

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2013

Present: Lawrence Burton, Rick Clemens, Bob Erio, Pam Jordan, Ken Lane, Rebecca Lienhard, Jenni Moran, Scott Shepard, Wayne Tashjian, Salisa Wagner, Gay Wane, and Asilia “Dolly” Wauls - Committee Members

Trudy Callahan, Jennifer Kaiser, Kim Rolfes, George Stevens, Joan Watson-Patko, Dr. John Youngbauer, and Ruth Zepeda - Staff Members

Nancy Parelskin, Joe Tighe, Faun Jimenez, Dana Andrews, Pamela Jacobson, Ana Hernandez, Randi Levinson-Kuzmin, Valerie Kissell, Arcelia Berleson, Donnette Hickey-Springman, Doug Pascover, Cynthia Fernandez, Fredlyn Berger, Celina Lopez, Cyndi McAuley, Anthony Jenkins, Sherman Mitchell, Rosa Valenzuela, Una Augustus, Sharise Henson, Dominique Johnson, Jimmy Williams, Don Turner, and Maribel Galvan - Guests

Absent: Sienna Greener-Wooten, Michelle Heid, Jonathan Istrin, and Roy Jensen

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Jenni Moran, chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. Introductions were made.

II. Public Input - There was no public input.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Item V.A. was added to the agenda.

M/S/C (W. Tashjian/R. Lienhard) To approve the agenda as amended.

B. Approval of Minutes from February 7th VAC Meeting

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

IV. Director’s Report (George Stevens, Executive Director, NLACRC)

- A. Vendor Audits: The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has given us direction to obtain audits/financial reports from providers. If you are required to submit one, please do so promptly; your vendorization could be affected if you do not.
- B. Workers' Compensation Insurance: It is a state law for our providers to have workers' compensation insurance. If you have not submitted proof of your coverage to us, please do so promptly.
- C. Legislative Training: We will be holding a legislative training session on Tuesday, March 12th, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. to prepare our staff, board members, VAC members, and CAC members to visit with our local legislators. We would really provider participation in these visits. Please RSVP to Jennifer at jkaiser@nlacrc.org if you haven't already.
- D. Behavioral Services Meeting: We met with behavioral services providers last week to talk about how we can meet the needs of consumers and families in a seamless way, with regional center, insurance companies, and schools all working together. We are brainstorming on ways to provide services to our more rural and under-served areas. It was a very productive meeting.
- E. NLACRC Budget/Cash Flow: DDS offset our January claims, but that did not give us all of our money, so our cash will run out prior to the end of the fiscal year. We have enough funds for this month, but will need to borrow next month. We sent a letter to DDS last week informing them of our cash flow situation and held a follow-up conference call with them yesterday. They will pay us \$18.8 million (which will cover us for another month) so we should be able to pay March claims in April. But unless we receive additional allocations from DDS, we will have to borrow in May to pay April claims. The problem is that DDS is waiting to receive federal dollars through the 1915i waiver. The waiver was approved by the feds on Valentine's Day, and it takes 90 days to process, so DDS should be receiving their waiver money in mid-May. Exacerbating this problem is unresolved purchase of service (POS) deficits from prior fiscal years and payment delays from our intermediate care facility (ICF) providers as part of the ICF state plan amendment (SPA) process. We need our ICF providers to pay us promptly when they receive our money. ICF providers are compensated monetarily for the time it takes them to process these payments. We are currently owed \$1.8 million in outstanding ICF payments.

- F. ARCA Grass Roots Day: Our team (which included VAC member Michele Heid) was in Sacramento yesterday visiting with legislators at the State Capitol. Our team received a warm reception from the legislators. Our issues were inadequate provider rates, the restoration of the Early Start program, the remaining input from the trailer bill related budget cuts, and the closure of the developmental centers. The cost for a person living in a developmental center is now up to \$400,000 per year.

V. Committee Business

- A. Nominations for FY 2013-14 VAC Chair: Jenni encouraged any VAC members interested in serving as VAC chair to step forward at next month's meeting as nominations will be heard. The election will be held at the May VAC meeting. Jenni stated that she accept the position for another term if nominated.

VI. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Early Start/Prevention Services (Roy Jensen)
- B. Children's Services (Rick Clemens)
- C. Adult Services (Rebecca Lienhard)

Jenni asked Rebecca to give the report as all 3 groups met together last month. Rebecca explained that a group discussion was held to brainstorm on ways to increase employment of people with disabilities. She referred everyone to a handout which covered the 3 focus areas: policies for best practices; system-wide education; and communication about hiring. The handout also included the following 3 tangible objectives:

1. How does NLACRC require providers of children's services to include in all skill development programs skills identified as most critical? What are those skills?
2. Ongoing seminars for families, service providers, and service coordinators.
3. Determine the unemployment rate for people served by NLACRC and develop target employment goals using the "Employment First" philosophy.

Jenni Moran invited anyone interested to join the next group discussion which will be held immediately following next month's abbreviated VAC meeting.

D. Mental Health Issues (Pam Jordan)

Pam reported that the group met on February 28th with 18 people present and discussed two complex adult cases covering items of dual-diagnosis, medication, hospitalization, crisis intervention, and residential needs. Many providers offered advice on obtaining services and provided support to the presenters who were facing complicated situations. Contact information was exchanged. Also, a short discussion was held on how to develop a similar group in Antelope Valley.

VII. Report on Board Committee Meetings

A. Administrative Affairs (Ken Lane): The committee has met twice since the last report.

1. In January, the committee discussed:

- Payment delays to the center as a result of the ICF/SPA.
- The contracts for 4 homes being developed for consumers leaving Lanterman Developmental Center.
- Tierra del Sol is closing one of their programs due to insufficient rates; 20 consumers will be impacted.
- The grand opening of New Horizons' Achievement Center.
- A status report on the stolen lap top that contained consumer information.
- 13 new staff members were hired.

2. In February, the committee discussed:

- The center's tax return (form 990).
- A pending cash flow problem.
- 5 independent living service contracts.
- 9 new staff members were hired.

B. Board of Trustees (Jenni Moran): Jenni thanked Salisa Wagner for her presentation on her Progressive Steps program at the January board meeting and thanked Michele Heid for her presentation on behavioral services at the February board meeting. The board has had the following items on their recent meeting agendas:

1. The presentation of the center's audited financial statement.

2. ARCA's draft strategic plan, which includes efforts to address providers' rate situation.
3. Upcoming meetings with local legislators. A training session will be held for all participants on Tuesday, March 12th, at 5:30 p.m. Topics for these meetings will include:
 - The impact of rate freezes.
 - Unfunded mandates.
 - The restoration of the Early Start program.
 - The sunset of the annual family program fee.
 - The annual evaluation of the executive director.

- C. Consumer Services (Lawrence Burton): Lawrence reported that providers can sign up for information on hiring state staff (from Lanterman Developmental Center) through DDS's website.

Action: George will forward any job announcements providers have with Lanterman Developmental Center. Also, George will bring information about hiring state staff to next month's VAC meeting.

- D. Government & Community Relations (Lawrence Burton):

1. The center's 28th Legislative Breakfast will be held Friday, April 12th, at 8:00 a.m. at Sam's Café at New Horizons in North Hills.
2. CSUN received a grant through CVS Pharmacy that will enable them to use a van to visit local communities for the purpose of assessing children in under-served areas.
3. The center is partnering with the Office of Client Rights Advocacy (OCRA) again this year to provide seminars to our community. This year's seminars are being held at Sam's Café. The next one, "Obtaining special education services from the school district, Part 2 (related services, assessments, behavioral plans, and due process)" will be held on Thursday, March 28th, at 6:30 p.m. (in English and Spanish).
4. Staff from the Family Focus Resource Center (FFRC) are now making themselves available in the center's resource library on Mondays and Wednesdays. They also continue to have an office location at CSUN. They can help assist families with the following:
 - Preparing for the transition to preschool

- Special education rights – basic IEP/IFSP services
- Record keeping and organization
- Referrals to community agencies
- Providing resources and checking out library materials.

The FFRC staff can be reached at (818) 756-6288 for appointments.

5. The committee also discussed the following bills: AB 954, SB 577, and AB 1041.

Action: Jennifer will forward a copy of the committee's bill file, which contains information about the bills they are tracking, to the VAC.

E. Housing (Scott Shepard): At the committee's last quarterly meeting:

1. A presentation was given on A Community of Friends, a nonprofit organization that provides affordable housing for various special needs groups, specifically mental illness, but also including homeless, low income, emancipated foster youth, and most recently, people with disabilities.
2. An update was given on the center's community placement plan projects which includes 11 different projects.
3. DDS's new housing guidelines were released and shared.
4. It was reported that Sonoma Developmental Center recently lost its certification and subsequently their federal funding. It is an unsafe place for consumers to live and is costing DDS millions of dollars to continue to keep it open.
5. George Braddock wrote a book on how to modify your home to accommodate your child's behaviors. He was willing to talk to the committee via a webinar, but prefers to speak in person. He charges a fee, so rather than pay him to speak to just the Housing Committee, they thought that if there was enough interest, the center could hold a forum in a larger venue and invite service providers to attend. Kim Rolfes asked the vendors if they would be interested in such a presentation. There seemed to be quite a bit of interest from the providers.

Action: Kim will take to the Housing Committee the recommendation for organizing a presentation by George Braddock in a large venue to accommodate any providers who would like to attend.

Action: Kim will also find out if we could record Mr. Braddock's presentation and post in on the center's website for future access.

Action: Scott Shepard will forward a copy of Mr. Braddock's report to anyone interested, just e-mail him at shepard6@pacbell.net.

F. Nominating (Bob Erio):

1. The committee has developed its proposed slate of officers for next fiscal year.
2. They held interviews with board applicants and have identified 5 applicants that they will recommend for nomination and election.
3. A group orientation will be held with Consumer Advisory Committee applicants on Wednesday, April 3rd.
4. The call for applications for the VAC will be re-opened this month as very few applications were submitted the first time around. The VAC is high in the behavioral services category, but all others are encouraged to apply. The committee is specifically looking for providers in leadership positions at agencies serving consumers in NLACRC's catchment area. For more information or an application, please contact Jennifer Kaiser at (818) 756-6118 or at jkaiser@nlacrc.org.

G. Strategic Planning (George Stevens):

1. The committee has been looking at the National Core Indicators project and how they could utilize the data in a beneficial way.
2. The committee would like to collaborate with the VAC to increase/promote employment of consumers.
3. The committee oversees the center's performance contract with DDS. The 2014 contract will be drafted and presented at community meetings this summer. The center has done well with its performance contracts in the past, but is running into difficulties with the number of consumers living in large facilities. The center is unable to move consumers out of large facilities when they have been ordered there by the court. We are working on ways to address this problem.

4. There is a lot of legislation pertaining to diversity/equity issues of regional center services. DDS will require the regional centers to include information that addressed this area in their future performance contracts.

VIII. Open Issues for Discussion

- A. Service Provider Needs Assessment Survey (Jenni Moran): The survey has been finalized and will be sent out by the center via an e-mail blast today. There will also be a link on the center's website that can direct providers to the survey. It is important that the survey be completed online because it will be easier to compile the data that is collected. The survey will be active for 30 days. The survey results will be shared with at the June VAC meeting.
- B. ICF Rate Proposal (Kim Rolfes): The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) submitted a proposal to seek a retroactive application of a new rate methodology retroactive to August 1, 2012. This proposal would place our intermediate care facilities (ICFs) in jeopardy of being able to continue providing services to our consumers. Our ICFs have been operating under a rate freeze since FY 2008-09 and have had to make every reduction in operating expenses without placing consumer care and services in jeopardy. This proposal could reduce their rates by up to 10%. NLACRC's Board of Trustees voted to oppose the proposal. Unfortunately, the proposal was approved.
- C. Service Provider Audits (Kim Rolfes): A second letter is being mailed out to providers who have not submitted their audits for 2011. The center is giving these providers 30 days to respond.
- D. Trudy Callahan (Joan Watson-Patko): Trudy is leaving the center's community services department to pursue a career in providing assistive technology services to our consumers and providers. Please contact Erica Beall in her absence.
- E. Community Services Department (Joan Watson-Patko): This department is very short-staffed, but the center is in the process of interviewing applicants for the open positions. We thank you in advance for your patience.
- F. Life After High School Fair: Will be held from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1st, at Leichman High School. The fair is primarily for consumers 14 to 21 years of age.

- G. The VAC's Employment Group: Rick agreed to meet with the Children's Services work group after the regular VAC meeting in May. It was suggested that Early Start/Prevention work group follow the same schedule. Rebecca will meet with Rick and Michelle to make sure that both Early Start/Prevention and Children's Services work groups are good with this new schedule. The RED bubble group will meet after the April VAC meeting. Since the RED bubble group encompasses the needs of the entire VAC, it was agreed that they would meet again as a large team in April. The BLUE AND PURPLE bubble groups will meet after the May VAC meeting. Based on the momentum of the large group, this schedule will either stay in effect for a short time or we will evaluate a better schedule at the May meeting.

Action: Rebecca will work with Jennifer to develop a meeting schedule for the "bubble" groups. (This was accomplished, see above.)

- H. Supported Living Services Meeting (Scott Shepard): Will be held Monday, March 11th, at 1:00 p.m. at United Cerebral Palsy, 6430 Independence Avenue, Woodland Hills.

IX. Board Meeting Agenda Items

- A. Minutes of March 7th VAC Meeting

X. Announcements/Information/Public Input

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, April 4th, at 9:30 a.m. (work groups meet)

XI. Adjournment

Jenni adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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