

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
**Consumer Services Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Virtual meeting via Zoom  
Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 6:00 p.m. PST

**Present:** Alma Rodriguez, David Coe, Rocio Sigala, Jennifer Koster, Nicholas Abrahms, Cathy Blin – **Committee Members**

Sharoll Jackson - **Vendor Advisory Committee Chair**

Lillian Martinez, Jeremy Sunderland, Ana Quiles, Tal Grinblat, Patricia Jauregui, Michelle Heid, Kimberly Bermudez, Christina Cannarella, Victoria Berrey, Angelina Martinez, Alexander Farkas - **Guests**

Evan Ingber, Ruth Janka, Michele Marra, Ana Maria Parthenis-Rivas, Cristina Preuss, Sylvia Brooks Griffin, Dr. Jesse Weller, Jennifer Williamson, Jazmin Zinnerman, Dr. Michael Fernandez, Gabriela Eshrati, Alan Darby, Liliana Windover, Lizeth Chavez – **Staff Members**

Shelley Hash - **Interpreter**  
Seth Tanner - **Minute Services**

**Absent:** Jennifer Siguenza, Gabriela Herrera, Deshawn Turner

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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

At 6:07 p.m., Cathy Blin, volunteer chair pro-tempore, called the meeting to order.

**II. Public Input**

- Christina Cannarella advocated for a support group for consumers only and for social and mental well-being checks as part of the IPP process supports.

**III.** Ana Quiles introduced James’s story in dealing with the regional center. Due to procedural checkpoints and denials due to ADHD and insufficient original evidence to support an autism diagnosis, a child was only accepted as into NLACRC in November of 2021. Over the course of eight years and over three thousand dollars, the child finally received a diagnosis, yet due to wait times, he had not received services. She encouraged the committee to seek an expedited intake process for individuals going through eligibility reevaluations at the Center. **Consent Items**

A. Approval of Agenda - Page 2

**M/S/C** (A. Rodriguez / R. Sigala) To accept the agenda as presented.

B. Approval of Minutes of the November 17 Meeting - Page 3

**M/S/C** (N. Abrahms / A. Rodriguez) To approve the November 17, 2021 minutes as presented in the packet.

#### **IV. Committee Business**

A. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Consumer Diagnostic Report – Page 9

Reports reviewed, which provide data by diagnosis, by office and quarter in a table format, and by age and diagnosis in line graph form. Percentage and numerical totals were provided for each diagnosis, office location, and age.

B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Consumer Intake Report – Page 14

Reports reviewed, data tables and line-graphs provide information regarding intake-enrollment status, Lanterman and Early Start data were both included in the tabulations. During Q2 of 2021-22, 1357 individuals were assessed in the intake process.

C. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Exceptions Report – Page 15

Exceptions to the typical processes for education services and non-medical services, environmental modifications, adaptive equipment, day-care share of cost, and supplemental supports for a-traditional settings were captured in the report. Co-pays were tracked as well. A total of 67 approved requests, 1 denial, and 1 alternative recommendation were recorded in the second quarter of FY2021-22.

**Action Item:** Dr. Weller to revise bar graph view to be revised to reflect denial case.

D. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Appeals / Notice of Actions / Hearings Report – Page 17

667 total notice-of-actions were sent with ten service-related appeals and eight eligibility-related appeals filed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021-22. 2.7% of the notice-of-actions were appealed. Appeals received from prior quarters were likewise tracked. A total of services and eligibility totals were presented in table and line graph form.

Eleven fair hearings were held during Q2 FY20-21. Data was presented with appeal type against outcome in table form. Ethnicity was tabulated by geographic location. Funding for Exceptional Minds was not vendored with NLACRC, which triggered some of the appeals. Dr. Jesse Weller identified the value of the reports in terms of identifying the disparity in services with demographics and assist in grass-roots communications to reduce disparities. Lack of contact, despite copious efforts, elevated many of the notice-of-action letters.

Depending on exact data counts, Ruth Janka reported that NLACRC's statistical composition of individuals served by ethnicity based on data available in the Purchase of Service Expenditure Data reports is between 47 and 50% Hispanic, between 8 and 9% African American, 10% other or multi-cultural, and between 24 to 28% Caucasian. It was noted that the reports are located on NLACRC's website. The statistical information was provided to the committee for context as the statistics for Notice of Actions sent by

ethnicity appears approximate, not exact, but approximate to the ethnic composition of the individuals served.

Finally, ethnicity data versus age-range and location data versus age-range were presented.

**Action Item:** Location and ethnicity compositions for those who made appeals were requested. NLACRC is not currently tracking ethnic composition of individuals filing appeals though Dr. Weller took the recommendation to drill down to disparities on that level.

E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 4731 Report - Page 24

Quarterly 4731 Complaint report reviewed; there were nine complaints included in this report, which identifies the timeline, root cause, and resolution of the complaints. Many complaints result in staff training directed toward prevention of the reoccurrence of an issue or rights violation.

F. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP) Report – Page 26

Dr. Weller provided counts for individuals at various secure treatment locations: specialized residential facilities (SRF), enhanced behavioral support homes, Canyon Springs, and Fairview, Lanterman and Sonoma (FLS) (the FLS location was no longer in operation and was to be removed). In-progress developments included Brilliant Corners Enhanced Behavioral Support Home slated for February of 2022 and a SRF in Palmdale. Elwyn Vendors had not secured a property, and another global CNC was having problems putting in offers.

G. Self-Determination Program Report (SDP) - Page 28

Currently, NLACRC has 80 persons were enrolled in the self-determination program report. Data on ethnicity for the program was charted. Counts of individuals in the various stages of the program were also listed. Ten spending plans are in process. Two individuals opted out at various stages of the program, and these individuals were reached out to connect them with, understand their experience, and provide other tools.

NLACRC is recruiting for two new bi-lingual, participant choice specialist for the Antelope Valley and San Fernando Valley. allocations toward implementation of the SDP have been awarded; new fund for the FY2021-22 were \$149,331.

A SDP support group occurred the first Wednesday of each month. The Disability United Resource Fair went well with plans to repeat the event in the Spring due to technology glitches. The local volunteer advisory committee (LVAC) met on 1/20/22 and was open to the public; all were invited. Contacts for FMS providers were shared.

For FMS not wishing to continue to service SDP, a feedback committee had been formed including Gabby Eshrati. Backup, waitlist, and staffing challenges were being addressed through reach out by various individuals from NLACRC and the LVAC. Dr. Weller stated that state-wide discussion was ongoing regarding FMS provider matters.

Rosie Sigala asked about clarifying rates to consumers and the percentages allotted to workers from the budget for various FMSs as reports had been received about different percentages.

**Action Item:** Gabby Eshrati and Dr. Weller to follow up about possible reasons for differing percentages.

H. Monthly Consumer Competitive Employment Report (Alan) - Page 31

Alan shared data tracked on competitively employed consumers between 18 and 77 years and unemployed consumers from 18-59 years old. Each had totals broken down by resident type and ethnicity. In December, 9,688 consumers were unemployed, and 2,068 were competitively employed which was 17.59% of the total consumers.

I. On Duty Specialist Call Center – Staff and Processes (Jesse)

Feedback was shared that the term “officer of the day” was too formal sounding based on information shared by community members; and therefore, NLACRC is using the terminology “On Duty Specialist Unit”. OD Specialist is a position that helps with urgent matters that crop up. These officers are classified by age-group. A pilot in San Fernando applied a supervisor to centralize the model. Recruitment for OD Specialists are actively occurring in the Antelope Valley.

Discussion was initiated on how to stream-line the OD calls, provide back-up coverage, and effectively route urgent issues. These individuals would be on the first floor to assist with walk-ins and incoming calls. Ana Quiles suggested that announcing the program would assist the community only if follow-up occurred. Cross-training was one of the goals to streamline the process.

J. Participant Directed Services – FMS Providers Update (Jesse)

Jesse Weller updated the Committee that the PowerPoint had been revised to include the vendor’s participant directed rates as well as other service code offerings and rates. Staff will revise and will seek to send to the community by Friday, January 21, 2022.

K. Project Plan for Projects that impact consumers/families - Discussion

Dr. Weller explained that projects that impacted families and consumers were to have a plan with specific timelines, objectives, and milestones for successful implementation.

Ana Quiles highlighted the purposes of this documentation as an accountability piece, the value of the communication that can be rolled out to the community about upcoming tools, and the quality assurance that comes from capturing the plan for future improvements. Examples were shared. Ruth Janka inquired about automating the process and exact data to capture. Specifically, system changes, milestone dates, benefits and outcomes, new offerings and options, and process alterations should be recorded to enable active, transparent communication with consumers.

L. Self Determination Board Liaison

Dr. Jesse Weller explained the need to select a new liaison for the Self-determination local volunteer advisory committee (LVAC) as the board member that formerly held the position, Christina Cannarella, has resigned from the board to pursue other endeavors to support the developmental disabilities services system here in NLACRC's catchment.

**M/S/C** (J. Koster / D. Coe) To appoint Rosie Sigala as liaison. The first LVAC for her was Thursday January 20, 2022.

M. Service Standard Discussion – Case Finding/Public Information/Intake Timelines – Page 33

During the process of adding provisional eligibility to the standard, feedback regarding the timeline had been received. To improve service and reduce stress to consumers, language was suggested to streamline those denied under a first application via an expedited process. Assessment was going forward to see the impact of such a change – in terms of staffing – from Lanterman's 120-day initial timeframe to a triggered 60-day exception timeline.

Ana Quiles stressed that statute provides for the committee to act in the best interest of consumers. The 60-day timeframe was a maximum, and under 60 days should be the goal where emotional, physical, or other development stresses would come about otherwise.

Dr. Jesse Weller expressed the need to ensure that the infrastructure was present to handle the increased administrative load and review the needs. Dr. Weller requested adding the review to the February agenda. Both, he and Ruth Janka indicated a commitment to assess the request and to report back findings on implementing the proposed language, while acknowledging the importance of this topic for our community.

Ana Quiles proposed the following language:

1. Add language to trigger the under 60-day flag for a consumer assessment
  - a. Returning consumers that have previously been exited should be flagged for under 60 days Intake process. (45 days similar to early start
  - b. Add reporting requirements to confirm that this is happening
2. Add language to specify that suspicions of autism should also use all available testing to determine autism (ex: site evaluation)"

Discussion revolved around the importance of expediting service in-take and the realities of operational resources. Ruth Janka reiterated support of Dr. Weller's request for time to assess operations prior to modifying the service standard to include a reduced timeline to ensure the committee does not set a standard the Center cannot operationalize. The Committee suggested moving forward with recommending/approving a service standard modification without operational testing in light of the purpose of the service standard modification would be to expedite support of families with certain circumstances in the intake process.

**M/S/C** (N. Abrahams / D. Coe) To assess the operationalization of a 45-day or <60-day timeline in intake, return with a report to committee for review in February, and then propose language for inclusion in the Center's Service Standards.

N. Diagnosis/Eligibility Training – Townhall from December 16., 2021

Leticia Garcia had previously shared that she would have liked to receive more information about the intake process via the diagnosis/eligibility training. Ana Quiles narrowed down the need to understand how the *intake* process impacts families. Discussion included the value of presenting things in a positive way: what can be done rather than what can't be done, versus the statutory language that carves out many specific exclusions. Ana Quiles shared that added accountability, transparency, and hope-driven language were needed in the intake process – after eligibility exclusion hurdles have been past.

**Action Item:** Schedule training within the Consumer Services meeting from the clinical department.

O. Board Audit: Review the center's mission, vision, and values statement to determine if the center is providing adequate guidance in establishing consumer services policy. - Page 38

Dr Weller said that the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiative and strategic planning process both were to help craft the vision, mission and values as an organization.

V. **Chief of Program Services Report** (Dr. Jesse Weller)

Dr. Weller concluded by informing members and guests about upcoming events including a TownHall on 1/20/22 at 1:30 p.m. and SuperFest (football camp). SuperFest, on Saturday February 12<sup>th</sup> at Inglewood Park, needed volunteers.

DDS received the camp, social rec, and non-medical therapies standard recommendations. The DEI policy steering committee would meet next month to create Board policy. Other support group meeting dates and topics were reviewed.

VI. **Board Meeting Agenda Items**

- A. Minutes of the January 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Consumer Diagnostic Report
- C. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Consumer Intake Report
- D. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Exceptions Report
- E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Appeals/Notice of Actions/Hearings Report
- F. 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 4731 Report

VII. **Announcements / Information Items / Public Input**

- A. Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 16, 6:00 p.m.
- B. Ruth Janka reminded the group to complete the strategic thinking surveys.

- C. Rosie Sigala shared her approval of ARCA's future planning for living options for the elderly consumers. A great pilot program was in place.
- D. Christina Cannarella suggested adding "support" to the new specialist position that would be hired. She punctuated the need to include families by saying "Consumers and families".
- E. Ana Quiles stated that a printable form of the survey was available and instrumental for some families.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Cathy Blin adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m. PST.

Submitted by:

(\*) *Liliana Windover*

Executive Administrative Assistant

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

