

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
**Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

May 4, 2017

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

Don Turner, Amanda Madrigal, Theresa Quarry, Drew Taylor, Erik Elliott, Natally Corleto, Diane Geary, Barak Almog, Bob Myatt, Jorge Flores, Claudia Wenger, Ken Lane, Ziba Behan, Emily Owens, Mereede Shamlo, Nick Vukotic, Miriam Whitfield, Darrell Bunch, Mindy Hughes, Christian Depaz, Dana V. Andrews, Tina Castro, Michael Stephens, Haley Rhyne, Ralph Stokes, Devin Letzer, Moira Letzer, Rebecca Holik, Pat Knight, Joel Smollett, Jon Francis, Roschell Ashley, Chris Bratzel, Kathy Sturkey, Cecile Turner, Shreda Powell, Don Lucas, Jason Trevino, Saeda Farah, Kendra Espinoza, Rhiannon Maycumber, Victoria Greenwood, and Tiki Thompson - Guests

George Stevens, Jennifer Kaiser, Ruth Janka, Yolanda Bosch, Kim Rolfes, Arsho Garlanian, Erica Beall, Arpi Arabian, Erin Broughton-Rodriguez, Sarah Cox, Jenny Dao, and Anna Polin - Staff

**Absent:** Shelly Briggs and Eleshia Johnson

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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Michelle Heid, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. Introductions were made.

**II. Public Input**

- A. Don Turner and Shreda Powell, who have worked as residential service providers in the Antelope Valley for 15 years, expressed their appreciation to Yolanda Bosch and Ruth Janka for the significant improvements they have made in the last year with their outreach efforts and support to residential providers in the Antelope Valley. They presented appreciation plaques to both of them and photos were taken.
- B. Michelle Heid provided information on which Congress members need to be contacted and urged to vote no on the American Health Care Act because it would cut needed Medi-Cal dollars for our system. She then urged everyone in the room to take a minute and call their Congress member – which everyone did. *[Unfortunately, mid-meeting, the vote was taken and the American*

*Health Care Act was passed by the Assembly by a vote of 217 to 213. The Act must be passed by the Senate before it can become law.]*

- C. Drew Taylor, from the Family Focus Resource Center, invited everyone to visit the FFRC before or after next month's VAC meeting. They would love to show everyone the abundant resources they have to share. Refreshments will be provided.

### III. Consent Items

- A. Approval of Agenda

Additional items were added to the agenda under Section VII.

**M/S/C** (J. Moran/S. Jackson) To approve the agenda as modified.

- B. Approval of Minutes from the April 6<sup>th</sup> VAC Meeting

**M/S/C** (J. Moran/S. Jackson) To approve the minutes as presented.

### IV. Executive Director's Report

George Stevens gave the following reports:

- A. Key Management Changes: Diane Ambrose, Susana Gil, and Joan Daniels will all be retiring from the center this year. George announced that Ruth Janka will be taking Diane's place as deputy director and Maria Bosch will be taking Joan's place as consumer services director over adult services and Medicaid waiver.
- B. American Health Care Act: The current president's plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act would dramatically affect Medicaid program funds that provide healthcare for the elderly and/or disabled. About 45% of the center's purchase of service (POS) dollars comes from Medicaid waiver. In addition, about \$300 million of ABX-1 dollars are coupled with the Affordable Care Act. So, if the new Act does pass, it would be crippling for our system.
- C. Lanterman Act 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration: George expressed his appreciation to everyone who helped make our April 21<sup>st</sup> event a great success! We had tremendous speakers, showed the documentary "We're Here to Speak for Justice," and presented the Jynny Retzinger Community Service

Award to former Senator Judy Chiu. We really wanted to engage families so they know we need their support to carry the Lanterman Act into the future. We are now planning what our next steps will be.

- D. Caseload Ratios: Once again, the center did not meet its required caseload ratios, and we probably never will. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) only funds us for about 2/3 of a service coordinator's salary. That, coupled with our growth, makes it nearly impossible to meet the caseload ratios. Essentially, we need more money. Centers that don't meet their caseload ratios are required to hold a public meeting to seek public comments. Our public meeting will be held Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. at our main office.
- E. Behavioral Services Collaboration: Dr. Arpi Arabian reported that the center is approaching the transition of behavioral health treatment (BHT) services to managed care programs (MCPs) as an ongoing collaboration and communication with the MCPs. We are close to completing the transition. Health Net appears to be the only MCP that has a different process for the remaining transition cases. We are addressing each case individually at this point. We are beginning to get requests for funding BHT services through the regional center once the consumer reaches 21 years of age and MCPs stop funding the BHT services at that time. Additionally, we continue to support the vendor community by providing assistance and clinical support in various settings including day programs, residential settings, as well as in the family homes.

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

- A. NLACRC Budget: The center's operations budget is currently just over \$49 million with no surplus or deficit projected. The POS budget is just under \$379 million with a projected deficit of about \$2.7 million. As long as we receive our cash advance from DDS in a timely manner, we will not have to borrow any money from our credit line in order to pay our bills.
- B. C-2 Allocation: We received our 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment for our contract with DDS for this fiscal year. It includes additional funding for 4 of our providers whose proposals for ideas to help them come into compliance with the CMS final rule were approved by DDS. It also included additional POS dollars to help cover our caseload growth.

## VI. Community Services Director's Report (Yolanda Bosch)

- A. CMS Final Rule: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS's) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) final regulations, or rules are to be implemented by March 2019. The center has made the commitment that "no provider will be left behind." We are still waiting for DDS to issue the pilot self-survey, which may be sent out this month. Thirty providers from our area were selected to receive the self-survey. We are in the process of developing a training webinar that will be available at all 3 NLACRC offices. The community services department staff are also available to speak about the CMS final rule at your group meetings.
- B. \$15 Million for CMS Compliance: As reported in previous meetings, DDS offered \$15 million for service providers to make changes in order to meet the requirements of the CMS final rule. DDS received an overwhelming 835 requests from service providers statewide, totaling \$131.6 million! DDS has made their decision on which proposals they will fund with their \$15 million. NLACRC had 4 service provider proposals accepted:
1. Goodwill of Southern California (\$84,300)
  2. Kaiser Adult Behavioral Center (\$140,000)
  3. PathPoint (\$82,772)
  4. Social Vocational Services (\$337,200)
- These are one-time dollars. Another \$15 million will be offered again next fiscal year.
- B. Health & Safety Waivers: We received denials from DDS for all health and safety waivers submitted for the local minimum wage increases.
- C. Community Services Newsletter: Copies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of the community services department's newsletter are hot off the press! Please contact Arsho Garlanian ([agarlanian@nlacrc.org](mailto:agarlanian@nlacrc.org)) with anything you would like to have included in the next issue.
- D. Community Integrated Employment (CIE) & Paid Internship Program (PIP): Providers have the opportunity to receive \$10,400 in incentive dollars for finding competitive employment for a consumer. Yolanda emphasized that consumers' IPPs must reflect their desire for employment before the job search begins. It also must be in line with the type of job the consumer wants.
- E. Provider Rates Survey: Kim reported that DDS issued a draft survey of provider rates which we will share with our providers for their feedback. DDS is also requiring service providers to send them their data by October 1<sup>st</sup>

on how they spent their ABX2-1 funds. Providers will need to log in for each vendor number they have. This will be mandatory.

## VII. Committee Business

- A. AB 279 (Holden): This is the bill that will enable service providers to be funded for the local minimum wage increases, until the state minimum wages catch up with them. It is still in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. We still need everyone to write letters asking them to take this bill out of that committee and give it the funding it needs. Three of the Appropriations Committee members are in our local area, and we need to send letters to them:

1. Assembly Member Raul Bocanegra: fax #: (916) 319-2139
2. Assembly Member Richard Bloom: fax #: (916) 319-2150
3. Assembly Member Laura Friedman: fax #: (916) 319-2143

Also, Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian has said he would co-author the bill, but has not as yet, please send letters to him, fax # (916) 319-2146.

- B. May Revise: We anticipate that the Governor will release his May Revise sometime next week. We will be looking to make sure that ABX2-1 funds are still included in his proposed budget.
- C. Assembly Member Tom Lackey: He is not only a big supporter for our system, but he has also just started a petition at IPetition.com to keep developmental center dollars in the developmental services system rather than going back to the state's general fund. It takes seconds to sign the petition.

**Action:** Jennifer will forward a link to the petition to the service providers on her e-mail list.

## VIII. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Early Start Services (Fredlyn): The group discussed multiple vendor issues, including socio-emotional survey needed so families can better understand Early Start services. Also, orientations for new Early Start families are held at the center every other month.
- B. Implementation of the Behavioral Services Collaborative (Mariela): Dr. Arabian pretty much covered the status of this in her report (Section IV.E.

above). Next month, the group will be discussing the transition of consumers back to the regional center once they turn 21 years of age – and how to serve adults with behavioral issues.

- C. Implementation of the Self-Determination Program (Michelle): There has been no movement with the self-determination program.
- D. Services for Adult Consumers/Implementation of CMS & WIOA (Eleshia & Scott): Yolanda Bosch has developed a detailed process/flow chart for CMS and the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), which she shared at last month's VAC meeting. The group has developed an Individualized community Placement Assessment (handout) to help identify what supports are needed. This information will provide us with a good starting point with the person-centered planning process.

## **IX. Report on Board Committee Meetings**

- A. Administrative Affairs (Orli): The committee reviewed and will be recommending the approval of 3 contracts and to increase the number of corporate credit cards and their limits at the May 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting. The 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter human resources report showed that during that quarter, the center had 0 positions on hold, 19 new hires, 4 promotions, and 17 separations for a quarterly turnover rate of 0.11%. The statewide regional center POS report showed that NLACRC has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest POS deficit in the state (down from 1<sup>st</sup> place).
- B. Board of Trustees (Michelle): At the April 13<sup>th</sup> board meeting, Sharoll Jackson gave a presentation on New Horizons and 15 contracts were presented for approval. Scott Shepard will be giving a presentation on Avenues Supported Living at the May 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting.
- C. Consumer Services (Sharoll): The quarterly exceptions/exemptions report showed that 310 exceptions were made and only 8 were denied. The quarterly appeals and hearings report showed that during the last quarter, 6 fair hearings were held (2 for eligibility and 4 for service denial); 2 were denied and the other 4 were dismissed. The quarterly diagnosis report showed that of the 23,808 consumers that the center serves, 9,372 of them have some form of autism. For the monthly community placement plan (CPP) report, the center's goal for this fiscal year is to place 10 consumers out of the developmental centers and into the community. As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, the center had placed 11 consumers in the community; this leaves only 13 NLACRC consumers living in a developmental center or similar large facility.

- D. Government & Community Relations (Sharoll): The center sent 2 teams to Sacramento this year to visit with legislators at the State Capitol. Each team was comprised of a staff lead, board member, VAC member, and consumers. The main talking point was to support AB 279 (Holden). The visits with legislators were very successful as they got even more legislators to support the bill. The committee is recommending to the board to take a support position on SB 283 (Wilk), which would change the regional center eligibility criteria to include a disability that originates before an individual attains 22 years of age (versus 18 years of age). The committee is looking at ways to increase consumer participation in legislative advocacy. Also, the center is going to developing a Facebook page in Spanish.
- E. Nominating (Deborah): The committee has completed their work for this fiscal year. They will be presenting their recommended nominees to the board in May and the elections will be held at the June board meeting. The committee is recommending the nomination of 5 new VAC members, 7 new board members, and 1 board intern. There were many great candidates and not enough positions to nominate them all. Deborah encouraged any VAC applicants who were not selected to re-apply for membership next year.
- F. Strategic Planning (Wayne): The committee reviewed NLACRC performance contract report summary for FY 2013-14 (DDS is a little behind). The center's goal is to improve each year, do better than the state average, and meet or exceed the DDS standards. The report showed that the center did well with meeting goals and meeting DDS standards, but still needed to improve in 2 measures. The full report will be posted on the center's website. The committee also reviewed the quarterly program closure report which showed that so far this fiscal year, 46 programs have closed, impacting 183 consumers. Since 2008-09, 248 programs have closed, impacting a total of 2,268 consumers.

**X. Open Issues for Discussion** – No further 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 May 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting:

- A. Minutes from the May 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting

**XII. Announcements/Information/Public Input**

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> (break out groups meet)

### **XIII. Adjournment**

Michelle adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m.

Submitted by,

*Jennifer Kaiser*

Jennifer Kaiser  
Executive Assistant

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