,187, and the POS budget is \$447,028,144, for a total budget of \$499,375,528 at this point. The center is currently projecting a deficit in the POS budget between \$2.9 and \$4.9 million which will be resolved with a future funding allocation from DDS which will put us above the half-billion dollar mark!
  - 2. FY 2019-20: The operations budget is \$52,049,655, the family resource center budget is \$207,187, and the POS budget is \$482,106,884 (excluding community placement plan (CPP) funding), for a total budget of \$534,363,726 at this point. The center is receiving additional dollars because of our large number of intakes. DDS should be releasing our second allocation soon, which will include our CPP funding.
- E. SFV Office Building Power Outage: Due to a fire marshal requirement, the SFV office building will have its power shut off on Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>; which included the e-billing program.
- F. Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony in Sacramento: The governor is reaching out to developmental disabilities organizations to submit consumer-made

ornaments for the State Capitol's Christmas tree. This is a good opportunity to highlight their many talents. Last year, one of NLACRC's consumers was the tree lighter!

- G. Service Provider Rate Increases: We are waiting for direction from DDS on the 8.2% supplemental rate increase for certain providers and for those providers who received a lesser increase. DDS needs to receive federal approval for matching funds which can sometimes take up to 90 days. Our community services department is ready to implement those rate increases as soon as we receive DDS approval.
- H. Fun Fact: Santa Clarita is one of the top 10 fastest growing cities in California! Kim found this information on the California Department of Finance website – which has lots of interesting information!

**VI. Community Services Director's Report** (Venus Rodriguez-Khorasani for Evelyn McOmie)

- A. Residential Homes: Our resource development department has been busy developing residential homes.
- B. 30-Day Notices: There are several vendors who have not submitted their annual program evaluations; 30-day notices will be sent to those vendors if not received. Should the vendor have questions or concerns, please contact the contracts and compliance department.
- C. Vendor Trainings:
  - 1. IPP Writing: Dr. Arpi Arabian and Bill Wood will be providing a workshop on IPP writing, including goals and outcomes, from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at our San Fernando Valley office. A similar training will be held at our Antelope Valley office but the date has not been finalized.
  - 2. Special Incident Report/Risk Mitigation: Will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at our Antelope Valley office.
  - 3. Special Incident Report/Risk Mitigation: Will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> at our San Fernando Valley office.
- D. Antelope Valley Vendor Fair: Will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, at the Chimbole Center.

**Action:** Please contact Venus with any suggestions or recommendations for future vendor fairs at: [VRodriguezKhorasani@nlacrc.org](mailto:VRodriguezKhorasani@nlacrc.org) or [SChapman@nlacrc.org](mailto:SChapman@nlacrc.org).

- E. Community Services Department Web Page: A “show and tell” will be provided at a future VAC meeting once the new enhancements have been made, including a fillable special incident report. A guest in the audience reported that she could fill in the special incident report, but wasn’t able to save it.

**Action:** Venus will follow up on this to make sure the fillable special incident report can be saved.

## VIII. Committee Business

- A. VAC Recruitment Notice – Attachment

The annual recruitment period for service providers to apply for membership on the VAC has begun! If interested, please contact Jennifer Kaiser for an application packet at: [JKaiser@nlacrc.org](mailto:JKaiser@nlacrc.org). The application deadline is December 15<sup>th</sup>.

- B. ETTA Consumers with Significant Delays in Receiving Services (Loreena): This agenda item was deferred to next month’s VAC meeting as Loreena was not present.

- C. San Fernando Valley Transportation Project (Sharoll)

CSUN is seeking support for advancing the North San Fernando Valley bus rapid transit project which was part of Measure M. This project must be inclusive of all transit riders and especially those in the disability community who rely on public transit. Los Angeles Metro is proposing a route that includes Nordhoff Street and Roscoe Boulevard for the 20-mile \$180 million project. The LA Metro Board of Directors will hold a meeting to advance the project on Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in their board room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of One Gateway Plaza in LA.

## IX. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek): Michelle Heid joined the group and they discussed increasing awareness of the fact that infant development services received no supplemental rate increase. Early Start providers are struggling

and we need a plan. This will be the group's new focus. Dana and Elisa Hill presented at the recent Infant Development Association (IDA) conference on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and the importance of social-emotional development. Annie Cox is on the IDA Board and advocates on the state level for Early Start services in California.

- B. School Age Services (Mariela Feldman): Service code 102; it is currently used for the 16-hour parent education groups, however since most of the behavior cases are services by managed care plans and commercial health insurances, the number of referrals from the regional center to vendors has decreased. The idea is to use the 102 miscellaneous code to provide ongoing group parent training with different topics being offered every group. The committee needs to meet to discuss this project further.
- C. Adult Services (Jenni Moran): The group is drafting a policy that will be presented to the VAC and then to the NLACRC Board of Trustees on services and supports for older consumers.
- D. Implementation of Legislative Changes (Sharoll Jackson): The group discussed grass roots visits with local legislators, the proposed rate study (what would work and what wouldn't), and the HCBS final rule in-person trainings.

## **X. Report on Board Committee Meetings**

To view the minutes from the following committee meetings, go to the center's website and click on the "Governance/ Board of Trustees/Approved Meeting Minutes" tab.

- A. Administrative Affairs (Kevin Shields): The committee met on September 25<sup>th</sup>. They discussed personnel policies that are going to be developed, reviewed the financial report, the intermediate care facility state plan amendment report, and the monthly human resources report.
- B. Board of Trustees (Sharoll Jackson): The board met on September 11<sup>th</sup> at Desert Haven Enterprises. Action items included:
  - 1. Approval of changes to the board's transparency policy
  - 2. Approval of changes to the board's master calendar
  - 3. Approval of a conflict of interest resolution plan
  - 4. Approval of the board's legislative priorities
  - 5. Approval to hold a town hall meeting



6. Approval to support AB 1004 (McCarty)
  7. Approval of a contract
- C. Consumer Services (Loreena Garcia)
- D. Government/Community Relations (Loreena Garcia)

A legislative training session was held for board members, VAC members, and staff last month in lieu of the Consumer Services and Government/Community Relations Committee meetings.

- E. Nominating (Cathy Carpenter): The Nominating Committee will be meeting on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, which will include an orientation for new board applicants. The Nominating Committee has been reaching out to the Hispanic/Latino community as the board is in need of additional representation in those areas. A recruitment postcard was mailed out and we had a lot of response to it; we have received 26 board applications and 13 of them were from Hispanic/Latino applicants! There are currently 7 board openings that need to be filled. Also, as stated earlier, the committee is currently recruiting for VAC applicants.
- F. Strategic Planning (Erica Beall & Nick Vukotic): The committee meets quarterly and last met on August 5<sup>th</sup>. The committee elected Caroline Mitchell to serve as their chair, held their annual orientation for the benefit of new members, and reviewed their FY 2018-19 action log. The committee also reviewed and discussed quarterly reports on: 1) competitive integrated employment and the paid internship program; 2) program closures; and 3) new vendorizations. The committee also reviewed the center's performance contract year-end report and the draft performance contract for 2020. The next quarterly meeting will be held Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Nick added that he attended a public meeting on the proposed 2020 performance contract yesterday; the meeting was well attended with good feedback and discussion.

## **X. Open Issues for Discussion**

- A. Consumer Employment Committee: Suad Bisogno announced that the next committee meeting will be held from noon to 2:00 p.m. on Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, at Jay Nolan Community Services. Bring your own lunch!
- B. "Intelligent Lives" Screening: Senator Scott Wilk will be presenting a screening of this film at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, at the Santa Clarita Valley senior center. The screening is being hosted by Avenues Supported Living Services.

- C. Major Impact Theatre: One of Bob Erio's many roles is board president of the Major Impact Theater, which puts on musical comedies with 35 actors who are also consumers. They have 2 performances a year (in November and in May). Their next performance called "Roadkill" will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, at the Newhall Family Theatre. For tickets go to: [majorimpacttheatre.org](http://majorimpacttheatre.org).

**Action:** The theatre group is looking for more actors. Actors must pay a \$75 fee to cover costumes. Rehearsals are held Tuesday and Thursday nights. For more information, contact Bob Erio at: (310) 944-2845

**Action:** The theatre group is also looking for more board members. Please contact Bob if interested.

- D. October is Emotional Wellness Month: Sharoll Jackson encouraged hugs to celebrate!

## XI. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

The following items were identified for the VAC's section of the October 23<sup>rd</sup> board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the September 5<sup>th</sup> VAC Meeting
- B. Minutes of the October 3<sup>rd</sup> VAC Meeting

## XII. Announcements/Information/Public Input

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup> (break out groups will meet)

## XIII. Adjournment

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

Submitted by,

*Jennifer Kaiser*

Jennifer Kaiser  
Executive Assistant