

**NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER (NLACRC)
9200 OAKDALE AVENUE, SUITE 100
CHATSWORTH, CALIFORNIA**

**MINUTES OF THE VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
HYBRID – ANTELOPE VALLEY OFFICE / ZOOM
MARCH 12, 2026, 9:30 A.M.**

MEMBERS:

Alex Kopilevich, Jaklen Keshishyan, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Paul Borda, Andrea Devers, Jen Pippard, Sharon Weinberg, Cal Enriquez, Jason Gillis, Tal Segalovich, David Ebrami, Ricki Macken-Chilvers,

STAFF:

Angela Pao-Johnson, Evelyn McOmie, Vini Montague, Arshalous Garlanian, Silvia Renteria-Haro, Belinda Abatesi, Lindsay Granger, Arezo Abedi

GUESTS:

ABSENT: Vahe Mkrtchian, Desiree Misrachi

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, and adequate and proper notice of the meeting having been given, VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. read the NLACRC Civility Code.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Members were asked to identify themselves when speaking or making a motion.

3. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

4. SHARE IMPACT STORY FROM INDIVIDUAL SERVED

Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson shared an impact story from Nicholas Abrahms.

5. CONSENT ITEMS

On a motion made by Sharon Weinberg, seconded by David Ebrami, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the Vendor Advisory Committee meeting held on February 12, 2026, as presented. Motion carried.

Alex Kopilevich proposed amending the agenda to add an additional item under Action Items.

Alex Kopilevich reported that 12 applications were received, with 7 candidates initially advanced to interviews. Due to some candidates withdrawing prior to interviews, the committee will review remaining qualified applicants to determine if additional candidates should be moved forward for in-person interviews.

To maintain confidentiality, applicants will continue to be identified by assigned numbers rather than names during discussions.

It was clarified that no new applications are being considered, as the submission deadline was January 15. The review will focus only on previously submitted applicants who may now be reconsidered.

On a motion made by Alex Kopilevich, seconded by Tal Segalovich, it was resolved to approve the amended the agenda. Motion carried.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Review and Approval of Updated VAC Guidelines and Procedures

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced Action Item 6: review and approval of updated Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC) guidelines and procedures. Alex Kopilevich reported that the updated guidelines were developed collaboratively with Lindsay Granger and Executive Director, Angela Pao-Johnson, to provide a clear framework for the VAC interview process, particularly as this was the first time the Committee assumed responsibility for conducting interviews.

Committee members confirmed they had reviewed the document and were given the opportunity to ask questions or propose changes. Feedback indicated that the updates accurately reflected prior discussions and expectations.

On a motion made by Ricki Macken-Chilvers, seconded by Sharon Weinberg, it was resolved to approve the updated Vendor Advisory Committee guidelines and procedures. Motion carried.

6.2 VAC Interviews Candidates

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced Action Item B to further review existing VAC applicants and determine whether to move additional candidates forward for interviews. Alex Kopilevich thanked Lindsay Granger for coordinating interviews efficiently and acknowledged Tal Segalovich and David Ebrami for serving on the interview panel.

Alex Kopilevich reported that 7 interviews were scheduled, 5 were completed, and there are 4 open positions. Discussion included consideration of additional applicants, including Applicant #7, with feedback noting limited vendor community involvement and representation already existing from the Antelope Valley.

Committee members, including Ricki Macken-Chilvers and Sharon Weinberg, expressed that the current pool of interviewed candidates was sufficient to fill the available positions. Jaklen Keshishyan confirmed that candidates moving forward represent different agencies. Tal Segalovich shared a slight preference to consider additional applicants but did not strongly advocate for further interviews. David Ebrami noted a preference to proceed with the current process.

No motion was made to invite additional applicants for interviews. As a result, the Committee will proceed with the existing candidate pool. Alex Kopilevich confirmed that the interview panel will meet to discuss all candidates and bring forward recommendations at the April VAC meeting, with voting anticipated in May.

Alex Kopilevich noted that the VAC has flexibility in filling positions, as there is no minimum requirement to fill all vacancies.

7. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 Introduction of Aging Specialist

Silvia Renteria-Haro reported that Aging Specialist Valeria Soto was unavailable due to illness and will be scheduled to present at the April meeting.

7.2 Introduction of Dental Consultant Lisa Butters-Smith

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich returned to Committee Business and reintroduced the item for the introduction of Dental Consultant Lisa Butter-Smith. Due to technical difficulties with video, Lisa Butter-Smith provided a verbal introduction.

Lisa Butter-Smith clarified that Lisa Butter-Smith serves as a dental hygienist (not a dentist) and Dental Consultant for NLACRC, with prior experience at Lanterman Regional Center and nearly one year at NLACRC. Lisa Butter-Smith explained that a primary responsibility of the role is coordinating and facilitating dental care for consumers, particularly when services are not covered by Medi-Cal or private insurance, as well as providing oral health education, preventative care training, and outreach to staff and families.

Lisa Butter-Smith reported ongoing efforts to provide trainings, including recent presentations for Children's Dental Health Month and upcoming presentations focused on autism and oral health. Lisa Butter-Smith also noted outreach to residential homes to address challenges in maintaining oral hygiene for individuals with complex needs and highlighted the use of RDHAP providers who can deliver in-home dental hygiene services.

In response to questions, Lisa Butter-Smith explained that consumers should typically work through their service coordinator to access dental support, though direct contact may be appropriate in certain circumstances. Sharon Weinberg raised concerns regarding limited access to dental providers, particularly for individuals requiring anesthesia, long wait times, and lack of trained providers. Lisa Butter-Smith acknowledged these challenges and noted that while access can be difficult, multiple vendored providers are available and a list can be shared upon request. Lisa Butter-Smith also discussed systemic challenges, including potential Medi-Cal reimbursement changes that may impact provider participation and availability.

Lisa Butter-Smith offered to provide a list of vendored dental providers with anesthesia capabilities to interested members.

7.3 2026 Jynny Retzinger Community Service Award Nominations

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced the 2026 Jenny Retzinger Community Service Award nominations and invited Chris Whitlock to provide an update. Chris Whitlock reported that nominations closed on March 1. Chris Whitlock shared that the Board will vote on the award recipient in April or May, and the award will be presented at the Legislative Breakfast in June.

No questions were raised following the update.

7.4 Self-Determination Update

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced the Self-Determination Program update and invited Silvia Renteria-Haro to present. Silvia Renteria-Haro reported that as of March 1, there are 730 participants in the program, with 22 transitions in March and 60 total transitions in 2026 to date.

Silvia Renteria-Haro explained that transition timelines vary depending on factors such as availability of independent facilitators and family needs, with approximately three months being the shortest typical timeframe and some cases taking six months or longer.

In response to a question from Alex Kopilevich, Silvia Renteria-Haro clarified that assessments are funded through the traditional service model during the enrollment process, and through the Financial Management Service (FMS) once a participant is enrolled, unless the Regional Center requires the assessment, in which case traditional funding may still apply.

Jen Pippard inquired about factors driving participation in the program. Silvia Renteria-Haro reported that participation is evenly distributed across age groups and is largely driven by families seeking more individualized services, particularly when traditional services do not meet their needs. Silvia Renteria-Haro also noted that some participants choose to exit the program or return to traditional services based on their experiences.

No further questions were raised.

8. REPORT OUTS

8.1 Deputy Director Officer's Report

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced the Deputy Director's Report and invited Evelyn McOmie to present. Evelyn McOmie provided a detailed update on upcoming changes to Special Incident Report (SIR) regulations, noting that revised requirements will take effect on May 1 and will directly impact vendors. Evelyn McOmie shared that DDS is offering two virtual trainings for vendors, providers, and direct support professionals on March 24 (1:00–2:30 p.m.) and April 1 (9:30–11:00 a.m.). These trainings will include an overview of the updated SIR regulations as well as a review of Regional Center SIR reporting guidelines. Registration information is being distributed via email to designated provider contacts, posted on the NLACRC website, and shared in the meeting chat. Evelyn McOmie noted that some attendees may not receive the email if they are not listed as the primary contact and encouraged providers to check internally within their organizations. Evelyn McOmie also confirmed that additional NLACRC-hosted trainings will be offered prior to the May 1 implementation date.

Evelyn McOmie encouraged committee members and providers to support outreach efforts to increase participation in the DDS Individual Program Plan (IPP) survey. Evelyn McOmie reported that NLACRC's response rate increased to 9% in January, up from under 2% the previous month, with February data still pending. Evelyn McOmie emphasized the importance of completing the survey included with the IPP signature form.

Evelyn McOmie provided an update on caseload and staffing efforts, reporting that three new case management units have been approved, totaling 36 new positions, including 3 supervisors and 33 service coordinators distributed across service areas based on age group needs. Evelyn McOmie reported that 3 service coordinators have been hired to date and that recruitment is ongoing for both service coordinators and supervisory roles. Evelyn McOmie

noted that supervisor candidates must have prior management experience and experience working with the Regional Center population.

Evelyn McOmie also provided an update on vendor program tours, noting that new staff continue to participate in site visits as part of onboarding and training to better understand the range of services provided. Vendors interested in hosting tours were encouraged to contact Community Services Director Arshalous Garlanian, with contact information shared in the chat.

In response to a question from Sharon Weinberg regarding whether the DDS training would differ from a recent NLACRC-hosted SIR training, Evelyn McOmie explained that while there may be overlap in content, the DDS training will include regulatory guidance, examples, and an opportunity for providers to ask questions directly to DDS. Evelyn McOmie reiterated that NLACRC trainings are aligned with DDS guidance and that at least one additional training will be offered prior to implementation.

No additional questions were raised.

8.2 Chief Financial Officer's Report

Vini Montague, Chief Financial Officer, presented the financial statement for service month December 2025. Vini Montague reported that NLACRC's allocation was approximately \$1.35 billion, with monthly expenditures averaging about \$110 million. Year-to-date expenditures totaled approximately \$627.9 million, and the projected year-end shortfall at that time was \$69 million. Vini Montague further reported that DDS later issued an additional Purchase of Services allocation of \$58.5 million, reducing the purchases of services deficit to approximately \$11.5 million. Vini Montague also reported that Fiscal Year 2024 billing has officially closed, with February 6 serving as the final billing deadline, and DDS is currently completing the closeout process.

Vini Montague then provided an update on the transition of representative payee services to FACT for consumers in residential placement. Vini Montague reported that all final representative payee accounts have now been transitioned to FACT, although Social Security has not yet completed all payee changes. NLACRC continues to monitor the status of those applications and is working to close out remaining trust account balances. Vini Montague explained that FACT is the representative payee provider for consumers in residential placement going forward.

Vini Montague next provided an update on the accounting department's help ticket system. Vini Montague reported that prior licensing issues have been resolved and that the accounting department now has the licenses needed to implement the system. The help ticket system is intended to centralize vendor payment and accounting issues, improve tracking of communications and resolutions, give supervisors visibility into open issues, and support more timely responses. Staff training is currently underway, and once training is complete, providers will be given instructions on how to submit tickets. Vini Montague noted that the goal is to centralize the process within one department and improve customer service for providers.

During questions and discussion, Sharon Weinberg raised concerns regarding communication and coordination with residential providers during the representative payee transition process, particularly when consent, consumer capacity, and provider operational needs are involved. Sharon Weinberg asked how consumers are informed about remaining monies in trust accounts, whether consumers are consulted regarding what should be done with those funds, and how NLACRC differentiates between Social Security funds and stimulus funds. Sharon Weinberg also noted that some residential providers have not been informed when referrals

to FACT were made, despite their close involvement in consumers' financial and service coordination.

In response, Vini Montague clarified that consumer consent is required before transitioning representative payee services to FACT. Vini Montague explained that Service Coordinators are responsible for discussing the transition with the consumer and obtaining consent. If a consumer does not want FACT to serve as representative payee, the consumer may identify another trusted person within their support circle, such as a parent or other trusted individual, but not another Purchase of Services provider. Vini Montague acknowledged that residential facilities should have been notified and stated that follow-up would occur regarding case management communication and provider inclusion in the process.

Sharon Weinberg further emphasized that residential providers often have internal procedures and ongoing responsibility for coordinating board and care, personal and incidental expenses, and other financial matters, and therefore should be included in discussions when representative payee arrangements are changing. Sharon Weinberg noted that providers often know the consumer well and can help facilitate communication among the consumer, family, and Service Coordinator. Vini Montague acknowledged that concern and agreed to follow up on the process.

Vini Montague then clarified that FACT is currently the only authorized representative payee provider for individuals in residential placement, although consumers may still choose another trusted individual instead. Vini Montague explained that once a transition to FACT is initiated, FACT applies to Social Security to become the representative payee. During the period while FACT's application is pending, NLACRC continues to loan and pay personal and incidental expenses and share of cost so there is no disruption to residential providers.

Vini Montague next addressed Sharon Weinberg's question regarding the remaining monies in trust accounts and explained that those accounts may contain both Social Security funds and stimulus funds, which must be handled differently. Vini Montague stated that Social Security funds must be returned to Social Security once payeeship changes, as required by Social Security, except in rare circumstances. Vini Montague explained that stimulus funds are different because they are not Social Security funds and are not covered by representative payee authority. Based on guidance from Disability Rights and legal counsel, those stimulus funds should not be forwarded to the next representative payee. Instead, NLACRC retains those funds and works with Service Coordinators to notify consumers that the funds remain available and to coordinate with the consumer and residential facility on how to appropriately spend down the balance. Vini Montague added that if the Service Coordinator determines through the IPP process that a consumer is able to manage funds independently, those remaining funds may be released directly to the consumer.

Vini Montague further explained that once FACT begins receiving Social Security payments, FACT is notified of the amount NLACRC loaned for share of cost and personal and incidental expenses while the application was pending. Because FACT should receive a retroactive payment from Social Security, FACT then forwards that retroactive amount to NLACRC to repay those interim loans. After that reconciliation occurs, NLACRC closes the account by returning any remaining Social Security balance to Social Security.

Sharon Weinberg reiterated the importance of including residential providers in these discussions, noting that providers often have a long history with the individuals they serve and may be better positioned than a newly assigned Service Coordinator to help assess whether a consumer can safely and appropriately manage their own funds. Sharon Weinberg also stated that, in Sharon Weinberg's experience, Social Security does not always effectively confirm representative payee changes with consumers in residential settings, particularly when individuals have significant impairments or may not understand the outreach. Sharon

Weinberg recommended a more collaborative, team-based approach. Vini Montague acknowledged the feedback and agreed on the importance of improving communication and coordination with facilities.

Alex Kopilevich then raised separate questions regarding possible e-billing discrepancies. Alex Kopilevich noted a small increase in the reimbursement rate for Adaptive Skills 605 without prior notice and asked whether it reflected a system error or an actual rate adjustment. Alex Kopilevich also reported a discrepancy in which February reimbursement appeared lower than the amount originally billed by approximately 57 hours, despite no visible deductions or discrepancies in the CSV reconciliation and despite unsuccessful follow-up with the temporary staff person handling the file. Vini Montague stated that she was not aware of the rate issue and would look into both concerns. Vini Montague also noted that DDS had previously resolved a brief e-billing login issue and said that problem should not have caused payment discrepancies.

Additional providers then reported similar experiences. Ricki Macken-Chilvers commented that unusual e-billing irregularities do occasionally occur and described instances where entries appeared inconsistent in the system. Jaklen Keshishyan stated that some rates appeared higher for certain consumers but not others. Paul Borda also reported seeing cases in which the e-billing rate was higher than the contracted rate, suggesting that the issue may be more widespread.

In response to a question from Ricki Macken-Chilvers about how providers should report the issue, Vini Montague asked providers to submit screenshots and supporting documentation to Accounts Payable Supervisor Robert Gann and Controller Justice Agonoy using the contact information listed on the NLACRC website. Vini Montague explained that because DDS owns the e-billing system used by all 21 regional centers, NLACRC will collect provider documentation and submit the information to DDS so the issues can be reviewed and addressed.

8.3 Community Services Director's Report

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced the Community Services Director's Report, presented by Arshalous Garlanian.

Arshalous Garlanian began by addressing provider questions regarding recent e-billing rate increases. Arshalous Garlanian clarified that effective January 1, 2026, a statewide minimum wage adjustment resulted in corresponding rate increases for providers. The increases vary depending on service type and provider, with some seeing minimal adjustments and others seeing increases up to approximately \$0.25 per unit. Arshalous Garlanian explained that while providers are only now seeing these changes reflected in March billing, the increases are being applied retroactively to January. Arshalous Garlanian noted that notification letters began distribution in late February and are still being sent due to the volume of approximately 1,000 vendors.

Arshalous Garlanian provided an update on workforce development efforts, highlighting the DSP Collaborative Job Fair held on March 5 in partnership with seven Los Angeles County Regional Centers. Approximately 100 vendors participated as exhibitors. The event was broadly promoted, including outreach through KTLA, and aimed to connect providers with potential employees. While attendance numbers for job seekers were not formally tracked, the event was described as well-attended and successful. Two additional job fairs are planned for later in the year (late spring/early summer and fall), with details to be shared at future VAC meetings.

Arshalous Garlanian reported that registration for the North LA Spring Vendor Fair has closed with a high level of interest exceeding available space. To address this, NLACRC will develop and distribute a provider directory including those unable to attend, ensuring service coordinators still have access to information about those vendors during the event.

Arshalous Garlanian provided an update on Quality Incentive Program (QIP) Wave 1 one-time lump sum payments. NLACRC has now received final direction and provider lists from DDS and will begin issuing payments and corresponding notifications in the coming weeks to providers who qualified.

Arshalous Garlanian reminded providers of the upcoming Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) in-person training hosted by DDS on March 25 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Chatsworth office. Arshalous Garlanian emphasized that EVV registration is a current requirement for QIP eligibility and noted that while current expectations focus on registration, future QIP phases will likely require active use of the EVV system. Providers were strongly encouraged to attend the training to better understand system requirements and ask questions directly to DDS representatives.

Arshalous Garlanian announced that the Housing Access Services Request for Proposals (RFP) has been reposted and will remain open through the end of the month, providing additional opportunity for interested providers to apply.

Arshalous Garlanian shared a recent DDS directive regarding Behavior Day Programs. Due to statewide challenges in recruiting Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), DDS will allow additional time for providers to meet staffing requirements. Providers will not be subject to audit findings related to BCBA staffing prior to March 1, 2027. Additionally, the directive permits up to 50% of services to be delivered remotely, provided documentation supports that the remote option was chosen by the individual or family and appropriately reflected in service planning.

Arshalous Garlanian provided an update on QIP survey completion and compliance tracking. The deadline for survey submission was February 28. DDS is currently conducting direct outreach throughout March to providers who submitted support tickets prior to the deadline. Providers who did not complete the survey or contact DDS are ineligible for Fiscal Year 2026–2027 QIP incentive payments. DDS is also reviewing compliance data related to HCBS settings, EVV registration, and independent audits. Arshalous Garlanian reported that NLACRC is currently at 100% HCBS compliance, with a small number of providers still being followed up with regarding EVV and audit requirements. DDS is expected to notify regional centers by April regarding which providers are eligible for QIP incentive payments beginning July 2026.

During the discussion, Sharon Weinberg asked about the timing of the next DDS audit. Chief Financial Officer Vini Montague responded that DDS has initiated the Fiscal Year 2025 audit process. Vini Montague stated that an audit entrance meeting is scheduled in the coming weeks and that NLACRC has begun providing pre-audit documentation for sample selection. The audit is expected to begin shortly and continue over the next several months.

Jason Gillis asked whether the Behavior Day Program directive had been formally published. Arshalous Garlanian confirmed that NLACRC received the directive and will distribute it to providers, noting that there may be a delay before it appears publicly on the DDS website.

9.1 Legislative Report

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced the Legislative Report, and Belinda Abatesi provided updates on recent advocacy efforts and legislative activity.

Belinda Abatesi reported that NLACRC participated in ARCA Grassroots in Sacramento alongside other regional centers across California. The delegation, which included Board members Juan Hernandez and Jeremy Sunderland, as well as staff Angela Pao-Johnson, Chris Whitlock, Lindsay Granger, and Belinda Abatesi, held nine meetings with legislative offices within the catchment area. Belinda Abatesi also acknowledged Jodi for participating as both a vendor and parent advocate.

Belinda Abatesi shared that advocacy efforts focused on several key priorities, including AB 2324, which would create pathways for high school youth caregivers to receive academic credit and training toward careers as direct support professionals, and AB 1670, which would allow dental providers to be reimbursed for behavior management services as a standalone service for individuals with disabilities. Additional advocacy priorities included stabilizing regional center funding to ensure adequate staffing, resources, and provider rate protection, as well as supporting a resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of California's first regional centers.

Belinda Abatesi provided updates on additional legislation relevant to the community. SB 1052 focuses on future planning supports to ensure continuity of services for individuals with developmental disabilities if a primary caregiver is no longer able to provide support. The bill would also allow for the designation of a backup authorized representative in advance. AB 1900 proposes the establishment of a statewide single-payer healthcare system (CalCare), which would include comprehensive coverage such as medical, dental, vision, prescription, and long-term supports.

At the federal level, Belinda Abatesi highlighted HR 1, signed into law on July 4, 2025, which impacts CalFresh (SNAP) eligibility. Beginning April 1, certain non-citizen groups may lose eligibility, though individuals currently receiving benefits may continue until their renewal if otherwise eligible. Changes in immigration status must be reported with verification.

Belinda Abatesi also shared information about the Lanterman Coalition's "Keeping California's Promise" candidate interview series, candidate interview series, a nonpartisan effort focused on disability rights and the Lanterman Act. The next interview is scheduled for March 25 at 11:30 a.m., and prior interviews are available online.

Belinda Abatesi encouraged members to review upcoming events and key legislative dates listed in the meeting materials. Belinda Abatesi noted that the bill introduction deadline was February 20 and that NLACRC will begin tracking legislation once ARCA releases its official bill list, with updates to be shared with the committee.

Finally, Belinda Abatesi introduced the Lanterman Coalition Action Form as a new advocacy tool that allows individuals to sign up for alerts and stay informed on legislative and advocacy efforts.

No questions were raised following the report.

9.2 Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Angela Pao-Johnson reported that NLACRC plans to begin posting at least weekly social media updates to help engage the community in legislative advocacy and inform individuals and families about ways to participate in current issues affecting the community.

Angela Pao-Johnson highlighted the continued success of the organization's all-staff forums, which are held across all three offices, with two sessions at the San Fernando Valley office due to staff size. Angela Pao-Johnson explained that these meetings provide updates on

organizational initiatives, legislative developments, and issues affecting the vendor community, while also creating space for staff feedback and discussion. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that the forums have supported transparency, accountability, and alignment across the organization and have consistently received staff ratings of 4 out of 5. Angela Pao-Johnson stated that these forums will continue on a quarterly basis.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided a department update on grievance procedures, noting that implementation of new grievance requirements has been delayed. The federal enforcement date has now been moved to late December 2027. Angela Pao-Johnson explained that DDS is considering implementing a centralized grievance intake process as early as November 2026, with complaints routed first to DDS and then to the appropriate regional center, in order to allow more time for training and process refinement before the final federal deadline.

Angela Pao-Johnson also reported that proposed federal HIPAA changes strengthening privacy and security requirements are expected to begin in May. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that DDS is reviewing the possible implications for regional centers and vendors and will share additional information when available.

Angela Pao-Johnson briefly referenced the Quality Incentive Program update and noted that approximately 75% of providers completed the required process, with additional providers still pending review due to submitted support requests.

Angela Pao-Johnson reported that the hold harmless rate period ended at the close of February and that standardized rate billing began March 1. Angela Pao-Johnson also stated that DDS identified errors in the Level 7 residential facility rate algorithm, which may result in higher provider rates and possible retroactive adjustments.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided a Self-Determination Program update, noting that DDS is conducting webinars during the required 45-day public comment period for proposed changes. Angela Pao-Johnson stated that proposed updates include having the State Council on Developmental Disabilities serve as the sole provider of SDP orientation and reviewing Financial Management Services standards and procedures to improve fiscal responsibility and standardize reporting. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that some smaller Financial Management Services providers have expressed concern that the standardization may be costly.

Angela Pao-Johnson then reviewed special contract language reporting, including caseload ratio updates. Angela Pao-Johnson explained that the DDS reporting format does not always reflect staff's day-to-day caseload reality, but noted that NLACRC has made significant gains in reported caseload ratios since March 2024. Angela Pao-Johnson stated that current reported ratios are approximately 1:59 for ages 0–5, 1:78 for Medicaid waiver, and 1:78 for all others. Angela Pao-Johnson also reviewed actual departmental caseload averages, reporting approximately 1:71 in Adult Services, 1:74 in Transition Services, 1:95 in School Age, 1:45 in Early Start, 1:66 in Provisional Eligibility, and 1:43 in Enhanced Caseload Ratio. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that some school-age caseloads remain over 100 and are being prioritized for reduction as additional staff are hired. Angela Pao-Johnson added that maintaining caseload ratios continues to be challenging across the regional center system due in part to underfunding.

Angela Pao-Johnson also reviewed IPP survey performance under the special contract language. Angela Pao-Johnson reported that NLACRC's current response rate is 2.19% of completed IPPs, compared to the 15% target, though this was noted to be among the higher response rates statewide. Angela Pao-Johnson stated that the survey includes only five questions and takes about two minutes to complete. Angela Pao-Johnson reviewed satisfaction data, noting that NLACRC's overall satisfaction rate is 81.4%, compared to a statewide average of 84%. Specific results included 88% for service coordinators listening to

family priorities, 84% for satisfaction with available providers, 72% for communicating Self-Determination Program information, 72% for ease of understanding information provided, and 91% for respectful treatment by service coordinators. Angela Pao-Johnson noted that lower scores may be tied in part to staffing and caseload challenges, and expressed hope that scores will improve as hiring continues.

During discussion, it was clarified that the IPP survey QR code is available at the meeting itself on the signature page and is not specific to an individual family. Angela Pao-Johnson encouraged vendors to help remind families to complete the survey during meetings when appropriate. Angela Pao-Johnson also noted that NLACRC is considering adding survey reminders to its newsletter and may begin sharing the newsletter with the vendor community as an additional outreach tool.

Angela Pao-Johnson reported that NLACRC currently has 956 filled positions and is serving more than 41,600 individuals. Angela Pao-Johnson also shared that the Quality Assurance Department conducted 133 residential site visits, including 58 unannounced visits, and issued 4 corrective action plans.

Angela Pao-Johnson provided a Social Recreation update, reporting that approximately 4,600 consumers have been served and that there are about 8,700 active authorizations since the program began. Angela Pao-Johnson stated that reimbursement turnaround times have improved significantly and are currently about two weeks for complete applications submitted with all required documentation. Angela Pao-Johnson also noted that outreach efforts continue through support groups, service coordinator training, and short Parent University videos posted on the website to help families learn about available services.

Angela Pao-Johnson closed by noting continued legislative outreach efforts, including plans to present an ARCA award locally to Assemblymember Lackey and sharing that Assemblymember Carrillo has agreed to participate in an NLACRC podcast. No questions were raised following the report.

10. OPEN DISCUSSION TOPICS

10.1 Vendor Fair – SFV & AV

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich shared an update on upcoming vendor fairs and noted that providers should begin receiving confirmation emails regarding selected dates. Alex Kopilevich reported that some notifications had already been sent and encouraged members to watch for communications regarding their registration status.

Alex Kopilevich also announced two additional upcoming fairs at the career technical centers: the Miller Fair on March 24 and the Leichman Fair on April 22. It was noted that some providers selected for multiple events may have overlapping commitments on the same day.

During discussion, a committee member asked whether a waitlist email applied to both the San Fernando Valley and Antelope Valley vendor fairs or only to the fair for which that individual had personally registered. Staff indicated that the waitlist likely applied only to the San Fernando Valley fair but agreed to confirm and follow up.

David Ebrami raised a separate question regarding independent audits and difficulty locating available accounting firms. In response, Vini Montague clarified that the audit must be completed by a licensed Certified Public Accountant and noted that NLACRC does not maintain a recommended provider list. Vini Montague advised vendors to verify CPA licensure through the appropriate licensing board before proceeding.

No additional questions or comments were raised.

11. COMMITTEE WORK GROUP INFORMATION

11.1 Early Start Services

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced Committee Workgroup updates and invited Jodie Agnew-Navarro to provide an update on the Early Start Services Workgroup. Jodie Agnew-Navarro reported that the next workgroup meeting is scheduled for the following Thursday at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. Jodie Agnew-Navarro noted that the group meets every other month and did not meet the previous month. Interested participants were encouraged to contact Jodie Agnew-Navarro for meeting details.

11.2 School Age Services

Alex Kopilevich introduced the School-Age Services report. Jodie Agnew-Navarro noted that information on the School Age Services work group meeting had been shared in the chat, and Tal Segalovich offered to provide a brief update.

Tal Segalovich reported that School-Age Unit Supervisor Jessica Ross attended the meeting and provided valuable insights, particularly regarding communication with the accounting department. The discussion focused on improving processes for obtaining clarification on authorizations and billing-related issues.

Tal Segalovich also shared that accounting representatives are assigned based on the first letter of an organization's name, and that connecting with the appropriate representative can help resolve issues more efficiently. He noted that this approach has been helpful in addressing questions and improving coordination between providers, service coordinators, and accounting.

No further updates were provided.

11.3 Adult Services

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced the Adult Services Workgroup update, and Octavia Watkins provided an update on upcoming activities. Octavia Watkins reported that the next Adult Services Workgroup meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16 at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Octavia Watkins noted that the group did not meet in February due to its bi-monthly schedule.

Octavia Watkins shared that the upcoming meeting will include presentations from Katie Warden, Housing Specialist at NLACRC, and Kimberly Johnson McNeil, Resource Development Supervisor, who will provide updates on housing resources, upcoming RFPs, and related opportunities. Octavia Watkins invited interested participants to attend and reach out directly for additional meeting information.

No questions or comments were raised.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

12.1 Executive Finance Committee

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich introduced the Executive Finance Committee report, and Jaklen Keshishyan provided an update from the February 26 meeting.

Jaklen Keshishyan reported that the Committee received a classification update from Sheila King regarding the Consumer Services Supervisor position, including distinctions between bachelor's and master's level roles. The Committee also reviewed financial updates, including approximately \$1.8 million in expenditures for the Paid Internship Program (PIP), which supports individuals served in gaining work experience and employment opportunities.

Jaklen Keshishyan shared that the Committee discussed Board member participation in reviewing budgets and program funding, including support for VAC-related activities. Additional updates included real estate discussions related to the Oakdale office, with plans to retain the current location.

Jaklen Keshishyan reported that staff forums were reviewed, with feedback indicating a 4 out of 5 rating for transparency, reflecting positively on organizational communication. The Committee also reviewed outstanding authorizations, noting an increase in reporting, which was described as a positive development reflecting improved tracking, visibility, and follow-through.

Jaklen Keshishyan announced that the next Executive Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for March 26 at 5:00 p.m. No questions were raised.

12.2 Nominating Committee

VAC Chair Alex Kopilevich provided an update on the Nominating Committee, reporting that the Committee met on March 4. Alex Kopilevich shared that discussion focused on reviewing applicants for the Board of Trustees and organizing candidate tracking. The Committee also began initial discussions regarding upcoming officer positions, including roles such as Secretary, as part of succession planning.

Alex Kopilevich reported that the next Nominating Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 1.

13. BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

There were no board meeting agenda items.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC INPUT

Ricki Macken-Chilvers provided comments highlighting the role of CDSA (California Disability Services Association) as an advocacy organization supporting service providers. Ricki Macken-Chilvers emphasized CDSA's collaboration with regional centers and Association of Regional Center Agencies in addressing key issues impacting the vendor community. As an example, she referenced advocacy efforts related to the BCBA requirement, noting that data and research—such as the shortage of qualified BCBA's in California—were instrumental in informing discussions with DDS. Ricki Macken-Chilvers encouraged vendors to consider supporting organizations like CDSA through membership, as it enables continued advocacy on behalf of providers.

Angela Pao-Johnson added to the discussion by reinforcing that advocacy efforts around stabilizing regional center funding also include support for service providers. Angela Pao-Johnson referenced ongoing legislative efforts, including AB 2324, which requires DDS to conduct a rate study to assess potential funding disparities. She noted that while the study is required, funding to address identified gaps is not guaranteed, and continued advocacy is needed. Angela Pao-Johnson emphasized that efforts to improve regional center funding and revise the core staffing formula are closely aligned with the needs of service providers, highlighting the interconnected nature of regional centers and the vendor community.

No additional public comments were received.

15. NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Vendor Advisory Committee meeting is on April 9, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at the Chatsworth office.

16. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion duly made and carried, it was agreed that there was no further business to transact; the meeting closed at 11:32 a.m.