

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2014

Present: Rick Clemens, Bob Erio, Michelle Heid, Jonathan Istrin, Ken Lane, Rebecca Lienhard, Wayne Tashjian, and Gay Wane - Committee Members

Kristie Hoefflin, Janet Schilling, Cynthia Fernandez, Deborah Cutter, Arcelin Berleson, Riva Kestenbaum, Maribel Galvan, Marina Isounts, Verjine Egian, Liana Aidinova, Angel Carrillo, Rhonda Bunnin, Eddie Bueno, Aaron Kirkman, Rachel Hofman, Michael Ross, Anthony Jenkins, Michael Wright, Jack Darakjian, Chris Bratzel, Seven Bratzel, Myesha Arguelles, Joe Tighe, Ben Behzadi, Andrea Lemus, and Mandy Flower – Guests

Erica Beall, Yolanda Bosch, Jennifer Kaiser, George Stevens, Sarah Staley, Kim Rolfes, John Youngbauer, Nikisia Simmons, Sarah Rolfes, and Jason Trevino - Staff

Absent: Annie Cox, Sienna Greener-Wooten, Pam Jacobson, Jenni Moran, Marina Pink, Scott Shepard, and Dolly Wauls

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I. Call to Order & Introductions

Bob Erio called the meeting to order in Jenni Moran's absence, at 9:35 a.m.

II. Public Input - There was no public input.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

M/S/C (W. Tashjian/R. Clemens) To approve the agenda as presented.

B. Approval of Minutes from April 3rd VAC Meeting

M/S/C (G. Wane/R. Lienhard) To approve the minutes as presented.

IV. Executive Director's Report (George Stevens)

A. Reports on "The Way Forward" Conference (George/Annie/Rebecca)

George gave history behind The Way Forward movement. The idea was born at a Southern CA regional center directors meeting a couple of years ago. Facing additional mandates from trailer bill language and further budget cuts, the directors agreed that ideas for a comprehensive strategy to address the eroding funding and increasing responsibilities of centers needed to be developed, including reinventing the system, so community services could realistically be sustained into the future. Several northern regional centers joined the movement to come up with a plan for The Way Forward. The plan was to solicit input from stakeholders within California and knowledgeable individuals from other states aimed at developing a consensus on the way to maintain an effective and sustainable system into the future. A conference was eventually planned and each director was able to invite 6 participants; George selected Rebecca and Annie from the VAC to participate.

Rebecca stated that it was a powerful conference. Participants included national leaders, advocates, service providers, regional center directors, and families. They discussed how service delivery should look in California's future. The conference closed with a commitment as a group to come back together and to continue to develop a plan for The Way Forward.

George reported that the Southern CA regional center directors were pleased with the conference's content and turnout. The challenge now is how to craft a plan for a sustainable future. The next step is for the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) to continue the conversation with our community. Santi Rogers, the new director of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), attended the conference both days – which really shows his commitment. George is hopeful that DDS will continue to participate in the development of The Way Forward in coordination with ARCA.

B. Southern CA Regional Center Employment First Policies – *Deferred*

C. Employment First

George will be putting together a Steering Committee to finalize a viable Employment First policy for our community. George would like to have representation from each of the 4 VAC workgroups on this committee.

D. Meeting with the Lanterman Coalition

George recently met with members of the Lanterman Coalition and the outcome was that each member agreed to target a legislator in their area and get families to contact them to support Senator Wesley Chesbro's proposal to members of the State Legislature urging them to support eight cost-efficient investments that will help meet the basic obligations to thousands of Californians with developmental disabilities and help stabilize a crumbling system of services and supports. The center sent out a legislative action alert with Senator Chesbro's proposal a couple of days ago, which includes a sample letter that people can use.

E. Early Start Restoration

We are beginning to get some traction with the movement to restore the Early Start program; adequate provider rates will be the next focus. We need to get to know our legislators and convey this information and message to them and rally their support. It is also extremely important to also rally our families and staff.

F. Budget

DDS has allocated us \$7.8 million in our most recent allocation, so our projected purchase of service (POS) budget deficit is now about \$24 million. We are working with DDS to completely resolve our shortfall and don't anticipate any disruption in service provider payments.

V. Community Services Director's Report (Kim Rolfes)

A. Minimum Wage

The minimum wage increase will affect providers with staff who are being paid less than \$9.00 per hour. Last month, Kim participated in a meeting with regional centers, DDS, and representatives from the Lanterman Coalition in Sacramento to develop a spreadsheet that providers can use to identify their costs so an adequate rate can be substantiated to cover the minimum wage increase. NLACRC will work with those providers with negotiated rates, using the same spreadsheet. The minimum wage increase will go into effect July 1, 2014.

B. Community Placement Plan for FY 2013-14

We are finalizing the letters to the providers who have been awarded the RFP contracts.

C. Supported Living Services (SLS) Rate Conversions

The center continues to work to convert the rates from monthly to hourly. The center's Community Services department will be contacting SLS providers to update their contracts.

D. Vendor Audits/Independent Reviews for 2011 and 2012

The center is required to collect audits/independent reviews from providers who qualify. The submission of this information to us is a requirement of vendorization.

E. Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT)

We had asked the LADOT to send a representative to a VAC meeting to talk about their ordinance requiring training and permits for agencies using vans to transport their consumers for non-medical reasons. They declined our invitation, but instead invited providers to submit questions about the ordinance that they could respond to in writing. To this end, Kim drafted a letter to LADOT with a list of 12 questions for them to answer; copies of the proposed letter and list of questions were provided to the VAC for their review and input. VAC members provided the following comments:

1. Use the 1st question only – or triple the number of questions.
2. One agency was contacted by the LADOT 2 years ago about this, but they have not forced them to comply.
3. Inform the LADOT about the consequences of enforcing this ordinance.
4. Ask LADOT to balance the restrictions and invest in transportation for people with developmental disabilities.
5. This ordinance is nothing but a revenue generator for the city and is a hardship for service providers who are already struggling to make ends meeting financially.
6. George added that we should inform the LADOT that providers are regulated by the state, Title 17, and the Lanterman Act – and their program designs include transportation. The state legislature wants people with developmental disabilities to participate in activities in their communities and this ordinance is at odds with that directive and is in conflict with the state's intent.

Action: The draft letter that Kim presented, along with the list of 12 questions, will not be sent to the LADOT. Instead, George and Kim will

draft a letter to the LADOT, for George's signature, outlining the concerns identified. George will present the draft letter at the next VAC meeting for the committee's review and input.

G. Department of Mental Health (DMH) Training

The center is holding a training for providers on "An overview of current DMH services and programs." The training will be held twice, at 9:00 a.m. and again at 11:00 a.m., on Thursday, June 12th, here at the center. Fliers for the training were provided.

H. DS 1891 Portal

This new online screening tool is up and running. Service providers must update their DS 1891 Form (Applicant/Vendor Disclosure Statement) every 2 years and the California Service Provider Portal will make updating DS 1891 forms much easier for our service providers to accomplish this requirement. A mass mailing was sent out to our providers letting them know about the portal and how to use it. In addition, the center held several webinar trainings last month to assist service providers on using the portal.

I. Privacy Breach Training

Last month, the center provided a training for providers to cover HIPAA compliance and how to avoid privacy breaches. All of your IPADS, laptops, etc. must be encrypted. Also, when providers experience a privacy breach, there is specific protocol they must follow. We understand that it is logistically difficult for providers to follow and the center plans to identify independent solutions and ideas for providers in each service category to follow to help them prevent privacy breaches.

VI. Committee Business

A. Election of Jenni Moran to serve as VAC Chair for FY 2014-15

Jenni was the only nominee at last month's VAC meeting.

M/S/C (G. Wane/R. Lienhard) To unanimously vote for Jenni Moran to serve as VAC chair for FY 2014-15.

B. Report on Visit with Senator Fran Pavley re: SB 577 (Ken/Scott/Rick)

At last month's VAC meeting it was agreed that Ken would request a meeting with Senator Pavley to clarify the bill's intent. Ken reported that he spoke with a representative in Senator Pavley's office in Sacramento who agreed to

schedule a conference call for them with the senator. Ken will organize the conference call to include Scott and Rick and will report back at the next VAC meeting. The bill will be going to the Assembly Health and Human Services Committee in June.

Action: The VAC will hold a conference call to discuss this bill (prior to the conference call with Senator Pavley) on Thursday, May 8th, at 3:00 p.m.; the call-in number will be: (818) 262-2566.

C. Discussion re: AJR36 (Gonzalez) and SB 1109 (Hueso)

The board asked that the VAC discuss these 2 related bills and provide them with a recommended position to take. SB 1109 would remove the allowance for providers to use minimum wage exemptions for specified contracts entered into by a state agency for services rendered to the state. It would further require agencies that employing people with disabilities under a contract with a state agency pay all of its employees at least the state minimum wage for work on the contract. The Assembly Joint Resolution (AJR) would urge the United States Congress to phase out the use of the special minimum wage certificate provision and eventually repeal Section 14 (c) of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. The elimination of 14 (c) would discontinue the ability to provide people with significant disabilities the opportunity to work.

Action: Michelle Heid will write a letter asking for alternative strategies once the 14 (c) is eliminated.

Action: The VAC's adult services team will discuss this further and will provide their input to the Government & Community Relations Committee.

VII. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

A. Early Start/Prevention Services (Annie Cox)

Annie was not present to give a report.

B. Children's Services (Rick Clemens)

The Children's Services meets on alternate months than the other VAC priority issue groups, so they will be meeting immediately following today's VAC meeting. Rick invited anyone interested to join their group's discussion!

C. Adult Services (Rebecca Lienhard)

The group discussed SB 577 and moving forward with the development of the center's Employment First policy – especially focusing on ways to reach out to our community to gain their input. The intent of the policy will be to include all age groups. The policy will be discussed further at the VAC break-out groups at the next VAC meeting.

D. Mental Health Issues (Gay Wane)

This group meets on the last Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m. at the regional center. Meeting participants include service providers, representatives from the Department of Mental Health (DMH), and regional center staff. Due to the confidential nature of the cases they discuss, Gay cannot share any of the meeting's details. However, Gay did share that this is a very collaborative meeting and at last week's meeting they were able to resolve 3 different cases pertaining to the service needs of consumers with a dual diagnosis.

E. VAC Employment First Policy

(See Section VII.C. above.)

VIII. Reports on Board Committee Meetings

A. Administrative Affairs (Ken Lane)

1. The contract issues with Southland Transit have been resolved; there will be no disruption of transportation services in the Antelope Valley.
2. Any contracts over \$250,000 are presented to the committee and then go to the Board of Trustees for approval. The committee reviewed a contract with New Horizons for a new innovative 1:1 day program for consumers who are unable to leave their homes and will be recommending that contract for approval.
3. The center continues to develop homes in the community for consumers leaving developmental centers and other large institutions.
4. The center has 9 new service coordinators starting this month and 2 more in June.

B. Board of Trustees (Jenni Moran)

Jenni was not present to give a report.

- C. Consumer Services (Rebecca Lienhard & Michelle Heid)
- D. Government & Community Relations (Rebecca Lienhard & Michelle Heid)

A legislative training session was held in lieu of the committee meetings last month to help prepare board members, VAC members, and staff for their upcoming visits with our local legislators. Sara Iwahashi, the center's publications manager, puts together a binder for each participant including pertinent information about the legislator they are scheduled to visit, which was very informative.

- E. Housing (Jonathan Istrin)

The next quarterly Housing Committee meeting will be held Monday, May 12th, at noon.

- F. Nominating (Bob Erio)

The committee interviewed the final 3 VAC applicants last night, all who have expertise in the field of Early Start. The proposed VAC nominees for FY 2014-15 will be presented at the May 14th board meeting.

- G. Strategic Planning (Jonathan Istrin)

The next quarterly Strategic Planning Committee meeting will be held Monday, May 5th, at 6:30 p.m.

IX. Open Issues for Discussion

No further issues were identified for discussion.

X. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

The following item was identified for the VAC section of the May 14th board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the May 1st Meeting
- B. Election of Jenni Moran to serve as VAC chair for FY 2014-15

XI. Announcements/Information/Public Input

- A. Michele reported that she recently participated in a legislative visit, set up by the center, with Senator Knight. The senator knows Jenni Moran well and, as

such, knows the importance of the developmental disabilities system. He is a fiscally conservative Republican, who is running for Congress.

- B. Due to a Jewish holiday in the first week of June, the next VAC meeting will be held one week earlier on Thursday, May 29th, at 9:30 a.m. The VAC's priority issue groups will meet.

XII. Adjournment

Bob adjourned the meeting at 11:33 a.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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