

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
 March 7, 2024

Present: Suad Bisogno, Dana Kalek, Alex Kopilevich, Octavia Askew, Sharon Weinberg, Vahe Mkrtchian, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Andrea Devers, Daniel Ortiz, Cal Enriquez, Jaklen Keshishyan, Masood Babaeian, Erica Beall, Catherine Carpenter, Lisa Williamsen

Cristina Preuss, Vini Montague, Everly McOmie, Gabby Esharti, Arshalous Garlanian, Kimberly Visokey, Arezo Abedi – **Staff Members**

Michelle Heid – Legucator, Geri Sue Cox, Marine Topushyan, Nicole Brown – Minute Services – **Guests**

Absent:

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Suad Bisogno, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

II. Public Input

Public input was given.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

M/S/C (A. Kopilevich / D. Kalek)

B. Approval of Minutes from February 1, 2024

Action item: Update the meeting minutes as discussed:

- Suad Bisogno’s first name is misspelled in various sections, beginning with the Consent Items. Her pronouns were incorrectly typed as he/him. The correct pronouns are she/her. Page five, in the middle of the page
- On page five: In the sentence, “She informs the committee about a recently introduced bill related to BA services...,” BA should be typed as ABA.
- On page six, in the middle, the sentence “and AC members are courageous to sign up to be advocates” should be typed as VAC.
- On page six, at the bottom, In the sentence, “To approve that all AC members will be part of the legislative,” AC should be typed as VAC.
- On page seven, in the final paragraph, in the sentence, “including, himself and Erica, who will be turning out,” turning out should be typed as terming out.
- On page eight, in the middle, In the sentence, “Dana assures that the committee is actively...,” assures should be typed as assumed.

- On page nine, in the second to last paragraph, In the sentence, “The committee has also addressed the late notifications for the AC committee applications...,” AC should be typed as VAC.
- Jaklyn Keshishyan’s name is misspelled.

M/S/C (S. Weinberg / J. Keshishyan) To approve the Minutes presented with corrections.

IV. Executive Director’s Report – Cristina Preuss

Amy Westling wrote an informative opinion article published in The Capitol Weekly, emphasizing California policymakers to continue investing in the developmental services systems, including equity and service capacities. The California Policy Center for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities report recommends housing needs for individuals with developmental disabilities. Along with North Los Angeles’ strategic plan, this topic focuses on area five – safe, affordable, and accessible housing.

Department of Development Services has notified us about an expansion of permissible training topics and an updated timeline for submitting training requests for Early Start providers. Additional topics are family and engagement practices and early prevention, coursework for an associate of science degree, and literature for speech-language pathology and occupational and physical therapy. Training fees and staff time for the training are reimbursable, and the submission request deadline has been extended to September 30, 2024.

In February, California Health and Human Services announced the establishment of the master plan for the Development Services Stakeholders’ Committee. The Committee consists of diverse individuals with different backgrounds and experiences who will provide their subject-matter expertise to develop the plan as accurately as possible. The agency has also introduced trailer bill language that permanently eliminates the AFPP and FCPP fees charged to families.

For coordinated family support, the Community Services department has created a series of information sessions regarding CFS for case management scheduled for the end of February, March 26, and April 23. The sessions will provide more information about service providers that provide these types of services.

The number of Direct Service Professional training stipends continues to grow, and the department provides us with information bi-weekly about how many providers are considering this program.

ARCA recommends the preservation of the entitlement to need services and supports as defined in the Lanterman Act. ARCA wants to ensure the incredible availability of flexible and sustainable services for person-centered

outcomes, and the alignment of policies available to support is based on California's Employment First Policy. It is also imperative not to forget that we must continue to support accessible transportation and innovative technology and proactively prepare for the changing service needs that our community and the individuals we serve go through during their lifespans, considering the diagnostic and demographic trends. We also need to start looking at the different needs and services required by various age groups to continue to provide this support.

The State Council of Developmental Disabilities NCI surveys are running through the end of June 2024. The department, with the support of state council, is conducting the data collection, including families with an adult with intellectual disabilities living in their home, families with an adult with intellectual disabilities who do not live in their home, and families with a child with intellectual disabilities. Once the survey closes and we receive the report, we will bring the results to the Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC).

NLA has already planned and scheduled its purchase of service public meeting on March 26 at 10 a.m. and March 27 at 6 p.m. This allows families and our community to have an opportunity to attend either meeting based on their schedules. Information is available on our website. Please share it with people interested in attending. We are in the final stages of planning for the ARCA Grass Roots gathering in Sacramento on April 1 and April 2.

As of February 2024, the Center has served 35,622 consumers and applicants, including 4,879 in the Early Start department and 27,991 in the Lanterman program, which services kids over age three.

A. NLACRC Human Resources New Hires Report

Staffing data numbers are increasing and improving. There were 12 total hires for the first and second cycles in February. As of February 29, there have been 35 new hires for total recruitment. In conjunction with the People Scout recruitment agency, we conducted a virtual hiring fair on February 28, February 29, and March 1, where 130 individuals registered, 51 interviews were scheduled, and 25 people were offered a position.

Tuition reimbursement has been approved for nine employees, and we are encouraging more employees to apply.

V. Chief Financial Officer's Report – Vini Montague

As of December 2023, the E-1 allocation for FY24 is \$847.2 million. Monthly expenditures were \$74.1 million (YTD \$407.8 million), and total annual expenditures are projected at \$923.9 million. Based on the E-1 allocation, a projected \$76.6 million deficit in the purchase of services is projected.

For the statewide purchase of services expenditure projection for the 21 regional centers, the projected annual expenditure in the purchase of services, based on the E-1 allocation, North Los Angeles is projecting the second largest deficit in the state.

ICF lag payments, related to consumers residing in ICF facilities that had to transfer to managed care plans as of January 1, 2024; there have been some delays in enrollment in managed care plans, resulting in the regional centers funding ICF lag payments. We pay the ICF providers until they receive payments from the managed care plans, and they will then reimburse the regional centers. This week, we processed our first payment for ICF facilities; regional centers must pay them within ten days of receiving the requests.

VI. Chief Consumer & Community Services Officer Report – Evelyn McOmie
For the record, Evelyn McOmie is the Deputy Chief and not the Consumer & Community Services Officer.

VII. Community Services Director’s Report – Arshalous Garlanian
DSP \$625 training stipends will continue to be available until June 30, 2024. Providers are highly encouraged to collaborate with staff to register for this great opportunity. A \$150 provider administrative costs reimbursement is included. For questions, email contractsandcompliance@nlacrc.org.

DDS continues to prepare for full implementation of the rate reform and make the changes needed for standardized service and billing codes—identified updates for the day, behavioral focus, and medically focused day programs. In the next couple of weeks, we anticipate putting out directives on how the regional centers can assist the providers in fully implementing rate reform compliance related to service and billing codes.

Continuing to conduct HCBS settings visits, the deadline for full compliance is August 31, 2024. David Ramos hosts office hours for those with questions and is available to answer questions every Thursday at 2 p.m.

North Los Angeles is providing various trainings for the service provider community. The HCBS person-centered thinking training incentive is for those registered for the person-centered thinking certification program. The Regional Center has a \$500 incentive program. For questions, email David Ramos at dramos@nlacrc.org. For those who have already completed the training, letters have been sent to providers informing them of the incentive payments that are being processed.

The “Transition: From Consumers to Producers” training at the Chatsworth office on March 25 -27, 2024, still has a few spots available for those interested in registering.

Open Futures Learning is a self-guided learning module for providers that includes free CEUs. Interested individuals can contact the HCBS specialist.

Provider deaf sensitivity training will be held on April 30, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. More registration information will be shared.

The Service Provider Directory was scheduled to launch at the last minute, but DDS and the regional centers are still fine-tuning the training materials and guidance on how to implement it. We will provide more information as it is provided.

For help with DS 1891s, including questions about any vendor changes, insurance, organizational chart, change of address changes, or entity names, please email resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org.

Employment Services

For FY 23, the total PIP reimbursement was \$1,615,000 compared to FY 22 reimbursement of \$279,000. This is a drastic change in paid internship expenditures. During FY 23, 191 individuals were enrolled in the paid internship program compared to the 98 people enrolled in FY 22. We seek paid internships and competitive employment success stories to share at the Board dinner.

On our website, there is an enhanced behavioral support homes for children and adults RFP, housing development RFP, and level 4I Delayed Egress proposal request. The proposal must be submitted by April 1, 2024. The 2024 proposal submission period is closed. Status letters for submitted submissions will be delivered by March 15.

Vendorization requests for coordinated family support, self-directed support, and money management services can be submitted resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org. Cal EVV is conducting in-person training in various locations throughout the state. It hosts in-person office hours for caregivers and providers to ask EVV-related questions.

Coordinated Family Support directives are available, and they include a new standardized reporting tool for CFS incentive payments. Once we receive the DDS link, we will share it with the providers who can submit incentive requests throughout their lives. The regional centers will be notified of approvals, and reimbursements will be completed.

Further guidance about (SB) 616 rate adjustments for paid sick leave will be provided. There will be a spring and fall vendor fall. The spring save-the-date is for Tuesday, April 30th in Antelope Valley, and May 7th and 8th in San Fernando Valley. More registration information is forthcoming.

VIII. Legislative Report – Michelle Heid

On February 20, the LAO released its update that moved the budget deficit to \$73 billion. We did get positive numbers from February but have yet to be close to solving this problem. There are 14 state legislatures in the Los Angeles area, and there will be three new ones because Assembly Members Robert Rivas and Laura Friedman both ran for congressional seats, and Senator Scott Wilk is terming out. Assembly Members Laura Friedman and Alex Balekian will advance to the November election. The Secretary of State will certify the primary election results on April 12.

A virtual town hall was hosted and included guest Assemblyman Tom Lackey, who provided everyone with great community feedback. After the event, Assemblyman Lackey offered additional support to help with advocacy efforts. Representatives from Assemblymembers Schiavo and Carrillo's offices joined the town hall and shared their thoughts and expertise.

There is new senate leadership due to Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins resigning from her position. Her replacement is Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire. The last budget committee hearing was on February 28, and more information will be provided during next month's meeting. The legislature has moved to primarily in-person testimony. Our community was presented and got the committee chair's support. ARCA had a response to the governor's proposed budget, including advocacy against the delay in the rate implementation and other community-based matters. A Los Angeles contingency will be participating in grassroots days, during which we will continue to advocate for these matters to our Sacramento legislators. February 16 was the last day to introduce new bills. We mostly know the bills that will impact our community this year.

Local Senator Caroline Menjivar authored SB1281 – Advancing Equity and Access in the Self-Determination Program Act. AB 1876 is new legislation that allows for the continuance of remote meetings for IPPs and IFSPs if requested by the participants. AB 1906 changed terminology, and AB 2002 is the Blue Envelope program legislation sponsored by ARCA. AB 2026 – terminology bill that will replace outdated terminology. AB 2340 – many community members are impacted by MediCal and EPSDT services for individuals under age 21. AB 2340 will ensure they are following the federal guidelines on EPSDT. The public comment period for amendments to the HCBS waiver is closing today to access it and provide your feedback.

Self-advocacy chats are available and may be of interest to your service groups. Please share them. For more information or to share the link for the HCBS Final Rule animated series, please see the link in the legislative report. Advocacy days at the capital, called Disco at the State Capitol (California Disability Community Advocacy Day), are on April 9 and April 10. There is

also disability policy seminar happening in Washington, D.C., and information about the Early Start Interagency Coordinating Council at the state level is available in the legislative report. Information about Caregivers for Caring Futures, voting information, and resources are also available in the legislative report. We need to start educating the community for the November general election.

IX. Committee Business

A. Remote Services – NLACRC Update

Payments may be deferred for invoices to ensure the correct invoice is in place. As an agency, remote services can be provided at the cost of not seeing funding for months as POSs are rectified.

Action item: Obtain an answer regarding the provision of remote services.

B. VAC Open Chair / Committee positions

Suad Bisogno's chair position terms in June, and there will be an open chair position. One person has expressed interest in this position, but others can reach out to her for more information. Interest will be published in April, when individuals can self-nominate or nominate others for the chair position. In May, a new chair will be elected. There are several committee position openings. Four people were interviewed yesterday, and possibly more next month.

C. Legislative Grassroots update

NLACRC is hosting an in-person grassroots day on April 1 and 2 in Sacramento. Two VAC member liaisons—Suad Bisogno and Jaklen Keshishyan—are attending. North Los Angeles is also coordinating a local grassroots event. More people can get involved, and all VAC members will be assigned to a team. Virtual training will be scheduled for late March and April. Afterward, VAC members will receive information about their team (s) and legislator assignments based on their work address. Contact Michelle with any requested changes.

D. Draft letter to next ED

Another round of emails was distributed, and there is a rough draft that still needs edits. Once we are closer to securing a new executive director, we finalize loose ends on the letter based on the selected person's history, experience, and personality.

E. VAC Coalition Letter update

At a meeting with Amy from ARCA, she encouraged our group to sign off on the letter that was being circulated. The question was, "Do we have a

voice as a Board committee to sign off on letters as the Vendor Advisory Committee Coalition?” Based on this discussion, it was decided that individual organizations could sign off on this letter. An email was sent to committee members and the Adult Services Work Group to share the letter that ARCA, the Lanterman Coalition, CCLN, and CDSA had developed requesting signatures from organizations that wanted to sign off on this letter. We focused on the provider aspect, which legislators sometimes respond poorly to. As a provider community, when working on advocacy, we ensure we fully represent the people who work for us and support them. Feel free to view the draft letter.

- F. Annual Jynny Retzinger Community Service Award Recommendations
By next month, VAC needs to secure an awardee. This is the last announcement about the annual Jynny Retzinger Community Service Award. The committee members make recommendations, but the community can suggest them.

Action item: Determine the final date to submit nominations to the Jynny Retzinger Community Service Award.

- G. Back to Basics

- a) Money Management Services to support people we serve – NLACRC update: NLACRC has made efforts to open a Money Management Services RFP, but the rates are low. If a provider wants to provide the service and support people with financial management, they can apply for it.
- b) Outstanding authorizations, invoices, payments) including issues for the fiscal year that will close) – NLACRC Update: At the last VAC meeting, the Committee discussed the fiscal year closing and tools to support providers in securing outstanding payments before the fiscal year closing.

- H. Open Issues for Discussion

- a) VAC Virtual / In Person meetings remaining: Have made a Board request for one in-person meeting before the current officers' term. An update will be provided mid-month or at the next VAC meeting.

Action item (Assigned to Anna): Follow up with the Board about having one in-person gathering to discuss the VAC officer transition. We are open to a hybrid meeting, too—to be determined.

X. Committee Work Group Reports

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek): There are no new updates.

Next Early Start Services workgroup meeting is on March 21st at 9 a.m.

- B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)—During Tuesday's March 5th meeting, they discussed remote services and the timeline for mental health services. We also reported some positive self-determination stories. School Age Services meets for one hour on the first Tuesday of each month at 9:30 a.m.

Next School Age Services meeting is April 2nd, 9:30-10:30am.

- C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall) – Discussed an individual's challenge when moving into a residential setting. There is not always clarity on who will complete the SAA reporting if the individual chooses to work and adjust the admission agreements for the residential shared costs when someone starts work, which may have to be adjusted several times during a person's work career. A continuing systematic issue is disallowing administrators or house managers to deter someone living in a group home on their employment journey. The best strategy may be to discuss developing an IPP amendment with a service coordinator. Also discussed was the workforce training and continuing QIP and ACRE training incentives. Adult Services wants to see more CIEs and more PIPs converting to CIEs. Ensure the business community is not oversaturated with PIPs not converting to CIEs. We discussed attaching the NLACRC directory in the VAC packet. Some locals do not require a local business license in the self-determination program. The Regional Center can distribute a published list of which areas need a business license and which do not.

Next Adult Services Workgroup meeting is May 6th, 11:00am.

Action item: Add the NLACRC active roster director and critical calendar to the agenda.

XI. Board Committee Reports

- A. Administrative Affairs (Andrea Devers – VAC Representative) – During the February 28th meeting, there was a presentation about the audited financial statements. Most importantly, following up on outstanding authorizations and payments. Any issues should be reported to Jonathan.
- B. Consumer Services (Erica Beall – VAC Representative) – During the last meeting, there was a discussion about the service standards referred to

the Consumer Services Committee, followed by the Board and then the DDS for approval. Evelyn provided an update on the parents and guardians service coordinators pilot program—a draft of service standards where the social recreation services are included. Most reports, including the diagnostic and competitive, were covered. A few reports were deferred due to time constraints. The NLACRC Self-Determination Local Advisory Committee requested support for a letter it has written to DDS. The next meeting is April 17 at 6 p.m.

- C. Government & Community Relations (Jodie Agnew-Navarro – VAC Representative) – No new update.
- D. Nominating (Suad Bisogno—Committee Member): During the March 6th meeting, we decided to present at next week’s Board meeting, an alternate Committee chair to support the chair as needed.

We interviewed four potential VAC members and one potential Board member. Updates will be provided when decisions for these interviews are made in the next month or so.

- E. Strategic Planning (Daniel Ortiz – Committee Member) – During the February 5th meeting, we discussed the plan for the remainder of the year. The next meeting will be in May. Regarding the PIP program, for FY 21, there was nearly \$91,000; in FY 22, over \$279,000; and in FY 23, over \$1 million.

XII. Review of Meeting Action Actions (Item Owner and Due Date)

- A. Vendor Advisory Committee Action Log – Minutes Services reviewed the action of the meeting during this portion of the meeting.

XIII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

- B. Minutes of the March 7th Meeting

XIV. Announcements / Public Input

- A. Next Meeting: Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.
- B. Committee Attendance

XV. Committee Attendance

A. Early Start Services (Cana Kalek)

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Dana Kalek – dkalek@cdikids.org

Next workgroup meeting: TBD (via Zoom)

B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Cal Enriquez – Call.Enriquez@aveanna.com

Next workgroup meeting: TBD (via Zoom)

Next workgroup meeting: TBD (via Zoom)

C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall)

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Suad Bisogno – Suad@irioc.org

Next workgroup meeting: TBD (via Zoom)

XVI. Adjournment

Suad adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

Submitted by:

Kimberly Visokey

Executive Administrative Assistant

(The majority of these minutes are taken from the Minutes Service submission and reviewed/edited as presented herein by NLACRC staff.*

