

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2020

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

Michelle Heid, Sharon Weinberg, Audrey Hughes, Jon Francis, Dennis Rutnam, Dana Hart, Claire Moynihan, Tanya Brustinov, Maria Ortiz, Hasmik Stimazian, Daniel Ortiz, Lori Sivazlian, Andrea Devers, Tanga Shirley, Rebecca Holik, Cindy Kozlowski, Brittany William, Ute Escorcica, Matthew Swan, Rachel Kearsley, Michele Linares, Reggie Baker, Tayo Ogunnaike, Emily Owens, Alisha Turner, Olga Reyes, Jessica Garrido, Trudy Callahan, Haley Rhyne, Leticia Leon, Ivania Holguin, Andrea Lemus Monique Long, Kenny H, Mychal Solis, Lori Resnick, Kendra Espinoza, Debra McCurry, Saida Farah, Rita Zelaya, Gabriela Sanchez, Yolanda Bosch, Tonia Holguin, Natasha Jackson, and Erik Elliott – Guests

Ruth Janka, Jennifer Kaiser, Kim Roles, Evelyn McOmie, Arsho Garlanian, Lisa Mayti, Cathy Robinson-Learn, Cristina Preuss, Victoria Girard, Chantelle Crown, Mone Masa, Josie Dauglash, Stephanie Margaret, Sonja Chapman, and Allyn Ortiz – Staff Members

Absent: Deborah Cutter, Bob Erio, and Sonia Ojeda

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Sharoll Jackson, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. and introductions were made.

II. Public Input

Priscilla Picard, from Autism Speaks, announced that they will be holding a walk on Saturday, April 25th at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena; brochures were provided. There will also be a huge resource fair. For more information or to register for the walk, go to AutismSpeaksWalk.org.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

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

B. Approval of Minutes from the February 6th VAC Meeting

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

IV. Executive Director's Report (Ruth Janka)

- A. Coronavirus: As part of the state's response to address the global COVID-19 outbreak, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Emergency to make additional resources available, formalize emergency actions already underway across multiple state agencies and departments, and help the state prepare for broader spread of COVID-19. The proclamation comes as the number of positive California cases rises and following one official COVID-19 death. The governor also announced the release of millions of N95 masks to address shortages caused by COVID-19. Today's action also follows the announcement earlier this week that the state has secured the capacity to test thousands of specimens from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to expedite testing. California is still considered "low risk;" out of a population of 39 million, only 43 have tested positive for the virus. For the latest on the state's COVID-19 preparedness and response, visit cdph.ca.gov.
- B. Budget Hearing: The Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 on Health & Human Services met yesterday. They discussed the governor's budget proposals, oversight items, advocacy proposals, system reform, self-determination, and disparity projects.
- C. Purchase of Services Community Meetings: The center will be presenting information on how it spends its money on purchase of services based on consumer age, race/ethnicity, language, residence, disability, and insurance-related data. Data will also include the number of consumers who do not use services. The meetings will be held:
1. SFV Office (Chatsworth): Thursday, March 12th, 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
 2. AV Office (Lancaster): Monday, March 16th, 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- D. Town Hall Meeting: The center's legislative town hall meeting was held last Thursday and it was well attended and well received. Assembly Member Tom Lackey, Assembly Member Christie Smith, and Senator Wilk were in attendance and were impressed by the amount of people who were there! A panel with 2 service coordinators, John Brauer (director of New Horizons), Dr. Ivor Weiner (parent), and Amy Westling (director of ARCA), spoke about challenges our

system is facing from their perspective and the importance of service coordination.

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

- A. Fun Fact! NLACRC's #1 expenditure is now respite at \$97 million.
- B. A-4 Allocation: We are expecting to receive our A-4 allocation from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) later this month.
- C. NLACRC' Financial Report: The center's operations budget for FY 2019-20 is \$55,978,293 and the purchase of service (POS) budget is \$498,946,326 for a total budget of \$554,924,619. We are projecting a deficit in our POS budget of \$3,076,189, which will be resolved by future allocations from DDS.
- D. Statewide Financial Report: Statewide, 10 of the 21 regional centers are projecting a potential POS deficit for this fiscal year (including NLACRC), while the other 11 centers are projecting POS surpluses. NLACRC is pretty much in the middle of the pack. Statewide, the regional center system is projecting a POS surplus of \$1,721,279.
- E. NLACRC's Audited Financial Statement: The center had an excellent audit with no audit findings or management letter. The audited financial statement will be presented to our Board of Trustees at next week's board meeting for their review and acceptance. Once accepted, it will be posted on our website.
- F. California Access to Housing Act: The Act includes \$50 million to reduce homelessness. A stakeholder meeting was held on February 25th.
- G. Disability Rights California Audit: On April 13, 2018, the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Benefits Act of 2018 (H.R. 4547) was signed into law by the President. The law directs Disability Rights California (formerly known as Protection and Advocacy) to conduct periodic onsite reviews along with additional discretionary reviews of representative payees. Disability Rights California has notified NLACRC of its plan to audit NLACRC and the audit is scheduled to begin the week beginning April 6, 2020.
- H. FY 2017-18 Contract Year: Is closing. Any bills from that fiscal year must be submitted to the center by tomorrow in order to be paid.
- I. Whistleblower Policy: The center will be doing its required annual mailing of our whistleblower policy to our service providers.

- J. Transparency and Public Information Policy: We are updating our policy. Once the board has approved the changes, it will be posted on our website.

VI. Chief of Program Services Report (Cristina Preuss for Jesse Weller)

Jesse Weller was attending a statewide chief counselors meeting, so Cristina gave a report on his behalf.

- A. Early Start State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP): NLACRC is actively involved in implementing the California's SSIP in Early Start. The SSIP is the statewide goal to increase awareness around social-emotional development by the time infants and toddlers exit early intervention. We are excited to be part of this project with other regional centers throughout the state to implement strategies to support social-emotional development.
- B. Cafecito Entre Nos: We continue to hold our community coffees with our Hispanic/Latino community, which we call cafecitos. These meetings are very well attended.
- C. Aprendiendo Entre Nos (Learning Amongst Us): This group was an offshoot of the cafecitos and is a forum for discussing and learning about various topics, issues, and training needs for our Spanish-speaking families. The families themselves identify the discussion topics.
- D. Grupo de Hombres (Men's Group): This is another offshoot of our cafecitos and is a forum for our Spanish-speaking Dads. They are held twice a month, once at the AV office (in the morning) and once at the SFV office (in the afternoon).
- E. Parent Mentor: Victoria Girard, the center's new parent mentor for the SFV office, introduced herself. Victoria is available to answer questions and provide guidance to regional center consumers and their family members about how to access services. She has valuable experience as a mentor and advocate and speaks both English and Spanish. Victoria is available to meet in person, by telephone, or by email during her office hours.

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

- A. Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Funding: DDS had set a date of February 21, 2020 to notify regional centers of selected concepts for FY 2019-20

HCBS funding. However, they are still wrapping up their review of the concepts and plan to announce the selected vendors in March.

- B. On-Site Assessments: DDS is set to begin on-site assessments in June/July 2020. They are hiring a third party vendor to aid in executing them.
- C. HCBS Specialist: Evelyn introduced Sonja Chapman, new HCBS specialist. She will be here for any technical assistance needed regarding the portal after today's VAC meeting.
- D. DS 1891 Forms: 444 DS 1891s have been submitted on the portal since January 1st; this means roughly 1,000 vendorizations still need to submit an update at: www.sanctionscreeningnow.com
- E. SB 81 Rate Increases: Of the 487 negotiated rates that were eligible:
 - 1. 194 (40%) have been sent out to providers and need to be returned.
 - 2. 200 (41%) have been completed by community services and are with our accounting department to update the rate.
 - 3. 57 (12%) have been returned to community services, but have not yet been processed.
 - 4. 36 (7%) are on hold pending health & safety feedback, other previous increase processing, vendor change, etc.
- F. 862 Annual Evaluations: Letters were mailed out of February 10th regarding the March 31st deadline to our 28 862s; 2 evaluations have been received so far. Please submit them to contract&compliance@nlacrc.org.
- G. Request for Proposals (RFP) Cycle: The next RFP cycle will be April 1st to May 11th.
- H. Residential Services Orientation (RSO) Classes: Will now be held within a 30-day period, 2 classes per week. The classes will begin on March 2nd and end on March 31st. These classes are for anyone opening a group home or becoming an administrator. We will also be adding a summer RSO class.
- I. Josie Douglass: Has been promoted to resource developer!

VIII. Legislative Advocacy Report (Michelle Heid/Raquel Armendariz)

Written copies of their legislative advocacy report were provided along with information about the preliminary results from Tuesday's election. The report covered the following topics:

- A. March 3rd primary election
- B. Legislative news
- C. LA County's new voting system
- D. Grassroots visits with local legislators
- E. Legislative calendar
- F. Legislative hearings (you can access them at Assembly.ca.gov: watch hearings)
- G. Bills
- H. Upcoming events

IX. Committee Business

- A. Policy on Older Adult Services and Supports: Copies of the draft policy were provided. Jenni Moran thanked everyone who helped draft this proposed policy and then read it aloud.

M/S/C (E. Beall/J. Moran) To present the draft policy to the Consumer Services Committee and eventually to the Board of Trustees for approval.

- B. Update on Employment Committee: Erica Beall reported that the group is putting together a list of questions, concerns, and solutions to strengthen the Paid Internship Program (PIP) and community integrated employment (CIE) program. The group is also still trying to get participation in their meetings by representatives from the Department of Rehabilitation. The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 28th, from noon to 2:00 p.m. at Jay Nolan Community Services. From then on the committee will have a standing meeting on the 4th Tuesday of every other month.

- C. Call for Applications for VAC (*Attachment*): Catherine Carpenter reported that there is still 1 more opening to fill on the VAC for FY 2020-21. The board's Nominating Committee is looking for applicants who can fill under-served service areas on the VAC, which are:

1. Community care facility
2. Health licensed facility
3. Early intervention
4. Habilitation
5. Day care/after school/Saturday programs

Anyone interested in applying for a position on the VAC should contact Jennifer Kaiser for an application packet at jkaiser@nlacrc.org. The application deadline is April 24th.

X. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek): The group discussed Senator Henry Stern's budget letter requesting an 8.2% increase for Early Start specialized therapeutic services and to also solve the minimum wage "quirk" by providing a 3.33% increases for every \$1 increase in minimum wage. The group is also working with NLACRC staff members Elisa Hill and Catherine Robinson-Learn to streamline the billing process.
- B. School Age Services (Mariela Feldman): The group discussed community resources, including:
1. Areas of Interest (socialization, access to peers, community-based participation)
 2. Things to consider: age groups, functioning level, and other needs (e.g. mobility, accessibility, sensory, etc.)
 3. Weekday and weekend options of things to do or participate in.
 4. Centralized/Master/Dynamic list or document with available resources (to be worked on by group members, consolidating information and resources. They plan to reach out to the Family Focus Resource Center and Sara Iwahashi, NLACRC's public information supervisor.
 5. How to get information out to our providers and families (brochure, website, email, school-age resource fair, part of the intake packet, meetings with families).

The work group's new priority is to facilitate access to information regarding services and supports available to families who have children with special needs.

- C. Adult Services (Jenni Moran): The adult services work group has been busy drafting the services for older adults policy discussed earlier in this meeting. Now that the policy has been drafted, what should the work group tackle next? Resource development and housing? Employment services? Please join the work group next month and bring your ideas!
- D. Implementation of Legislative Changes (Sharoll Jackson): The group discussed and wants support for AB 2024 (Holden) which would solve the minimum wage "quirk" by requiring certain provider rates be increased by 3.33% for each \$1

increase in the minimum wage. This bill will be discussed at the board's Consumer Services Committee meeting later this month.

XI. Report on Board Committee Meetings

- A. Administrative Affairs (Kevin Shields)
- B. Board of Trustees (Sharoll Jackson)
- C. Consumer Services (Orli Almog)
- D. Government & Community Relations (Orli Almog)
- E. Nominating (Cathy Carpenter)
- F. Strategic Planning (Erica Beall & Nick Vukotic)

Reports were given on the recent meetings of these committees. For more information, approved minutes of these meetings are posted on the center's website under the "Governance/ Board of Trustees/Approved Meeting Minutes" tab.

XII. Open Issues for Discussion

- A. Erica Beall and Rebecca Lienhard (from Tierra del Sol) were both appointed to serve on the DS Task Force's community resources work group and Alona Yorkshire (from The Adult Skills Center) was appointed to serve on their safety net and fiscal reform work groups. The community resources work group recently held their first meeting at DDS in Sacramento. The first half of the meeting was spent establishing ground rules and bringing everyone up to the same knowledge base (e.g. including newer types of services, resource development efforts due to the closing of the developmental centers, and disparity funding). The second half of the meeting was spent identifying service gaps and resource development ideas.

Action: Report outs on the DS Task Force's community resources, safety net, and fiscal reform work groups will become a standing agenda item for VAC meetings.

- B. Erica Beall announced that while she was in Sacramento, she spent some time with Senator Jim Beall. Senator Beall is concerned with the lack of resources available to consumers and the closure of group homes.
- C. Guests in the audience shared their concerns about the coronavirus. How should they quarantine affected consumers? Also, they are seeing a drop in service use and attendance because people do not want to leave their homes.

Action: Ruth will contact DDS about lack of attendance and possible program closures.

Action: In order to provide DDS with accurate data, please report any lack of attendance or possible program closures since December 1, 2019 to contract&compliance@nlacrc.org.

XIII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

The following items were identified for the VAC's section of the March 11th board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the February 6th VAC Meeting
- B. Minutes of the March 5th VAC Meeting

XIV. Announcements/Information/Public Input

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, April 2nd (break out groups will meet)

XV. Adjournment

Sharoll adjourned the meeting at 11:27 a.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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