

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2016

Present: Orli Almog, Shelly Briggs, Deborah Cutter, Mariela Feldman, Cynthia Fernandez, Michelle Heid, Sharoll Jackson, Staci Jordan, Kristin Laurino, Marina Pink, Scott Shepard, and Wayne Tashjian - Committee Members

George Stevens, Jennifer Kaiser, Arsho Garlanian, Arpi Arabian, Kim Rolfes, Erica Beall, Erin Broughton-Rodriguez, and Anna Polin – Staff

Victoria Berrey, Nataly Corleto, Verjine Egian, Harut Bulaniklan, Dolly Wauls, Jorge Flores, Tracy Glen, Debra Dinielli, Linda Cobuzzi, Maria Ortiz, William Powe, Lizeth Corral, Randi Levinson-Kuzmin, Leticia Leon, Jonathan Istrin, Ken Lane, Angie Cortez, Melissa Nishimoto, Nick Vukotic, Clifton Von Buck, Shirley Walker, Sonny Agbede, Mindy Hughes, Michael Stephens, Ralph Stokes, Nikisia Simmons, Victoria Greenwood, Judith Vargas, Sara Blitzstein, Alexandra Rivera, Doug Masterson, Lisa Szilaggi, Rebecca Holik, Cyndi McAuley, Andrea Lemus, Sandy Ruh, and Marisol Yribe - Guests

Absent: Fredlyn Berger, Eleshia Johnson, and Jenni Moran

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Michelle Heid, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. once a quorum of members was present. Introductions were made.

II. Public Input

A. Sarah Blitzstein announced that Jewish Family Service of LA is starting a new support group for families of children with special needs, that is open to the entire community. The support group will begin meeting November 1st and Tuesdays and Thursday. Free child care during the meetings. To register or for more information, please call (866) 287-8030.

B. Victoria Berrey announced that the Family Focus Resource Center (FFRC) will be holding its annual special needs resource fair on Saturday, October 29th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at CSUN. There will be lots of resource exhibitors, music, entertainment, a photo booth, carnival, and more. This is a great networking opportunities for families. For more information contact the FFRC at Facebook at www.facebook.com/ffrec or via Twitter@FamilyFocusFRC.

- C. Victoria also announced that the FFRC has a beautiful new suite at the center's new main office. It is located on the 1st floor adjacent to the reception area. Once they have fully moved in, she invited everyone to come visit them, take a look at their new space, and see what valuable resources they have to share.

III. Consent Items

- A. Approval of Agenda

M/S/C (S. Jackson/S. Shepard) To approve the agenda as presented.

- B. Approval of Minutes from the September 1st VAC Meeting

M/S/C (S. Jackson/K. Laurino) To approve the minutes as presented.

IV. Executive Director's Report

George Stevens gave the following reports:

- A. New NLACRC Office: George welcomed everyone to the center's new main office in Chatsworth. The center's reception area is located on the north side of the building on Prairie Avenue. We are all busy getting settled in our new space. Kim made special mention of Fay Shapiro, facilities manager, and Malorie Lanthier, I/T director, who put a lot of extra work in to make the move go so smoothly.
- B. Behavioral Health Services Transition: Dr. Arpi Arabian gave the behavioral services report. The center is about halfway through transitioning approximately 700 consumers to managed care for their behavior health treatment. There are couple issues affecting those who have not yet transitioned. Approximately 150 families have not provided consents either to NLACRC or to the managed care plan to share information regarding the transition. We need signed consents from the families in order to share information with the managed care plans. We have been working with consumer service coordinators and we are reaching out to our service providers to help us obtain the consents from our families. We also need to know when the managed care plans have begun providing services to our consumers, so we can finalize the transition; service providers can help us by sharing that information with us. Please use the behavioral health treatment e-mail address to communicate any information related to the transition of behavioral health treatment services to managed care.

- C. Candidates' Forums: The center's first candidates' forum will be held tonight at 6:30 p.m. at the Santa Clarita Activities Center. Our area is losing 2 of its current senators, Fran Pavley and Carol Liu, who have been champions for our system. We want whoever takes their places to know that the developmental disabilities system has a dynamic force of advocates behind it. We want to make sure there is standing room only!! Please come to the candidates' forum tonight and bring as many people as you can with you. These candidates need to see our numbers so they remember us when they are making budget decisions in Sacramento.
- D. POS Equity Proposals: The state budget for this fiscal year included \$11 million to help fund proposals to assist regional centers to increase POS equity. NLACRC submitted 6 such proposals to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The center submitted 6 disparity proposals to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). They included the Family Empowerment Team in Action (FETA), statewide purchase of services (POS) disparity research, community and legislative educator consultant, education advocate, bilingual pay for staff, and social media outreach. We are waiting to receive DDS's response to these proposals.
- E. Self-Determination: DDS is still working with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to prepare the waiver for federal funding, but have not formally re-submitted the waiver as yet. They are reportedly down to about 35 remaining issues. The waiver should be posted for its 90 day comment period by the end of the year. Also, the center's Self-Determination Volunteer Advisory Committee (SDVAC) continues to meet on a monthly basis and learn as much as they can. The committee generally meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. and meets at the various NLACRC offices. These are open meetings and members of the public are welcome to attend. The next SDVAC meeting will be held Thursday, October 20th, at the center's Antelope Valley office. If you want to keep updated on the development of the self-determination program, you can sign up to receive updates on the center's website.

V. Chief Financial Officer's Report (Kim Rolfes)

VI. Community Services Director's Report (Kim Rolfes for Yolanda Bosch)

- A. Annual Evaluation Reporting – Attachments
1. Community-Based Day Programs
 2. In-House Respite Services Agencies

(See the report in Section VI.G. below.)

- B. CMS Final Rule: The state budget includes \$15 million to enable DDS to fund changes that will be necessary for providers to make in order to come into compliance with the CMS rules by March 2019. Service providers can apply for the funds through the regional centers and all submitted proposals will be forwarded by the regional centers to DDS. DDS's guidelines ask that regional centers make recommendations for funding based on local priorities, although final approval will be made by DDS. A subcommittee of service providers was established to identify NLACRC's priorities, which are proposals that will lead to: 1) integrated employment, 2) integrating employment in IPP goals, 3) and demonstrating consumer choice and preferences. DDS's directions on how to apply for this funding has been posted on their website and on NLACRC's website. DDS has extended the deadline for these proposals from October 1st to October 30th. The center will be sending out an e-mail blast and a mailing alerting our service providers of the extension of the proposal deadline. All pertinent information about this process is currently posted on the center's website.
- C. Minimum Wage/Unanticipated Rate Increase:
1. Providers with a DDS set rate: There is a tool providers can use on the center's website to request a rate increase from DDS. DDS is accepting rate increase requests through the end of September 2016, and it is NLACRC's understanding that the rate will be retroactive to July 1st, when the minimum wage was increased in L.A.
 2. Providers with a negotiated rate: All service providers with a negotiated rate will need to request a health and safety waiver for each of their consumers. There is a tool and information on the center's website to request a health and safety waiver exemption to comply with local ordinances on the center's website. All health and safety waiver exemption requests should be sent to the center for review and processing and then, the center will forward the completed health and safety waiver exemption to DDS for review and approval. The center will be seeking an effective date of July 1, 2016, for all health and safety waiver rate increases received from service providers to comply with local ordinances.

The local minimum wage will increase from \$10.50 per hour to \$12.00 per hour on July 1, 2017. We are expecting that most of our service providers will need to seek a rate increase through one of the 2 processes, above, early next year in order to comply with local ordinances.

- D. Annual Family Statements for 2016: Annual Family Statements for FY 2015-16 will be mailed by our accounting department next month.
- E. Zero Tolerance for Consumer Abuse or Neglect: The center's contract with DDS requires that annually regional centers provide our service providers a copy of our Zero Tolerance Policy. Service providers are required, under their contract with NLACRC, to share the policy with their staff on an annual basis and upon the hire of any new staff. The center's Zero Tolerance Policy will be mailed to service providers next month.
- F. Request for Proposals (RFP) for Day Program Start-up Funds: The center received FY 2016-17 Community Placement Plan (CPP) start-up funding to develop a day program for 15 consumers in the Antelope Valley. The objective of the day program is to be a fully community-based day program that helps consumers achieve competitive employment goals and be compliant with HCBS rules. In the past, we have not been successful in awarding CPP start-up funds for day programs because the ongoing rate that we can offer service providers for a day program is not sustainable. In order to address this issue, the center will be asking applicants to provide a cost statement that either: 1) demonstrates the ongoing rate needed to operate and sustain the day program, and if selected to develop the day program, the center will seek approval from DDS to authorize the rate; or 2) a service layer approach which demonstrates that the ongoing rate is equal to or less than median rate for a community-based day program, individualized training service, and behavior analyst service.
- G. RFP for Early Start Services: The center is in need of licensed occupational, physical, and speech therapists to serve our early start consumers in the Antelope Valley. In the past we have not been successful in developing early start services in the Antelope Valley. In order to address this issue, the Center will be issuing a RFP to develop an Early Start program under Specialized Therapeutic Services for the purpose of serving children under the age of 3 years in the Antelope Valley.
- H. NLACRC's Contract with DDS/Data Security: The center's budget for this year is nearly \$425 million (\$377 million in POS and \$48 million in operations). We received our C-1 intent letter from DDS, but our actual contract has been delayed due to some contractual changes that will be required to ensure that certain security requirements are put in place by regional centers and our service providers to protect consumer personal health information and avoid data breaches. If a privacy breach occurs, service providers may be required to provide credit monitoring for a full year

for everyone that was affected by the breach. George highly recommended that service providers look into obtaining cyber liability insurance to cover themselves in case they do have a privacy breach.

- I. California State Auditor Update: As reported at last month's committee meeting, NLACRC was 1 of 5 regional centers randomly selected for an in-home respite audit by the California State Auditors. The audit was conducted in June and there were 2 audit findings. First, regulations require that all in-home respite providers conduct a program evaluation (a self-assessment) and submit a written summary of their evaluation on an annual basis to the regional center, user regional centers, and DDS. NLACRC has not been collecting this information from our in-home respite service providers. Kim has been working with Yolanda Bosch, the center's community services director, to implement and comply with this regulatory requirement. The center plans to send out notices to our in-home respite service providers seeking their annual program evaluation for FY 2015-16. Second, regulations provide that the center review all vendor files, biennially, to verify the vendor continues to comply with vendorization requirements. The center's community services staff have been reviewing vendor files biennially; however the center's review has not been documenting the biennial reviews as part of the vendor file. Yolanda Bosch has changed community services procedures to provide that the biennial review checklist is signed and maintained in the vendor file. The draft audit report will be issued on October 5th for our review and input. The final report will be issued on October 25th and available to the public.
- J. Adaptive Skills: Regulations provide that staff providing adaptive skills training services must have Master's Degree. The center has identified 7 adaptive skills training programs that need to either: 1) provide a plan to that demonstrates compliance with regulatory staff qualifications; or 2) be re-vendored under another service category. Additionally, the center is working with behavioral service providers to develop a 637 proposal to address the service needs of consumers. Behavioral vendors who are not compliant with regulations have been asked to either provide a plan that demonstrates compliance with regulatory staff qualifications or participate in the 637 proposal.
- K. Consumer Trust Accounts: Recently, NLACRC was audited by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The audit included a review of NLACRC's trust account and P&I ledgers of some of our residential service providers. The SSA identified consumers who had funds in excess of \$2,000. Consumers who are SSI recipients and who have more than \$2,000 in their

cash resources lose their SSI and MediCal benefits. Additionally, SSA found that in some cases consumers had a negative P&I balance at the residential facility. The SSA reported that residential providers should not allow consumer spending to exceed P&I funds, resulting in a negative balance or “loan.” As such, the SSA recommended that NLACRC better monitor the funds managed by our residential providers. In order to address this audit finding by the SSA, NLACRC will be sending out a communication to our residential service providers asking that they report to NLACRC, on a monthly basis, any time a consumer’s P&I balance is equal to or greater than \$300.00. Additionally, NLACRC will be monitoring consumer P&I balances during facility visits to ensure that consumers are not spending more funds than they are receiving.

- L. Consumer SSP Restoration Checks: Effective January 1, 2017, DDS is going to be reducing consumers’ SSP restoration check amounts by \$4.32 per month (\$12.96 per quarter). However, effective January 1, 2017, consumer SSI funds will be increasing by the same amount of \$4.32 which will offset the reduction in consumer SSP restoration funds. Since this may be confusing for some of our consumers we are asking our service coordinators to help explain this change to consumers.
- M. Facebook Page: NLACRC now has a Facebook page! It will serve as another tool to provide outreach and information to our community. Please go on it and invite your friends to like us! Please help us spread the word.

VII. Committee Business

- A. Volunteer to Represent the VAC on the Consumer Services & Government/Community Relations Committees

One of the VAC members had volunteered to represent the VAC on these 2 committees but found that she had a schedule conflict.

Action: Sharoll Jackson volunteered to represent the VAC on these 2 committees.

VIII. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Implementation of CMS & WIOA: Eleshia was not present to give a report, but this group jointly met with the services for adult consumers group last month, so Michele deferred to Scott’s report (Section VIII.D. below).

- B. Implementation of the Behavioral Services Transition: Mariela reported that most of what was discussed was included in Dr. Arpi Arabian's report (Section IV.B. above). But Mariela added that each transition plan is different than the other because they are so individualized. There is still no work from DDS as to whether or not adaptive skills will be transitioned to the managed care plans.
- C. Implementation of the Self-Determination Program: Michelle stated that she continues to serve as a member of the center's Self-Determination Advisory Committee. They are waiting to get further direction from DDS. Once the program starts, each regional center will have a 3-year pilot program for a limited number of consumers. NLACRC will start with 175 consumers their first 3 years.
- D. Services for Adult Consumers: As reported earlier, Scott stated that his group met jointly with the CMS & WIOA implementation group. The groups discussed the standards for the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver and how to develop infrastructures to provide services that will meet the new federal regulations. In addition, there are incentives available for service providers who develop services or programs that lead to consumers gaining employment. Ken Lane added that it is very important for DDS to understand what services will actually cost to provide.

IX. Report on Board Committee Meetings

- A. Administrative Affairs: Fredlyn did not attend the meetings. Kim reported that in August, the committee was given an overview on the center's insurance coverage and in September, the committee was informed that DDS's audit of the center for FY 2013-14 and FY 2014-15 went so well, that DDS offered to cancel the exit interview, which we agreed to. Kim gave kudos the center's accounting staff.
- B. Board of Trustees: Michelle reported that the board has been overseeing the move of the main office, the development of the 2017 performance contract, and the planning of the candidates' forums. At each meeting, Michele gives a report on the VAC meeting and what is currently happening in the vendor community. Michelle encouraged folks to come to a board meeting. The next one will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 13th, at Desert Haven Enterprises in Lancaster. Next month's board meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 9th, at the center's new office on Oakdale Avenue.

- C. Consumer Services: Michelle reported that each month this committee is provided with an update on self-determination and the center's CPP. The center's CPP goal for this fiscal year is to move 10 consumers out of Fairview Developmental Center and into the community and so far 2 of the 10 have been moved. It is really great to hear that these consumers are finally able to live in the community and make their own choices.
- D. Government & Community Relations: Michelle reported that this committee has been helping to plan the candidates' forums and got the center into using social media with the development of a new Facebook page. Please go to the page and like it! It is a very easy page to share.
- E. Nominating: Deborah reported that this committee will not resume meeting until January after the recruitment period for VAC and board members has ended.
- F. Strategic Planning: Wayne reported that this committee meets on a quarterly basis. The next meeting will be held Monday, November 7th, at 6:00 p.m.

X. Open Issues for Discussion

No additional issues were identified for discussion.

XI. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

The following item was identified for the VAC's section of the October 13th board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes from the October 6th VAC Meeting

XII. Announcements/Information/Public Input

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, November 3rd (priority issue groups meet)
- B. Upcoming Meetings/Events:
 1. 1st Candidates' Forum: Tonight! 6:30 p.m. (Santa Clarita Valley Activities Center in Santa Clarita)
 2. NLACRC Board of Trustees Meeting: Thursday, October 13th, at 7:00 p.m. (Desert Haven Enterprises in Lancaster)

3. 2nd Candidates Forum: Tuesday, October 18th, at 6:30 p.m. (Sam's Café at New Horizons in North Hills)

- C. Sharoll announced that New Horizons will be hosting "Coffee with a Cop" in coordination with the Devonshire Police Department. It is a meet and greet opportunity and is also a community outreach effort. It will be held from 10:00 a.m. to noon tomorrow at Sam's Café at New Horizons. There is plenty of free parking in the lot on Haskell Avenue.

XIII. Adjournment

Michelle adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Submitted by,

Jennifer Kaiser

Jennifer Kaiser
Executive Assistant

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