

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2012

Present: Lawrence Burton, Bob Erio, Michelle Heid, Jonathan Istrin, Pam Jordan, Ken Lane, Rebecca Lienhard, Jenni Moran, Scott Shepard, Wayne Tashjian, Salisa Wagner, and Gay Wane - Committee Members
Diane Ambrose, Jennifer Kaiser, Anna Polin, and Joan Watson-Patko - Staff Members
Kathleen Sturkey, Chris Bratzel, Maribel Galvan, Rhonda Bunnin, Cyndi McAuley, Dolores Wright, Andrews Day, Lisa Lee, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Jorge Flores, Debra Donovan, Anthony Jenkins, Helen Sherman Wade, Fredlyn Berger, Dana Kalek, Dan Merrell, and David Spies - Guests

Absent: Rick Clemens, Sienna Greener-Wooten, Roy Jensen, and Asilia “Dolly” Wauls

I. Call to Order & Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Jenni Moran, chair, at 9:38 a.m. Everyone present was introduced. Jenni welcomed new member Michele Heid to the VAC. She also thanked Bob Erio for chairing the VAC meeting last month in her absence.

II. Public Input - There was no public input.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Items V.B. and V.D. were deferred to next month’s meeting.

M/S/C (L. Burton/R. Lienhard) To approve the agenda as modified.

B. Approval of Minutes from August 2nd VAC Meeting

M/S/C (G. Wane/W. Tashjian) To approve the minutes as presented.

IV. Director’s Report (Diane Ambrose for George Stevens)

- A. Update on George: George had surgery on Tuesday morning and it went well. He will remain in the hospital for several days and will then be recuperating at home from 6 to 8 weeks. Diane is in charge while George is away.
- B. Medi-Cal Integrity Form (DS 1891): Certain providers must complete this form and submit it to NLACRC. Providers must list the names of all of their staff, at management level and above. The names that are submitted will be compared with names on state and federal lists that have the names of individuals who are prohibited from any involvement with Medi-Cal. The center has contracted with an agency that will check the names against these lists and let the center know the outcome. If any of the names submitted shows up on one of the prohibition lists, that individual will have to be removed from the provider's agency or it will cause problems with their vendorization.
- C. Trailer Bill Language Implementation:
- SB 946** (Insurance coverage for autism-related treatments): The center has sent letters to families asking them to contact their health care provider to request coverage. Service coordinators will follow-up with as many as 3 phone calls. Families who refuse to contact their health care provider will be sent a Notice of Action. The goal is that by the end of September, all families who should be using their insurance, will be. So far, we have 1,100 families on board and only 2 Notices of Action have had to be sent. The center will cover co-payments for those families who can demonstrate that they could not afford the service if they had to pay the co-payment themselves. We do not anticipate any families experiencing a gap in their service; this should be a seamless transition.

Action: VAC members should let families know that if they have any questions regarding insurance coverage for autism-related services, that they should contact their service coordinator. If their service coordinator does not have an answer for them, they should contact their service coordinator's supervisor and Diane Ambrose should be contacted with the name of the service coordinator (dambrose@nlacrc.org) so that the service coordinator can be re-trained.
 - Prevention Program:** The center's prevention program was discontinued on June 30, 2012. All eligible children have been referred to the family focus resource center for services.

3. **Supported Living Services (SLS):** Last fiscal year, trailer bill language required regional centers to conduct individual assessment on our consumers who used SLS. We got started on getting those done and this fiscal year the law changed. The new law does away with the individualized assessments and now requires service coordinators to review the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS's) SLS questionnaire at least quarterly. This is a huge workload issue for our service coordinators.
4. **Conflict of Interest:** DDS has released their new conflict of interest forms which regional center board and staff members will be required to sign on an annual basis. As our board and staff have already signed NLACRC's conflict of interest forms for this fiscal year, we will not be using DDS's form until next fiscal year.
5. **E-Mail Encryption:** Starting September 1st, any outgoing NLACRC e-mail messages that contain sensitive/confidential information will be encrypted and the receiver will have to open them with their e-mail address and password. Unfortunately, the new program is encrypting all of the center's outgoing e-mail messages and our Information/Technology department is working to resolve that problem. An e-mail "blast" was sent out regarding the new e-mail encryption process to those individuals who have signed up on NLACRC's website to receive e-mail blasts. Several VAC members did not understand how to open encrypted e-mail and how are they going to know how if the explanation comes to them in an encrypted e-mail message?

Action: Diane Ambrose will make sure information is posted on NLACRC's website on how to open the center's encrypted e-mail messages.

A question was raised as to whether or not providers should begin encrypting their outgoing e-mail messages. Diane suggested that they contact their legal counsel for advice.

6. **Whistleblower Complaint:** The center received a whistleblower complaint alleging that many of the center's infant development programs were hiring sub-contractors to provide direct services. After investigating this complaint, we found out that about 30% of our infant development programs were, in fact, hiring subcontractors. This is a violation of Title 17 regulations. The center will be scheduling a meeting with its infant development program providers next month to work with them on resolving this issue and to bring them into compliance.

7. **Annual Statements:** The center will be sending statements to families in November which list the services they were to have received last fiscal year and the cost of those services.
 8. **NLACRC's Budget:** The center has not received its initial D-1 allocation from DDS, who continues to tell us that we will receive it "next week." This is problematic for us because we still have a projected deficit in our purchase of service (POS) budget of \$3.4 million from last fiscal year and until we have our D-1 allocation, we will not know what our financial projections will be for this fiscal year. In addition, we have concerns regarding the \$50 million trigger that is looming.
 9. **Intermediate Care Facility/State Plan Amendment (ICF/SPA):** The ICF/SPA is a new way of billing which requires our ICF providers to reimburse the center once they are paid. Unfortunately, our ICF providers have not repaid us in a timely manner. This is generating a running deficit for us of about \$700,000 per month (over \$8 million per year). To address this problem, we are asking for DDS's approval to offset their Medi-Cal payments when they do not pay the center within the 30-day deadline.
- D. Staffing: We have several supervisors who have left the agency and several more who are currently on some type of leave. Maria Bosch, from our community services department, accepted the position of director of the Southern CA Independent Health & Living Project, which assists many of the southern CA regional centers with resource development for consumers leaving Lanterman Developmental Center. It is our hope that Maria will return to her former position here at the center once Lanterman has closed. We also lost Debbie Rasmussen, our nurse, who took the position of nursing director for United Cerebral Palsy. Plus, both George Stevens and Dr. Carlo DeAntonio are currently on medical leave for at least the next month.
- E. "Out of Community" Travel: The center has been struggling with this issue for many years: consumers who leave the state or country with their ILS or SLS instructor or with their group home provider. We are very concerned about this because if a problem arises, they are too far away for us to help them. Providers are also at risk in these situations. There is nothing specific in regulation that addresses this, however our corporate counsel suggests that we develop a policy on "out of community" travel which would only be allowed in certain situations. Scott and Rebecca both expressed concern that rather than focusing on agency risk that the center focus on client's right to travel and to just put parameters in place for providers to follow when a consumer is going

to be traveling out of the area. Diane added that any consumer travel plans should be included in their Individual Program Plan (IPP).

V. Brief Committee Business

- A. Presentations for the NLACRC Board of Trustees: Last year, the board asked if the VAC would provide them with 4 presentations on their programs during the fiscal year. They were given presentations by Jenni Moran, Rick Clemens, Scott Shepard, and Ken Lane. The board is making the same request for this fiscal year.

Action: The following VAC members volunteered to give presentations on their programs on the following board meeting dates:

1. Wednesday, November 15th, at 6:30 p.m. (Van Nuys) - Lawrence Burton
2. Wednesday, January 9th, at 6:30 p.m. (Santa Clarita) – Salisa Wagner
3. Wednesday, March 13th, at 6:30 p.m. (Van Nuys) - Gay Wane
4. Wednesday, May 8th, at 6:30 p.m. (Van Nuys) – Jonathan Istrin

Jenni added that the presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes long.

- B. VAC Action Log from FY 2011-12 – Deferred
- C. VAC Priority Issues and Teams for FY 2012-13: Jenni had this agenda item deferred from last month's meeting so she could be present to participate in the discussion. Do the VAC members feel that good things are being accomplished by the current work groups? Should anything change for this fiscal year? Gay said that she felt that the mental health group has been an invaluable tool to getting the center, providers, and representatives from the Department of Mental Health to work together to problem solve. Jenni felt the adult services work group addressed a variety of issues and felt it was a vital partnership between regional center staff and providers. Rebecca wants the adult work group to include more discussion regarding consumers who are aging and the issues that they face.

M/S/C (J. Istrin/L. Burton) To continue the VAC's priority issues from last fiscal year to this fiscal year and to present them to the Board of Trustees for their approval.

Action: Wayne Tashjian will chair today's Children's Services work group in Rick Clemen's absence.

Action: Salisa Wagner will chair today's Prevention/Early Start work group in Roy Jensen's absence.

Action: Michele Heid will join the Children's Services work group.

D. Group Photo of VAC for the Center's Website - *Deferred*

VI. Identify any Specific Items for Board Discussion (for the next Board meeting)

- A. Minutes of September 6th VAC Meeting
- * B. Approval of VAC Priority Issues for FY 2012-13

VII. Announcements/Public Input

A. Candidates Forum & Voter Education/Registration Event: Jenni announced that the center will be holding this event on Tuesday, October 16th, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Sam's Café (at New Horizons). The center has invited the candidates who are running for the open Senator and Assembly positions in the center's catchment area. George Stevens asked Jenni if the VAC members would please discuss and identify questions they would like to see the candidates answer at the forum. Also, George said he would appreciate it if VAC members could attend the event.

Action: VAC members will identify questions, during their break-out sessions, they would like to see the candidates answer at next month's forum and e-mail them to Jenni Moran (jmorandhe@aol.com) and Sara Iwahashi, the center's publications manager (siwahashi@nlacrc.org). The proposed questions should be e-mailed to them **by September 20th**.

B. Next Meeting: Thursday, October 4th, at 9:30 a.m.

VIII. Committee Work (Committee breaks into their priority issue teams)

- A. Early Start/Prevention Services
- B. Children's Services
- C. Adult Services
- D. Mental Health Issues (This group does not meet after the VAC meetings. They meet on the 4th Thursday of each month at the regional center's main office in room 210 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.)

Action: It is critical that the chair of each group e-mail the notes from their work group sessions to Jenni Moran and also to Jennifer Kaiser (jkaiser@nlacrc.org) so she can include them in the monthly board meeting packets.

IX. Adjournment

Jenni adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m. so the committee could break into their work groups.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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