

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Government & Community Relations Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2017

Present: Jessica Gould, Michelle Heid, Erika Hernandez, Shant Kotchounian, Caroline Mitchell, Debra Newman, and Tamar Witmer – Committee Members
Breanne Burris, Steve Miller, and Sonia Ojeda - Guests
Sara Iwahashi, Jennifer Kaiser, Michele Marra, and George Stevens – Staff Members

Absent: Adelina Castellanos, Meagan Miller, and Curtis Wang

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Tamar Witmer, chair, called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

II. Public Input – There was no public input.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Several items were added to the agenda.

M/S/C (J. Gould/C. Mitchell) To approve the agenda as modified.

B. Approval of Minutes from the February 15th Meeting

M/S/C (J. Gould/C. Mitchell) To approve the minutes as presented.

IV. Committee Business

A. Legislative Update

Sara provided the committee with an updated log of priority legislative bills and a list of additional bills that are being tracked by the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). Sara explained that she provided the list of ARCA's bills in case the committee was interested in tracking any of them. Several bills were discussed, including:

1. AB 279 (Holden): This bill would compensate our service providers for the local increases in the minimum wage. The bill was heard by the Assembly Human Services Committee last week; George Stevens and Dr. Ron Cohen, executive director of United Cerebral Palsy, Los Angeles (UCPLA) both provided testimony at that hearing. The bill passed 6-0 in favor of the bill. Any bills that have a cost attached to them (like this one) will then be sent to the Appropriations Committee, where they either die or are held over for a second year. Our strategy is to get each member of the Appropriations Committee to support the bill, but we also need to continue contacting our legislators and asking them to help co-sponsor the bill, which will make it stronger. Senator Anthony Portantino, Senator Henry Stern, and Assembly Member Tom Lackey have all become co-authors; Senator Scott Wilk and Assembly Member Nazarian have said they will co-author the bill but haven't taken the necessary steps to do so as yet.
2. AB 384 (Irwin): This bill pertains to the ABLE Act (tax-advantaged savings accounts) for consumers. The center's subject matter expert says this bill aligns the state law involving ABLE accounts with the federal law and recommends a support position be taken.

M/S/C (J. Gould/C. Mitchell) To recommend to the Board of Trustees to take a support position on AB 384 (Irwin).

3. SB 283 (Wilk): This bill would modify the eligibility criteria for regional center services to include people who suffer a traumatic brain injury between the ages of 18 and 22 years. Although we appreciate Senator Wilk's support of AB 279, this bill is very troubling for regional centers as they do not have the knowledge or the services to support these individuals. Rather than take an oppose position on this bill, the following action was taken:

Action: George will contact Senator Wilk to let him know they the center appreciates his support of AB 279, but also has concerns about his SB 283.

B. New Day and Time for Conference Calls

The committee had been making an effort to hold weekly conference calls with Michelle Heid and Steve Miller to keep updated on legislative activities, but it didn't work out. Communications are now conducted through e-mails instead.

C. Legislative Advocacy Training for Consumers (Tamar)

The center serves many thousands of adult consumers and Tamar felt that if they were given some legislative advocacy training that they would become quite a group of formerly untapped voting power. Steve Miller reported that he and Michele already have a legislative advocacy training planned for consumers, which will be held May 13th and voting materials will be provided at that training.

M/S/C (C. Mitchell/E. Hernandez) To present a legislative training concept for consumers, including the potential costs, to the Board of Trustees for their approval.

Caroline asked Steve and Michelle if they would be willing to give a legislative training to her self-advocacy group. They meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Action: Michelle Heid and Steve Miller will follow-up with Caroline about this after tonight's meeting.

D. The Lanterman Act 50th Anniversary Event: Friday, April 21st

Copies of the draft invitation for the event were provided to the committee for their review. The planning committee is working on developing the invitation list, which will include about 300 individuals. Members of this committee should plan on attending.

E. ARCA Grass Roots Day: Wednesday, April 5th

Like last year, the center will be sending up 2 teams to Sacramento this year for ARCA's Grass Roots Day visits with legislators at the State Capitol. The team members are:

1. Team #1: Diane Ambrose, Staff Lead
Debra Newman, Board Member (Parent)
Eleshia Johnson, VAC Member (Service Provider)
Debra Newman's Twins (Consumers)
2. Team #2: Yolanda Bosch, Staff Lead
Tamar Witmer, Board Member (Parent)
Scott Shepard, VAC Member (Service Provider)
Jereth Suede (Consumer)

The teams will meet with other regional center representatives on Tuesday night at an ARCA-planned meeting and then the teams meet with 11 legislators at the State Capitol the next day. What legislators really want and need to hear are personal stories.

F. NLACRC's Grass Root Week

Similar teams like the ones being sent to Sacramento for Grass Roots Day will also be put together to visit our local Assembly members and Senators. The visits will be held in April and May.

G. Legislative Education/Craft Elevator Speeches/Letter-Writing

The committee discussed how to craft a short "elevator" speech that they could give to a legislator quickly. Tamar also organized a letter-writing campaign for AB 279 and provided copies of a sample support letter, stationery, pens, and stamps. Everyone present crafted their own personal support letter and Tamar will mail them.

H. Monthly Legislative Activity

Tamar suggested that the committee take 10 minutes at the end of each Government & Community Relations Committee meeting to participate in a legislative activity. The committee supported this idea.

M/S/C (E. Hernandez/J. Gould) To agree to have a 10-minute legislative activity at each monthly Government & Community Relations Committee meeting.

V. Board Meeting Agenda Items

The following items were identified for the committee's section of the April 13th board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes of the March 14th Meeting
- B. Legislative Update
- C. The Lanterman Act 50th Anniversary Event: Friday, April 21st
- D. Approval of Legislative Training Concept for Consumers
- E. Approval of a Support Position on AB 384 (Irwin)

VI. Announcements / Information / Public Input

A. Complete Meeting Evaluations

Tamar asked the committee members to please complete their evaluation forms after the meeting and submit them to her with any comments.

B. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 19th

VII. Adjournment

Tamar adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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