

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
**Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
May 2, 2024

**Present:** Suad Bisogno, Alex Kopilevich, Andrea Devers, Cal Enriquez, Catherine Carpenter, Dana Kalek, Daniel Ortiz, Erica Beall, Jaklen Keshishyan, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Masood Babaeian, Octavia Askew, Sharon Weinberg, Vahe Mkrtchian,

Cristina Preuss, Evelyn McOmie, Vini Montague, Arshalous Garlanian, Donna Rentsch, Gabriela Eshrati, Kimberly Visokey, Arezo Abedi, Emmanuel Gutierrez – **Staff Members**

Michelle Heid – Legucator, Joseph Tartaglia – Minute Services – **Guests**

Other than panelists, there were 90 other attendees.

**Absent:** Lisa Williamsen

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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Suad Bisogno, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m.

**Action Item:** Add the reading of the civility code to the future agendas

**II. Public Input**

Space for public input was given, but there was no public input.

**III. Consent Items**

A. Approval of Agenda

**M/S/C (S. Weinburg/A. Kopilevich)**

B. Approval of Minutes from April 4, 2024

**M/S/C (A. Kopilevich /J. Keshishyan)** To approve the Minutes presented with corrections made by Sharon Weinburg.

**IV. Executive Director's Report – Cristina Preuss**

**Legislative**

Cristina reported that the first round of budget hearings is finished for the year. May revise will be released on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Also, trailer bill language related to in person meetings have started.

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**Department of Developmental Services:**

Service Provider Directory is still in development.

DDS is working on another rate reform update communication

IPP Template: the goal was to obtain broad community feedback. Once finalized, DDS will provide a RC staff specific briefing before a public one. The focus is to develop a companion guide for service coordinators and another one for individuals and families.

DDS is working to identify a staff lead for the vendorization standardization project.

Emphasis on completion of Implicit Bias training for intake personnel continues with EquitiFy and discussions are in place regarding future maintenance of this program for periodic refresher courses and training of new staff.

El Arc is going to be hosting a daylong rally and public forum in Bakersfield on May 18<sup>th</sup>. The keynotes are Delores Huerta and Assemblymember Arambula.

**Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA)**

Committee meetings for Master Plan for Developmental Services has begun with a release date in March 2025.

**Emergency Management Specialist**

Cristina introduced Roy Ortega. [ROrtega@nlacrc.org](mailto:ROrtega@nlacrc.org). He will Serve as the point person for NLACRC's response to disasters and emergencies. He will gather and triage critical information and give updates.

**V. Deputy Director Officer's Report – Evelyn McOmie**

**Updates on Case Management training**

IFSP Training Manual for Early Start Staff: All early start staff are completing the training manual for the revamped IFSP manual that has been issued. This tool will be available and will create consistency for all staff in early start including new on boarding early start CSCs. All Early start staff will have completed the training by end of May.

New NSO IPP training: Since the new NSO IPP training was issued in December 2023 with all new onboarding staff we have had 2 full cohorts that have complete the 4-course training. Recent survey results demonstrate 34% increases in new staff feeling better prepared for conducting IPPs with the training they have received. The training surveys are

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intended to gage the effectiveness of the new training modules, how it's being provided, and the accessibility of the tools for the service coordinators.

**Introduction of new Cas Management Supervisors & Specialist units**

Tabled to next in person VAC meeting so vendors can meet the new supervisors/management and new specialist in person.

**VI. Chief Financial Officer's Report – Vini Montague**

**VII. Community Services Director's Report – Arshalous Garlanian**

**DSP Training Stipend program:**

Each DSP can receive up to two \$625 stipends and \$150 reimbursement for provider's administrative costs. Eligible to take trainings through June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Coordinated Family Supports: Monthly Vendor Incentive Payments:**

DDS will notify regional centers of eligibility. 11% incentive payment amount will be calculated on the total payment to the vendor for CFS assessments and services.

**Service Provider Directory:**

This is a statewide project launching in the next 3 months. DDS and Regional Center announcements and trainings will be published soon with further instructions and details.

**Direct Support Professional 2023 Workforce Data Collection:**

Service providers must register by May 31<sup>st</sup> to receive a link to this year's survey. Even if you've participated last year, you will need to register again. After registration, data collection for survey must be submitted by June 30<sup>th</sup>. \$8,000 incentive.

**HCBS:**

HCBS Final Rule: Monitoring and Corrective Action: NLACRC continues to conduct on-site reviews of all HCBS settings. For residential settings, compliance will be assessed during Annual Reviews. Regional Centers have a deadline to complete all reviews by August 31<sup>st</sup>. If the HCBS setting is found out of compliance with any of the federal HCBS requirements, further remediation efforts will align with the existing Corrective Action Plans and Sanctions. Assessment Tools are available on NLACRC website.

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HCBS Person-Centered Training Incentives are being processed. After training is completed, David Ramos sends out attestation forms for service providers to verify attendees. Please review and sign upon receipt.

Open Futures Learning is providing self-guided learning modules to aid our vendors and their staff with a broad range of online courses. Contact David Ramos.

**Compliance Corner:**

Rate Reform Highlights: DDS continues to prepare for full implementation of rate reform and make changes needed to standardize service codes and billing codes for each type of service.

Vendorization maintenance: Don't forget to submit your insurance and organizational charts, or any questions related to compliance activities, change of address, etc.

Spring Vendor Fair Registration is full. Registration for the Fall Vendor Fair in late September will be announced in August.

**Employment Services:**

Reminder to submit PIP workbook claims and CIE requests.

Employment Access & Equity Incentive Payments: To request incentive payments available through the QIP Employment Access measure, every service provider must submit a certification form to DDS.

**Resource Development:**

Request for Proposal (RFP) - RFP for the HCBS funding for the 2023-2024 fiscal year is published now. NLACRC is seeking qualified contractors to be awarded HCBS funds for the following projects:

1. American Sign Language Training
2. Video Production
3. Consultant of HCBS Guidelines and Requirements

**Request for Vendorization (RFV):**

Coordinated Career Pathways: Information regarding the RFV for CCP services will be posted to our website shortly. NLACRC will hold an information session on May 22, 2024 at 1:00pm.

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An information session regarding CCP will be held by the Department for all interested parties, on May 13 at 9:00 a.m. and May 14 at 1:00 p.m.

Coordinated Family Supports: Submissions are due.

Soc Rec RFV - NLACRC continues to vendor Social Recreation, Camp, and Non-Medical Therapies. These projects will be posted until the resource need is met. An information session for applicants will be held Wednesday May 8, 2024 at 10am.

Transportation services: NLACRC is seeking qualified vendors to transport individuals to and from their community-based day programs or other vendored services for the regional center. More information to come.

Money Management services: NLACRC is seeking qualified vendors to provide Money Management services acting as the representative payee for NLACRC consumers identified by the accounting Department.

Self-Directed Support Services for the Self Determination Program: NLACRC is seeking qualified vendors to provide Self-Directed Supports by submitting a standardized vendor packet created by DDS.

## **VIII. Legislative Report – Michelle Heid**

Michelle reported that the Spring season has California legislators grappling with the massive state budget deficit through early action budget cuts, negotiations, and identification of legislative priorities. Now we await the Governor's May Revise which is a revision of the January budget based on updated tax estimates and the actions already taken to address the shortfall. Our community remains hopeful, but advocacy in this area continues to be crucial against delay of the provider rate reform delay that was included in the Governor's January budget. We recently heard from Senator Menjivar they have made their priorities clear and that includes preserving funding for developmental disability service providers. Now our community needs to continue the advocacy work and thank those legislators prioritizing our community in their work.

The May Revise will be released by May 15th and is anticipated to find Governor Newsom purporting a budget deficit number that is higher than his January estimation, but not as high as the alarming \$73 billion estimated by the Legislative Analyst's Office. As the April 15th tax filing deadline has come and gone, collected revenues appear to be hitting the estimation put forth in January and all eyes are watching that big, red, fundraising thermometer to see how high it goes.

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The Senate and Assembly both released versions of their plan to address the budget shortfall and an agreement was reached on April 4th, 2024. Governor Newsom signed the early action plan on April 15th which maximizes efforts to close the deficit while minimizing cuts by shifting and delaying past funding allocations that hadn't yet been spent and using a couple of accounting maneuvers that will save costs by deferring costs from one fiscal year to the next.

Assembly Member Gabriel said that the early action budget package “avoids cuts to core health, human services, public safety, and education programs. (Cuts in all of these areas are likely in the June budget, but the goal will be to minimize cuts to core programs.) In the coming weeks, budget subcommittees will consider the rest of the Governor’s budget proposals and, if unable to agree to some of them, will begin to identify alternative cuts in order to balance the 2024 state budget.” This means that advocacy efforts such as those against delaying provider rate increases are still needed and is a reminder to keep up that momentum through the entire budget process. California has moved through the pandemic and things are in some ways returning to “normal” while some things will not likely return to pre-pandemic levels anytime soon. As budget and bill hearings are in full swing testimony has returned primarily to in-person-only whereas during the pandemic testimony could be provided via phone lines. During a recent visit with Senator Menjivar she shared that the Senate Budget Subcommittee she chairs, fought to keep testimony provided via the phone line open to allow access for individuals with developmental disabilities, but sadly only one person called to share their opinion. If our community would like to continue to be able to provide this remote testimony, then we need to show up when that is offered. Currently remote testimony will only be available for hearings when an ADA request is made.

### **Governor Signs Early Action Budget Plan**

After the Senate released its “Shrink the Shortfall” early action budget plan on March 14th, 2024, with praise from Governor Newsom, the Assembly Budget Committee released their version of an early action budget plan on April 4th, 2024. Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel, chair of the Assembly Budget Committee noted that their plan largely aligned with the Senate plan, included \$17 billion of early actions to help address the massive budget shortfall estimated at \$38-73 billion. It included about two-thirds of the deficit solutions that Governor Newsom proposed in his initial budget proposal released in January. A key difference in the Assembly early action plan from the Senate plan is the specific authority for the administration to freeze certain one-time 2021, 2022, and 2023 budget allocations. This was a key Assembly priority to preserve at least a few billion dollars more of budget-balancing options for June. An agreement was reached on April 4th, 2024 and Governor Newsom signed the early action plan on April 15th. The Department of Finance will now report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee the list of items in the early action agreement that will no longer be included in the baseline budget forecast.

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### **Assembly and Senate Proposed Early Action Budget Plans**

As the Assembly, Senate, and Governor Newsom are grappling with how to address the 2024-25 Budget deficit, they each made proposals as they inched towards an early action agreement. Governor Newsom's January plan was evaluated by each house and by agreeing on some early steps that could be taken to start solving the shortfall, they will now look to making some of the harder decisions. The Governor's May Revise will lay the groundwork for continued negotiations.

### **Advocacy Efforts Against Delaying Provider Rate Increases**

The \$1 Billion delay in provider rate increases put forth by Governor Newsom in his 2024-25 Budget Proposal has spawned quick advocacy efforts across the state. The Arc of California has called for the disability community to share testimony at the legislative budget hearings about the personal impact these delays would have, the acute staffing crisis and growing waitlists for services as regional center caseloads continue to grow. The Lanterman Coalition has put together an Outreach Toolkit with sample communications and social media graphics that can be used to spread the word to family, friends, and colleagues about this important issue and make sure our voices are heard as the Legislature continues to look for solutions to the budget deficit.

### **Continued Advocacy Efforts Against the Proposed Delay in Provider Rate Increases**

As the budget process continues, several news outlets have reported on the proposed delay in provider rate increases, shining a light on the negative impact this delay would have on our community.

### **Assembly Members Rally for Provider Rate Implementation**

Continued advocacy efforts have brought more attention to the Budget Request Letter that Assemblywoman Stephanie Nguyen (D10) sent to the Chairs of the Assembly and Senate Budget Subcommittees that oversee Human Services requesting that the service provider rates scheduled to be implemented on July 1st, 2024, not be delayed as proposed in Governor Newsom's 2024-25 Budget Proposal. Assemblywoman Nguyen's office is excited about the bipartisan support across both the Assembly and Senate. At last count the letter has been signed by a combined 51 Members of the Assembly and Senate, with the majority of our local legislators representing the NLACRC catchment area having added their signatures in support of not delaying provider rate implementation.

## **IX. Committee Business**

### **A. VAC Chair/Alt Chair Election**

**M/S/C** (S. Weinburg/D. Kalek) To elect Alex Kopilevich as VAC Chair

**M/S/C** (E. Beall/ A. Kopilevich) To elect Jaklen Keshishyan as Alt Chair.

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- B. In-person transition meeting update  
June 24 from 10-12 at the North LA Chatsworth office. Food provided, let them know if there are any food restrictions.
- C. Review of the Critical Calendar
  - 1. For April and May add “Alt Chair” to “VAC members interested in serving as chair for next fiscal year are identified”
  - 2. December’s item about “members w/ expiring terms will be notified” will be moved to November.
  - 3. Put a call for new VAC members in November. And notify those whose term will expire.
- D. Mayday Rally
- E. System/Industry Issues

**X. Committee Work Group Reports**

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek):
- B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)
- C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall)

**XI. Board Committee Reports**

- A. Administrative Affairs (Andrea Devers – VAC Representative)
- B. Consumer Services (Erica Beall – VAC Representative)
- C. Government & Community Relations (Jodie Agnew-Navarro – VAC Representative)
- D. Nominating (Suad Bisogno—Committee Member):
- E. Strategic Planning (Daniel Ortiz – Committee Member)

**XII. Review of Meeting Action Actions (Item Owner and Due Date)**

- A. Vendor Advisory Committee Action Log –
  - 1. Revise April 4<sup>th</sup> Minutes with revisions made by Sharon Weinberg.
  - 2. Add the reading of the civility code to the future agendas
  - 3. For April and May add “Alt Chair” to “VAC members interested in serving as chair for next fiscal year are identified”.
  - 4. December’s item about “members w/ expiring terms will be notified” will be moved to November.
  - 5. Put a call for new VAC members in November. And notify those whose term will expire.



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**XIII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting**

1. Add the reading of the civility code to the future agendas.

**XIV. Announcements / Public Input**

- A. Next Meeting: Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.
- B. Committee Attendance

**XV. Committee Work Group Information**

**A. Early Start Services (Cana Kalek)**

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Dana Kalek – [dkalek@cdikids.org](mailto:dkalek@cdikids.org)

**Next workgroup meeting: May 16, 2024 @ 9:00am (via Zoom).**

**B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)**

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Cal Enriquez – [Call.Enriquez@aveanna.com](mailto:Call.Enriquez@aveanna.com)

**Next workgroup meeting: May 7, 2024 @ 9:30am (via Zoom).**

**C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall)**

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Suad Bisogno – [Suad@irioc.org](mailto:Suad@irioc.org)

**Next workgroup meeting: May 6, 2024 @ 11:00am (via Zoom).**

**XVI. Adjournment**

Suad adjourned the meeting at 11:28 a.m.

Submitted by:

*Kimberly Visokey*

Executive Administrative Assistant

*(\* The majority of these minutes are taken from the Minutes Service submission and reviewed/edited as presented herein by NLACRC staff.*

