

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2023

Present: Suad Bisogno, Alex Kopilevich, Andrea Devers, Dana Kalek, Cal Enriquez, Jaklen Keshishyan, Masood B., Octavia Askew, Sharon Weinberg, Erica Beall, Donna Rentsch, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Vahe Mkrtchian, Lisa Williamsen – **Committee Members**

Ruth Janka, Vini Montague, Evelyn McOmie, Gabby Esharti, Ashalous Garlanian – **Staff Members**

Chris Whitlock, Dolly Wauls, Michelle Heid - Legucator, Dolly Sharma -Minutes 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

Suad Bisogno proposed to add a discussion for the Next VAC Meeting and DSP Training Stipend under Committee Business.

M/S/C (A. Devers/J. Keshishyan) To approve the Agenda as amended.

B. Approval of Minutes from the October 5, 2023, Meeting

M/S/C (A. Kopilevich/A. Devers) To approve the Minutes as presented.

IV. Executive Director's Report – Ruth Janka

NLACRC Human Resources Report

Ruth Janka presented the Human Resources Report as presented in the packet.

Ruth Janka stated that Agenda items can only be added based on direction from the department or feedback from the public that requires action.

Suad Bisogno will host meetings a week before these meetings in order to permit people to add Agenda items.

Suad Bisogno asked how DDS would cover the pay differential if they were billing per individuals. Ruth Janka stated it would be handled by the Regional Centers, though the details were not yet prepared.

Suad Bisogno stated it will require more support for both the Regional Center and the

providers. E-billing needs to be updated in the rollout. Erica Beall stated work is being done on that, but it may take several years to clean the data.

Octavia Askew stated DSP trainings for residential providers were provided online but she asked if there was a vendor number for those looking to take the training even if people did not work for an adult residential or elderly facility. Ruth Janka stated they can take the training without the stipend for DSP 1 & 2, but she will check if the DSP training is available to all individuals regardless of the work. Erica Beall stated there was a separate section on the website for these kinds of trainings. Vahe Mkrtchian stated a vendor number is required to take the training. Ashalous Garlanian stated that other trainings were available online for those without a vendor number.

Dana Kalek asked if those who are making those charges to their insurance would be able to take these courses. Suad Bisogno stated that item would be tabled until Committee Business item B.

V. **Chief Financial Officer's Report – Vini Montague**

Vini Montague stated that the Administrative Affairs Committee had not met that month, so there was not a Financial Report to share. She announced that an Accounts Payable Supervisor, Robert Ghan, was hired and in training. There were still open positions in accounting and recruitment was ongoing. New positions were added to support service providers. The close of FY 2021-2022 notice was posted on the website. The deadline for submissions was February 6, 2024. 1099s were being prepared and they will be sent during the second or third week of January. The Social Security Administration may announce a cost increase for SSI beneficiaries effective January 2024 which will impact consumer share of costs. The team will update that share starting in January 2024. A check-on schedule for calendar year 2024 will be prepared and posted on the website in December.

Sharon Weinberg noted that the open positions were included in the packet, and she asked why the Director of Finance position was on hold. Vini Montague stated it was on hold so they could assess the need and internal resources. When she moved into the CFO position, it was put on hold and the Controller, Bob, took on a lot of those responsibilities. The CFO position had also been changed, so the Director of Finance position may not be needed at this time. Positions to address vendor issues were open and recruiting.

VI. **Chief Consumer & Community Services Officer Report – Evelyn McOmie**

Evelyn McOmie stated NLACRC will not have meetings in December. Three lead trainers were hired, 2 for Adult Services and 1 for School Age in the San Fernando Valley. While there were only 3 lead trainers, recruitment was ongoing, and those trainers would be implemented for the departments they were in.

The IPP Training Manual was created and developed for CSCs and distributed to all of them on October 30, 2023. A refresher course will be posted on November 6, 2023, and CSCs will have until January 1, 2024, to complete it. The learning will be available in an electronic form for staff to keep it on hand. The IPP Training was modified to meet the needs of the new staff so that training is more relevant to current practices.

The IPSP Training Manual for Early Start Staff was updated and training materials will be rolled out in January 2024 to be in alignment with the Lanterman Act.

The Training for Case Management/Onboarding of New Staff had 20 modules to facilitate virtual trainings for staff. Additional training is being developed. The trainings are available online so staff can access it at any time.

Training for Onboarding Parents, or Parent University, was an ongoing virtual training being developed for families that register. Through this, they can learn the Regional Center system and enhance their knowledge on NLACRC, IFFP, IPP, service standards, and POS purchases, among many other topics. This will be piloted in the Spring with about 20 randomly selected families. It will be modified based on feedback and then published in the community.

Internal Assessments of NLACRC forms to make changes and streamline inter-agency review and bring NLACRC into modern times.

Case management continued to progress on POS approvals. In October, over 3,700 POSs were approved.

Partnership meetings will begin with vendors in a yearlong effort to meet with vendors. She hopes to meet with vendors to discuss mutual goals and achievements moving forward.

Suad Bisogno asked if the lead CSC trainer had a case load. Evelyn McOmie stated for training purposes, they could have up to 50 cases to address using shadowing.

Jaklen Keshishyan asked if case management training included important links and information they could refer back to. Evelyn McOmie stated the training was broken down into subjects with hyperlinks and tools packaged together rather than navigating in any different folders in a shared virtual space. Jaklen stated that it was a great update.

VII. **Community Services Director's Report** – Arshalous Garlanian

Arshalous Garlanian stated that based on questions about the DSP training stipend, she will follow up to answer some of the questions asked.

There were 166 vendor numbers, and 1,442 DSPs had already taken the training. NLACRC receives weekly updates on the DSPs that take the training, and the department was making payments for that. Any questions about payment could be directed to vendorincentiveprograms@nlacrc.org

The QIP for Workforce Survey was still being reviewed by DDS. Once approved, letters will be sent to providers that participated in the survey and are eligible for the \$8,000 incentive.

HCBS Specialist, David Romos, will reach out to providers to schedule tours and meetings to review validation and remediation plans submitted in March. A consultation service will also be available for providers with remediation plans.

Service Provider Training Webinars include:

- Person Centered Thinking Certification Training (online) – November 28, 2023, to December 1, 2023
 - \$500 incentives provided
- Person Centered Thinking Certification Training (in person) - January 2024
 - \$500 incentives provided
- Open Future Learning (self-guided, online learning for free)

Employment Services continue to meet with providers to update PIP/CIE information. The Annual report on PIP/CIE was being prepared to be submitted to DDS. Those who had not already filled out the information should reach out to pip&cie@nlacrc.org

The Quality Incentive Program was waiting on a response of providers that qualify for the Employment Access & Equity Incentive Payment and the Employment Capacity Incentive Payments. UAA Robotics' Programming is a training program for individuals with autism interested in working with manufacturing. This program was a part of a grant program. Anyone interested can reach out to join.

Research Development continues to request vendorization for Coordinated Family Supports. Final touches were being made to the approval letters for the program. Social Recreation request for vendorization was ongoing and resources were being built for Social Recreation Camp and non-medical therapy. Self-Directed Support Services for service code 099, SDP, was still being vendorized. Tailored Day Services were available for those interested. Electronic Visit Verification was still being discussed during office hours at DDS for anyone with questions or comments.

Effective January 1, 2024, ICF DDH and DDN will transfer to MediCal Managed Care. Stakeholder meetings and webinars will be held to help those impacted by the transition.

Quality Assurance was ongoing, so any information detail changes need to be updated with the Regional Center. Rate questions and insurance updates can be directed to NLACRC. The next Vendor Support Forum would be on November 16, 2023, from 10 am to 12 pm, and questions should be submitted by November 10, 2023, so they can be reviewed. Each department is present during the forum and breakout rooms can be established to answer department-specific concerns.

Sharon Weinberg asked if anyone had a connection with Community Care Licensing and Guardian as there was a long delay for potential support parents. The delay prevents people from being hired. Arshalous stated she will look into it and relay the information.

VIII. **Legislative Report** – Michelle Heid

Michelle Heid stated that the legislature adjourned for the year. The Governor had until October 14, 2023 to sign or veto legislation on his desk, so those decisions were completed. 2024 will bring about the second year of the Legislative Session so that any bills stalled can still be reviewed. The 2024 Legislative Calendars was available online and in the packet. Michelle suggested that people review who represents them in their given areas, as elections would be

the following year. Developing relationships with the potential candidates may be important moving forward.

Legislative Bills were included in the packet with updates. AB 222 and AB 1147 was stalled, AB 751 and AB 248 was signed by the Governor, and AB 649 was held under submission. Bills in the second year were lower than the first year, but it would still include about 2,000 proposed bills that will need to be reviewed in order to understand the impact to this community. Additional details about representatives were included in the packet.

ARCA has a list of bills that could impact Regional Centers. Links were included in the packet. ARCA had been holding trainings and webinars throughout the year.

DDS continues to issue directives including training stipends, Regional Center Board Trainings, incentive programs and SDP. The Directive allowing Telehealth Services will end on December 31, 2023, unless an extension comes from the department. The DS Task Force had not met in 2023. The DDS Stakeholder meeting information was included in the packet along with workforce initiatives and stipends associated with trainings.

SSI/SSP adjustments were included in the packets. The Office of Administrative Hearings Committee had met, and their report was included in the packet.

Many families will have to transition from their Medical plans. Those providing insurance-based services will also be impacted and should follow up on what changes to expect. Also in the packet were toolkits for best practices and legislative events in the coming weeks.

IX. **Committee Business**

A. Next VAC Meeting – 2024

The January VAC meeting will be in January at the Chatsworth Office to allow Santa Clarita more time to set up hybrid meeting options.

Sharon Weinberg requested that people use a microphone when speaking at the meeting and also alert vendors that the meeting will be in person, and they will be invited. Suad Bisogno stated that Board Support can highlight that the meeting is hybrid and include the location.

Action Item: Support Staff will send out the VAC January meeting invite in a timely manner that will state the meeting location.

Alex Kopevich stated using a microphone would be helpful for hearing across the room. Erica Beall stated they could use closed captioning and the system that pivots to the speaker.

Action Item: Support Staff will prepare equipment to make communication easier during the VAC meeting.

B. DSP Training Stipend

Sharon Weinberg stated that FHA vendors are interested in having providers participate in the DSP incentive program, as they are the ones caring for the individuals in their home, but they cannot get the incentive since they are reimbursed rather than paid. She was not sure what they could do, but it should be a main focus that these individuals are the ones that need to participate in the incentive program.

Action Item: Arshalous Garlanian will follow up on how to include FHA vendors and those reimbursed by insurance.

- C. Back to Basics – Message to BOD/Follow-up
Suad Bisogno stated the BOD will meet the following month. Based on feedback from the group and stakeholders, the message will be consolidated to send back to the Board. The Back-to-Basics statement was presented to the committee.

M/S/C (S. Weinberg/O. Askew) To approve the Back-to-Basics statement be submitted to the Board.

- D. Proposed Service Provider Visit Verification for In Home Services Update
Ruth Janka stated that the Board had reviewed this proposal, and it was sent to the Consumer Services Committee to review. The document will be reviewed at the CSC meeting in November.

Erica Beal stated that while increasing accountability was a good idea, the focus should be prioritizing necessary actions and increasing staff despite inflation issues.

- E. Annual Individualized Program Plan
Ruth Janka stated it was previously reported that providers were not receiving the Annual IPP. In reviewing the processes, some things have changed so supervisors will ensure that all qualifying providers will automatically receive the Annual IPP. She thanked the committee for bringing this issue to their attention. Processes were put in place to make sure this is the case moving forward.

Lisa Williamsen asked if it was standard procedure to invite vendors to the IPP meetings. Ruth Janka stated that under the Lanterman Act, the Regional Center is a part of the time so if the Regional Center invites people to attend, then they can come to the appropriate team. She noted that it was not a consumer meeting specifically and they wanted the meetings to be effective in discussing IPP. More consideration would need to be given to invitations. The statute identifies that the intent states parents or providers can come, but those who are new may not think so, so the Regional Center will advocate for it.

- F. DDS Provider Rate Reform Plan of Action Committee
Suad Bisogno stated a letter was developed by the Directors of the Department of Developmental Services looking to schedule a meeting to discuss the current wage crisis. It was shared with the committee before the meeting. A meeting will be scheduled, and legislative efforts will be organized along with ARCA's efforts.

M/S/C (S. Weinberg/J. Keshishyan) To approve the letter from Department of Developmental Services expressing concerns about wages and encouraging rate reform.

Jodie Agnew-Navarrow shared that Cal Cash was holding a meeting to discuss rate reform, so they were also aligned with the topic.

- G. NLACRC Website Feedback – Chris Whitlock
Chris Whitlock stated updates were being made to the website and the team was reaching out to the community to get feedback on how to make the website better. A meeting will be held to discuss feedback. Anyone can sign up via the link provided.
- H. Open Issues for Discussion
None at this time.

X. Committee Work Group Reports

- A. Early Start Services - Dana Kalek
The next meeting will be held on November 16, 2023, at 9 am.
- B. School Age Services - Cal Enriquez
The group discussed mental health services. At the next meeting, held on Tuesday, November 6, the legislative team was invited to review available information. goals and outcomes for mental health resources for consumers.
- C. Adult Services - Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall
The next meeting will be held on November 6, 2023, at 11 am.

XI. Board Committee Reports

- A. Administrative Affairs – Andrea Devers
There was not a meeting last month.
- B. Consumer Services - Erica Beall
There was not a meeting last month.
- C. Government & Community Relations – Jodie Agnew-Navarro
This committee discussed the legislative Town Hall, legislators to target, and more. On February 22, 2024, from 6-7:30 pm, a virtual meeting will be held to review legislation. In March, there will be a Consumer Legislative Training online. A goal of the committee was to visit a disability rights organization, for which Jodie had increased the list of groups which would be included in training materials.
- D. Nominating - Suad Bisogno
There was not a meeting last month.
- E. Strategic Planning - Daniel Ortiz
No report at this time.

XII. Review of Meeting Action Items

- A. Vendor Advisory Committee Action Log

XIII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

- A. Minutes of the November 2nd Meeting

XIV. Announcements/Public Input

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

XV. Committee Work Group Information:

- A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek)
For meeting schedule and information
Contact: Dana Kalek - dkalek@cdikids.org
Next workgroup meeting: March 16, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

- B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)
For meeting schedule and information
Contact: Cal Enriquez – cenriquez@accreditednursing.com
Next workgroup meeting: March 7, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

- C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall)
For meeting schedule and information
Contact: Suad Bisogno - Suad@irioc.org
Next workgroup meeting: March 6, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.

XVI. Adjournment

- Suad adjourned the meeting at 11:32 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.*

