

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Self- Determination Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023

Present: Victoria Berrey, Michael Carey, Richard Dier, Jordan Feinstock, Jon Francis, Diana Padilla Garcia, Wilary Torez, Lori Walker – **Committee Members**

Robin Monroe, Gabriela Esharti, Denise Juarez, Evelyn McOmie, Lucy Paz (Spanish Interpreter), – **NLACRC Staff Members**

Lia Cervantes Lerma (SCDD), Claudia Wegner (Claudia Cares Consulting), Ana Ramirez (Claudia Cares Consulting), Dr. Laura Espinoza (Autism Society of LA), Kristianna Moralis (Disability Voices United), Katie Dempsey (DDS), Katie Hornberger (DDS), Suzy Requarth (DDS), Miriam Erberich, Naomi Hagel, Jaime Munoz, Jacquie, Julie LaRose, Sofia Renteria-Haro, Silvia Renteria-Haro, Danielle Isola, Socorro Curameng, Elena Tiffany, Minutes Services – **Guests**

Absent:

I. Call to Order, Introductions and Housekeeping

Lori Walker called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

Terrasel will not be able to present today. The other presentations were DDS and the Autism Society of LA.

Questions and concerns for committee directives were needed from members. Feedback on the Self Determination Program (SDP) was needed by September 30. The new code for SDP would be 099.

Spanish interpretation services were announced.

The chat will be saved and included in the written response for feedback that will be sent to DDS. Even if questions are not answered in the meeting, they can be answered at a later time by DDS.

Lori shared contact information for issues related to SDP:

NLA SDP Email: selfdetermination@nlacrc.org

SDP Hotline: 818-756-6314

Committee Direct Email: nlacrcsdlac@gmail.com

As per the Self-Governance Documents, the committee members need to turn in their Annual Self-Review. This is to ensure that members want to continue as active members or allow the committee time to plan accordingly.

II. Resources, Upcoming Meetings, and Regional Center Opportunities

Dr. Laura Espinoza presented on behalf of the Autism Society of Los Angeles. A new training will launch, and they hope it can be shared with Regional Center clients. The Mutli-Cultural Advanced IF Training is for IFs and those who transition people into the SDP program. These individuals will provide translations and mediation that can provide culturally appropriate training in Spanish, Korean, and English. The lectures will be in the three core languages and most materials will also be translated. There will be a 16-hour Person-Centered thinking training, an 8-hour training on the Lanterman Act, an 8-hour training on Self Determination legislation, Advanced Level Training on the budget and spending plans, roundtables with professionals already in the field, and assistance in setting up an IF business. In year 2, they will do mentoring and ongoing support. They hope to create opportunities for IFs to network amongst themselves and with industry professionals.

Jordan Feinstock asked when, where, cost, and who can attend for the trainings. Dr. Laura Espinoza shared a document with dates, times, and information for registering. The training is free. The first training is on October 23, 2023, and anyone who registers can attend. One criterion is that people have knowledge about SDP already, otherwise they would be directed toward the introduction course.

Jacque stated she was an IF and had attended multiple training courses. She stated there are often time parents attending, but it is a divergent path of education because it gets too specific. It sounds like they will try to weed those individuals out. Dr. Laura Espinoza stated that was correct.

Richard Dier asked if the document would be available on the Autism Society website. Dr. Espinoza stated she could email the link otherwise they could bookmark the page.

Richard Dier asked how the curriculum and information developed is reflective of input from Regional Centers or DDS. Dr. Espinoza stated the curriculum was being developed within the Autism Society of Los Angeles and with some of their community partners. She stated she would follow up about the specific partners.

Miriam Erberich stated she is a parent provider, and she hopes she can still access the training. She had taken many training courses, and had several certificates, but wasn't comfortable offering her services for \$100/hour. She hopes this training will go deep, as that is what she is looking for. Dr. Espinoza stated they will be screening to make sure they have background knowledge, so it would be no problem for Miriam to join.

Lori Walker stated the Resource Fair would be on September 23 from 10 am to 1 pm at the Santa Clarita Valley Office. Kristianna Moralls stated over 20 resources will be available at the Resource Fair plus speakers discussing their experiences with SDP and small roundtables where people can have their questions answered. Each vendor will bring a giveaway so there will be drawings the whole day.

Lori Walker stated Statewide had set a meeting for the end of the month.

Wilmary Torres OCRA outreach team is operating two free online training sessions on

September 29. Session One will teach basic advocacy tips to get care for you or your loved one and Session Two is an introduction to the SDP with the target group of Japanese and Vietnamese communities, though everyone is welcome. There will be 2 guest speakers as well. She shared a link for the registration

Lia Cervantes Lerma stated she was an advocate with California SCDD LA Office. They provide technical assistance to families that have questions. For anyone that had questions, she stated they could call. Lia Cervantes Lerma announced that statewide training from SCDD would continue on Mondays, with the next meeting on September 25 where they will discuss how to testify and influence public policies. The trainings alternate between English and Spanish. Additionally, the Third Annual State Council Law Contest would be held, and the best idea submission could be turned into a law.

Victoria Berrey stated the State Council is doing statewide SD orientation in Armenian, Chinese, and other languages.

Kristianna Moralls stated the Disability Voices United conference was coming up. It will be a virtual conference on Friday, November 3 from 8:30 to 4:30. She shared the link in the chat.

Jordan Feinstock shared a link to the California Department of Developmental Services Professional Training Stipend Program.

III. Attendance

Attendance was taken and a quorum was met.

Richard Dier stated that Ellen Jannol had excused her absence in advance.

IV. Approval of the August Meeting Minutes

M/S/C (J. Feinstock/V. Berrey) To approve the August 17 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed with unanimous consent.

V. DDS Presentation

Suzy Requarth, Assistant Deputy Director at DDS, stated they were joining the meeting as a part of an initiative to attend local advisory meetings. Now that there were over 3,000 enrolled in the SDP, data could be broken down more than in the past. Other advisory groups have found it helpful to see the data broken down by the Regional Center.

Katie Dempsey, Chief overseeing the Self Determination Program at DDS, stated that local volunteer advisory committees share best practices and training materials, review implementation, and make ongoing recommendations for improvements. North LA received \$127,000 in funds to keep SDP going. DDS has worked toward long-term success of DDS through creating standardized vendorization packets for pre-enrollment supports (March 2023), revising

rates for the Financial Management Services (April 2023), extending initial PCP and pre-enrollment supports (June 2023), and meeting with local volunteer advisory committees (July 2023). It was noted that local advisory groups no longer had to report to Bagley Keen. Along with updating the Financial Management System (FMS), DDS has worked on standards and certifications for independent facilitators, started collecting data on enrollment timelines, and set targets and benchmarks for Regional Centers.

Suzy Requarth presented the statewide data. Enrollment for the state was up to 3,050 by July 2023. Katie Dempsey stated that for August, they had reached 3,189 participants. Enrollment just for NLACRC was up to 226 in July 2023. NLACRC was the third largest Regional Center in California by enrollment. Statistics for the state and NLACRC were presented for demographic information. NLACRC was more even than the state for SDP participant across age groups, but there was still over-representation for 18–22-year-olds. There was under-representation for intellectual disability and over-representation for autism. There was under-representation among African American and Hispanic populations and over-representation among the white population at a larger rate than was seen statewide. English was over-represented at NLACRC, as it was at the state. Suzy Requarth opened for any questions and feedback; she also shared the DDS email for any questions at a later time.

Victoria Berrey asked if the department tracked information about budget neutrality for the program. Suzy Requarth stated they have access to the budget data, but they were not looking at it for cost neutrality. The information that was gathered and reviewed was about disparities in budget between different groups of participants. In the future, they can make that information available.

Victoria Berrey stated she had heard from some families that their IFs were pressuring them to increase their budgets, which is not what was intended with the program. Kaite Dempsey stated that could be an opportunity to educate families about the process. Suzy Requarth stated the SDP was now federally approved, meaning services paid through with these programs can get federal funding which increases oversight, even if someone was trying to raise the funding.

Jon Francis stated there was a systematic issue of parents not trusting the system, especially if they did not understand right away. Many families had increased concern about the FMSs raising their costs. FMS states that they work on pass through funds and are not holding the funds, but that increased burden was passed to the consumers. He asked if it was correct to pass the burden or if it could be absorbed somehow. Suzy Requarth stated DDS had been discussing this topic. DDS was determining what guardrails could be placed around rates and was reviewing what other states were doing. There was not yet a directive on employer burden, but they continue to work with FMSs on a path forward

Miriam Erberich stated IFs suggest increasing the budget due to experience. It is a hassle to open the budget or ask for something new and get it approved. She stated it needs to be easier to ask for those changes. Victoria Berrey stated that the point she had brought up was prices being raised for services that the individual did not ask for, rather than for additional services with time limits. Lori Walker stated she had heard that IFs come in with nothing and ask for

more.

Richard Dier stated the advisory committee will collaborate with NLACRC in training about the principles of SDP, the mechanics, and the rights of the participants. He asked what “advancing the principles of self-determination” meant, and asked if the principles were a part of the Regional Center that need to be operationalized into the IPP office. In some places, the principles are seen as models or band-aids, so he asked for clarification on what advancing them meant. Suzy Requarth stated DDS had not issued guidance on what advancing the principles meant. Operationalizing that part of the statute depends on the Regional Centers and advisory committees. She noted that NLACRC does a lot of work between meetings, but the department had not worked to establish those definitions. It was also not specified how the principles relate to the IPP process, but they were included in the statute and were required. She suggested it should be added as a DDS action item to operationalize that goal. Richard Dier stated the principles are the heart of SDP and it would be useful to make that clearer. He asked if the principles could be advanced by case law. Suzy Requarth stated they were not sure. This topic could be worked on with the Regional Center, this committee, and DDS. Lori Walker noted that the words sounded good, but things like freedom were infringed upon by more rules.

Lori Walker stated that FAQs were always changing but it was never listed in the notices. She suggested adding the dates for the FAQs and/or describing the questions in the notice. Katie Dempsey stated they had received that feedback before and were discussing that topic as well.

Jordan Feinstock stated the larger issue is determining if someone needs services or not, rather than if a budget is overblown. He stated that when someone considers opening their budget with their IF, it is very expensive, and they should alternatively provide training to consumers so they can build their own budget, handle overtime, fire or hire someone, and more without assistance. Suzy Requarth stated that the State Council offers orientation at a high-level and additional training materials on enrollment and responsibilities in SDP were being prepared for the public and would be released in the near future. Other advisory committees had requested those coaching services as well.

John Feinstock stated there was no oversight with FMS. His vendor was not paid for 4 months by FMS on more than one occasion. He stated most consumers don't know how to manage things like that. Suzy Requarth stated that DDS was developing standards and a certification for FMS providers that will ultimately go into the regulations process. Those individuals already go through vendorization with the Regional Centers, but more are needed since SDP is a new service.

Jordan Feinstock stated that only 2% of consumers attend advisory committee meetings. As it was a Self Determination Program, they should be present to share their opinions. He stated they should be informed about meetings.

Kristianna Moralls stated that prior to 099, her organization provided services to 19 different Regional Centers. With 099, the potential need for in-person service will narrow who they can provide service to. She expressed concern as the year is almost over and it appears that no changes were made. Kristianna Moralls noted that no IFs should pressure the consumers and

stated none of the IFs she worked with would behave that way. She suggested they train consumers on what to expect from IFs. Kristianna Moralls requested that DDS meet with IFs to determine how to get people best covered under 099. Lori Walker reported that Ruth Janka had provided clarification on September 19 stating that IF services, under 099, had to be direct services. She had also stated there would be a higher standard for courtesy vendors, but that NLACRC did not intend to remove their insurance requirements. Suzy Requarth stated that they were working on finalizing pre-enrollment support services and clarifying what people can do and get paid for. IF engagement groups were being organized from across the state to provide feedback and create action items to guide the final decision. As the IF standard is set, which is hopefully sooner than later, NLACRC and the advisory group will hear about it. For insurance concerns, that is determined by the Regional Centers and its Board of Directors, and therefore varies depending on location.

Kristianna Moralls stated that having the rate dropped but insurance increased makes conditions unsustainable and could create a lack of professionals. Suzy Requarth stated it is a priority to take care of having enough staff to meet their needs.

Claudia Wegner from Claudia Cares Consulting stated if they need to travel to some of their clients, they would have to pay for 2 hours of travel for 1 hour of work. Additionally, a lot of the work is done virtually as they are not typical vendor providers. She stated that 099 states that transition support is not an independent facilitator, but in the Self Determination Law, independent facilitators cannot do other work. Since independent facilitator is not used to describe 099, then any vendor could become an 099. Suzy Requarth stated they don't want to see someone receive transition support that is in the best interest of the provider rather than the participant. She appreciated the feedback and comments. Claudia Wegner stated that established IFs should be fine, but for the new individuals it was less clear about how they would provide services, especially when it is face-to-face.

Richard Dier stated he heard that DDS gave assurances that face-to-face will not be required. He asked if that was true, as they need to understand for business modeling purposes. Suzy Requarth stated this topic was included in the discussion about how services can be provided, and guidance would be given soon.

Lori Walker stated that local advisory groups were required to provide feedback by the end of August for 4731 processes, but no feedback was given as of September 10, only after she continually called for information. She stated it was demoralizing when timelines and laws were not followed without any consequences. A Regional Center had a lot of problems and their auditor noted that there were no repercussions. She requested a system be set up to ensure accountability for timelines, follow ups, etc. Jordan Feinstock agreed there was no oversight, as he had mentioned in his example. Lori Walker stated there needed to be accountability for FMSs and Regional Centers. They were meant to take responsibility for their families, but it was frustrating and demoralizing to see nothing change. Lori Walker stated she appreciated how the local advisory groups had been placed and asked that it remain flexible while also holding people accountable.

Action Item: Richard Dier will send a written document about feedback and questions from this meeting.

VI. Adjournment

Lori Walker adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Submitted by:
Minutes Services

