

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
**Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
 June 6, 2024

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

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

Michelle Heid – Legucator, Wahkie Mcgully – Minute Services – **Guests**

Other than panelists, there were 66 other attendees.

**Absent:** Katherine Carpenter, Sharon Weinberg, Lisa Williamsen

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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Suad Bisogno, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

**II. Public Input**

Public input was given.

**III. Consent Items**

A. Approval of Agenda

**M/S/C (O. Askew / A. Kopilevich)** To approve the agenda as presented.

B. Approval of Minutes from May 2nd, 2024

**Action item:** Update the meeting minutes as discussed:

- On page 5, under the Department of Developmental Services, "LR" was corrected to "LARC."

**M/S/C (J. Keshishyan / V. Mkrtchian)** To approve the Minutes presented with corrections.

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

Everything was thanked for their participation in the rallying efforts. Having faces and voices year-round with representatives would make a big difference when decisions had to be made at the state and federal levels.

**Legislative:**

The budget will be available by June 15th. There were previous discussions about opposing the model's delay. Many groups supported that there should not be a delay.

The organization's name, the California Department of Rehabilitation, was changed to Disability Works California. Marketing and the establishment of the new employment first office would drive policies for individuals with disabilities. More information will be coming.

Regarding the Department of Developmental Services, there was the Spanish translation of the Lanterman Act available. This translation will have a significant impact on the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in the Spanish-speaking community. There was a desire to translate the Lanterman Act into other languages as well in the future.

#### **Master Plan Updates:**

Committee meetings were ongoing. The next one would be held virtually and would alternate between in-person and virtual meetings.

#### **Georgetown University:**

There were evaluations of the various studies that had been done. There was an independent evaluation of the Service System Acts Program done, and one recommendation to the department grantees was to collect longer data and focus on specific areas that had the greatest likelihood of reducing disparities. Developing a universal system to collect and evaluate methodology for any of the metrics was a goal. The study had many good ideas that would be implemented during the next fiscal year. There would be workshops and focus groups with more information so that the families and clients could also participate.

#### **NLACRC Human Resources New Hires Report:**

As for May, there were 715 positions filled, and 946 were authorized to be filled. Collaboration is ongoing to make sure all the positions are filled and to ensure lower caseloads and quality care. In May, there was a hiring fair. May 29<sup>th</sup> there was an all-staff event to celebrate the 50th anniversary. There was a new Director of Human Services who had many years of experience in Human Resources. She began in May.

Cristina Preuss and Evelyn McOmie attended a graduation that had eight of their clients. It was wonderful to see how happy and encouraged the graduates were. The partners were thanked.

At the end of May, there were 36,677 consumers across the three catchment areas. Five hundred applications were processed per month.

#### **Highlight of the Month:**

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Team was highlighted. There was a team of ten. The team was originally started by two bilingual parent mentors, and currently, the team consists of two Spanish speaking Parent

and Family Support Specialists, one Outreach Language Specialist Armenian Speaking, one outreach language specialist Tagalog speaking, one outreach language specialist Farsi speaking, two outreach language specialist Spanish speaking, one LGBTQ+ specialist, and one consumer advocate. The group of individuals were conducting many outreach events and provided training and assistance to anyone who needed to learn more about the Regional Center System. They were able to partner and collaborate with many communities in the three catchment areas. They were available for any assistance.

**Special Events:**

Annual All Staff event - May 29, 2024

Vendor Fairs - AV office on 4/29/2024; SFV office on 5/7/2024 and 5/8/2024

NLACRC EXPO - Antelope Valley Embassy Suites - 5/11/2024; SFV Airtel Plaza - 5/17/24

Suad Bisogno reported that the legislation would be housed under Health and Human Services to provide more oversight over the different departments. Some advocates were upset due to the Department of Rehab not meeting all the needs of people supported, regarding employment. It was discussed that the legislators needed to sign off on it because it was not how it was written into legislation. It was important to ensure that people being served by DDS had their needs met.

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

**IFSP Training Manual:**

All Early Start staff completed the IFSP training. The target date was met. The goal was to create consistency for all staff, including onboarding staff. It was clarified that the training was issued in December 2023, as well as the training manual. The training was not intended to change the IPP process but to emphasize and highlight IPP planning and the documentation that needed to be captured. New staff were required to complete the fourth course. The training was cataloged as well. All the training materials, tools, and reference materials were available. To better prepare staff, make sure the tools are available, and have the same baseline for everyone across the board were the goals.

**Vendor Portal Update:**

NLACRC was in the process of making the vendor portal. A snapshot of how it would look was shared. There were still changes and tweaks being made, so it was still a work in progress. The portal was explained. When someone logged in, they would only have access to their cases and would be able to pull their POSs. A monthly report would be received to identify that the vendors were keeping up with their POSs. It was important for vendors to utilize the portal. The vendors would be worked with. The first

six vendors would be piloted and would be contacted to pilot the portal for 60 days and provide feedback. In addition, the portal would be rolled out in phases. All DDS information pertinent to vendors would be available on the portal. Training for service providers would be available. Forms relevant to all service providers would be available on the portal. The pilot would aim to capture as many errors initially as possible, so the community at large did not have as many issues. It was discussed that they were a target for breaches. There were benefits and consequences of having items on the portal. More than one member could be part of the vendor portal, but it was discussed that it would likely be one administrative and others assigned. There was a Paid Pilot Program discussed.

**Staff Recognition:**

Moving forward, staff would be recognized. There was a staff recognition process to highlight staff with positive feedback. There was also a plan to recognize staff at the end of calendar years.

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

The report was deferred.

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

Everyone was reminded that the DSP Training Stipend Program would be ending on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Everyone was reminded to take the training. There were \$625 stipends available. It was open to all service providers that work directly with individuals. There were criteria, and that information could be found on the website.

For the Monthly Vendor Incentive Payments, it was reminded that the requests be submitted directly to DDS to ensure that the incentive payments are received.

At the state level, they were working on a service provider directory. The project was anticipated to launch in the spring or summer, but there were no updates. Once there was information, it would be provided.

It was reminded that for those who registered for the Direct Support Professional 2023 Workforce Data Collection survey, the last date to submit was June 30. If the survey was completed, the individual was eligible for the \$8,000 incentive payment.

**HCBS Final Rule Compliance:**

As of today, 62% of service providers are in compliance. The quality assurance specialist went out to meet with providers to review the information and confirm that the HCBS compliance was being met. The deadline was August 31, 2024, and the goal was for all providers to comply by that date. There were office hours every Thursday at 2:00 pm for questions.

**Training service provider training opportunities:**

There were several person-centered thinking trainings and PCT Bootcamp focused on family. There were symposiums coming up in July and August related to community engagement and employment, and additional training. For the person-centered thinking training, there was a \$500 incentive for those who attended and completed the PCT training.

There was a self-guided learning module program through open future learning for those who are interested. The service would be going away at the end of August. David could be reached out to for more information.

ICF lag funding was extended to December 31, 2024.

They were waiting for more information on rate reform to understand how to proceed with implementation.

**Vendorization Maintenance Reminder:**

Everyone was reminded to contact contractcompliance@nlacrc for any vendorization maintenance. If there were any changes to addresses, names, or entities, rootstodevelopment@nlacrc should be emailed.

**Employment Services:**

There was an upcoming workshop on work incentives on finding an assistant and understanding SSI and SSDI. It will be held on July 17. Kye Brennan should be contacted for more information. Employment office hours were available on the second Wednesday of the month for questions related to employment.

There was a new service called coordinated career pathways, and there were requests for proposals. The request for proposal RFP closed, and the awardees were being collected. There were various RFPs currently out.

There were upcoming trainings for providers in the community. PNI training will be held on June 25. Special incident and mitigation training will be held in July. Restricted healthcare training will be held in August. More information on the training can be found on the website.

## VIII. Legislative Report – Michelle Heid

### **Legislative Update:**

The Governor's May revision was released. It reported a \$44.9 billion deficit, which was up \$7 billion from the January projections. The early action budget package included \$17.3 billion that did not impact the community. The May revision resolved the remaining \$26.7 billion deficit problem over two years. The impacts to the community included maintenance of the proposed delay of the rate reform to July 2025, decreased funding for assistance in applying for health and safety waivers, decreased funding for procuring emergency preparedness supplies, eliminated spending for the continuation of the DSP internship program, decreased funding to reflect revised service cost extensions for family coordinated support services, and increased funding for caseload utilization based on increases in eligible individuals. There was information from the May revision. Following the May revision, the joint legislative budget committee came out with their budget plan. The senate and assembly had an agreement that they came up with and published, which rejected many of the governor's proposed cuts as well as the proposed delay to the rate reform. They suggested other funding solutions with lower impacts on individuals who were receiving support. There was a lot of advocacy against delaying the provider rate increases, including the May Day rally. There was an open letter to the Governor that could be signed, and the deadline was June 6. The Lanterman Association put together an outreach kit. There were videos linked in the report and more information about the budget letter. It was requested that video messages be sent to the Governor. Information in the report about the May Day rally was available, however, the timing of the report was that it was submitted before the rally. In the report, there were summaries of the recent budget committees. On May 16 and May 20, there were hearings, and the Assembly Budget subcommittee met as well. There were summaries available in the report.

### **Legislative Calendar:**

June 15 was the deadline for passing the budget bill. The deadline for bills to move from the house of origin to the second house had passed. Any bills that moved to the second house would continue through the legislative process. On July 3, the summer recess for legislators would begin, and months would be spent in their districts. Some continued grassroots with local legislatures were being scheduled.

### **Legislative Bills:**

1281 continued to move through the process. 1147 had not moved yet, but there could be movement. 1876 was continuing through the process. 1906, which involved moving toward more respective terminology, continued to move through the process. AB-2002 could come up again in future years.

2423 involved requiring DDS to redo the rate study and update models every other year was moving through the process. Other legislative bills could be looked at in the report. The DDS directives were summarized in the report. The master plan for Developmental Services met on April 24 and May 15 and the meetings were summarized in the report. Work groups were being developed and were named in the report. There could be additional individuals added to the workgroups. There was no update on the DDS service provider directory.

**Stakeholder Events:**

The stakeholder events continued to occur. There was a Quality and Incentives workgroup meeting, a Performance Measure workgroup meeting, and a Stakeholder workgroup meeting. There was one meeting in May that was postponed. All the information was available in the report.

The state council continued to host a lot of their meetings online, including the self-advocacy chats. There were also Legislation and Public Policy Committee, the State Planning Committee, and the full Council meetings. They were partnering with the Learning Rights Center for their talks. There were two coming up in June, and information could be found in the report. There was information about a self-advocacy survey and research study being conducted in the report. ARCA was doing a pledge-to-vote campaign. There was information about local legislation events in the report. Assembly Member Jackie Irwin was having a safety fair on June 8. There were also a cocktail and conversations with Senator Scott Wilk on June 20. Assemblywoman Pilar Schiavo was having Popsicles with Pilar on June 29. Senator Menjivar was very involved with the San Fernando Valley Pride March occurring on June 29. There was also a cocktail and conversations with Pilar Schiavo on July 10.

Next week, there will likely be updates regarding what came back from the Governor's office regarding the budget. Sometimes blank budgets were passed and what was included in it would not be asked until days after it was passed. The next step was to vote on the budget, and there was still a possibility for a standstill; however, a standstill historically had not occurred. There was still the ability to line-item veto items, but the Governor historically had not executed that ability. It was highlighted that individual letters regarding the budget would also go a long way.

It was clarified that if Bill 2423 passed, trends would be examined, but providers would not necessarily be surveyed or asked for feedback. The rate models were done in 2019 and re-done. When they were updated the first time, they were only updated for mileage and minimum wage, but many other factors needed to be included.

**IX. Committee Business****A. Committee Goals for the next fiscal year**

There would be a meeting of the VAC Committee in person on June 24 at 10:00 am in North LA to discuss the goals in preparation for the August meeting. There would be an overview of Committee priorities. The August meeting would be longer than typical meetings. There were three committees: Early Start, School Age, and Adult Services. The legislator workgroup was dissolved and made a priority under the other work groups.

**Action:** Kimberly will send out the invite and a link to RSVP.

**B. In-person training meeting update**

Board Support will be sending out the calendar invite. They would also send out a request for any dietary restriction information.

**C. Mayday Rally report**

It was commented that it was wonderful to see everyone there and was nice to have the legislative support. Everyone was thanked for showing up. It was commented that it was great to see the provider committee come together.

**D. Jenny Retzinger Award Recipient**

Rebecca Lighthart was honored at the dinner. She helped deliver letters to the senator's office and was a great advocate and representation. She was thanked for all her work.

**E. Other Items**

It was highlighted that the Board had a slate of officers that had to be approved before any announcements were made. The Board meeting will be next week, and announcements will go out shortly afterward.

**X. Committee Work Group Reports**

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek):** Dana Kalek reported that they met on May 17<sup>th</sup>, and the intakes were steady. There have been approximately 400 intakes per month since February. There were discussions regarding a Quality Incentives Program that seemed to be confusing for vendors. The other issue discussed was that receiving POPlus needed to be done promptly for the vendors. There was often no way of meeting the 10 or 20-day timeline for insurance. Some vendors did use insurance and others did not, so that caused other issues. Quite a few vendors reached out to



DDS to get clarification. The other thing being worked on was being able to utilize the 116-service code. The next meeting was scheduled for July.

- B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez): Cal Enriquez discussed the coverage changes beginning in August. The main focus was to have vendors join the group. There was an ongoing genetic services workshop. A universal IPP was being developed, and if all went way, it would begin in January 2025. There were a couple of meetings coming up to revise the IPP. Some vendors in the group would be serving on the summer programs. They would be highly involved in the monthly mental health meetings that LA had. The next meeting will be held in August.
- C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall): Suad Bisogno reported that the goal was to reschedule the meeting, although the legislative efforts had taken priority. Adult Services would reconvene.

#### **XI. Board Committee Reports**

- A. Administrative Affairs (Andrea Devers – VAC Representative): Nothing to report
- B. Consumer Services (Erica Beall – VAC Representative): Nothing to report
- C. Government & Community Relations (Jodie Agnew-Navarro: VAC Representative) – There was a meeting and there would be a new Chair. There was a discussion about the goals for the next fiscal year.
- D. Nominating (Suad Bisogno—Committee Member): The slate for officers was approved and voting would occur at the next Board meeting.
- E. Strategic Planning (Daniel Ortiz – Committee Member): Nothing to report

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

- A. Vendor Advisory Committee Action Log –
  - 1. The minutes from May 2nd will be revised as per Section III. B
  - 2. Add action items to the critical calendar.
  - 3. For the company meeting, the days for the Vendor Advisory Committee needed to be looked at.

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

- A. Minutes of the May 2nd Meeting
- B. Minutes of the June 6, 2024 Meeting

**XIV. Announcements / Public Input**

- A. Next Meeting: Thursday, August 4, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.
- B. Committee Attendance was reviewed.
- C. It was clarified that changing the meeting dates would begin in September.
- D. David from Care Connect introduced himself and the company.

**Action:** Add changing the meeting dates to the agenda for the June 24 meeting.

**XV. Committee Attendance**

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

For meeting schedule and information

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

**Next workgroup meeting: TBD**

**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: July 18 at 9:00 am (via Zoom)**

**Next workgroup meeting: TBD (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: TBD (via Zoom)**

**XVI. Adjournment**

Suad adjourned the meeting at 11:16 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.*

