

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2023

Present: Sharon Weinberg, Dana Kalek, Vahe Mkrtchian, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Andrea Devers, Alex Kopilevich, Jaklen Keshishyan, Cal Enriquez, Catherine Carpenter, Erica Beall, Octavia Askew, Masood Babaeian– **Committee Members**

Liliana Windover, Monike Paz, Ruth Janka, Evelyn McOmie, Asrshalous Garlanian, – **Staff Members**

Michelle Heid - Legucator, Dolly Sharma -Minutes Services, Lilian Martinez - Board Member, Alisha Turner - JNCS, Scott Shepard, America Maravila, Aurelia Creative Steps - **Guests**

Absent: Suad Bisogno, Daniel Ortiz

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Jodie Agnew-Navarro, called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

The Committee Members introduced themselves to the group.

II. Public Input

Dana Kalek shared that Michelle Linares, the owner and CEO of The Learning Grove, who recently passed away . Michelle was a part of the Early Start Community and strong advocate for children and families and leaves behind a husband and two children. The Committee held a moment of silence in honor of Michelle and her contributions.

Lilian Martinez announced that a report from KALW was shared by Disability Voices United related to group home issues; and related it to AB1147. Lilian forwarded the report to the Committee for review.

Victoria Berrey, from Family Focus Resource Center, shared that FFRC is partnering with NLACRC to host the Armenian Parent Circle of Support. The inaugural meeting is September 7th and will cover support and future meetings. All are invited. There will be a monthly IEP Training Workshop that will be held in English and Spanish, more information is available on the FFRC website. The Annual Resource Fair will take place on October 15th at the Cal State Northridge Campus. Applications are still being accepted for vendors who are interested in participating.

Alisha Turner, from JNCS, shared that the UAA Robotics Programming Training will be hosting an Open House and a Soft Skills Training Cohort this fall and Alisha can be reached for more information.

Scott Shepherd stated that his organization, Avenues, is hosting 5 Employment Webinars in October on Tuesday mornings geared towards self-advocates, family members, NLACRC staff

and agency staff.

Jodie Agnew-Navarro announced that the Cal-Tash Conference is scheduled for March 1-2, 2024 in Sacramento and call for proposals are open.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

Item VIII. Government and Community Relations Request was added to the agenda to follow the Legislative Report. All items will subsequently be moved down.

M/S/C (A. Kopilevich/O. Askew) To approve the agenda as revised

B. Approval of Minutes from the August 3, 2023, Meeting

Jodie requested a revision to include her name on the attendance list, as well as Erica Beall.

M/S/C (E. Beall/D. Kalek) To approve the Minutes as revised

IV. Executive Director's Report - Ruth Janka

Ruth reviewed the report as presented in the packet. Highlights include:

Legislation

AB1147 is now up for consideration by the full Senate, who can choose to support the bill as written, to amend the bill, to choose to not support the bill or to hold the bill to be addressed in the next calendar year. Ruth will share the outcome as updates become available.

Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act – Translated

DDS will be publishing the Lanterman Act into Spanish! The department intends to maintain the publication in both English and Spanish ongoing.

FY23-24 Service Access and Equity Grants

Service Access and Equity Grant applications from community-based organizations and regional centers are due to DDS by September 26, 2023 through the online application in GrantVantage. Questions regarding the application or process should be sent to SAEgrantprogram@dds.ca.gov.

Direct Service Professional Internship Program

DDS has contracted with All's Well to administer the department's statewide DSP Internship Program; the goal is to provide paid internships to individuals interested in working in the field of developmental disabilities and enhance the service provider workforce across the state. The program will be piloted across selected regional centers before being implemented statewide.

DDS Direct Service Professional Training Stipend and Incentive Program Pilot

This program will be implemented statewide September 1st! DSPs will be able to earn two stipends, \$625 each, for participating in training. Of the two trainings, the Code of Ethics is required to earn a stipend.

Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA)

ARCA met on June 15 - 16 in Sacramento, where the board reviewed ARCA's Financial Statement May 2023, ARCA's Annual Report, FY23-24 through FY25-26 Strategic Plan, FY23-24 Strategic Priorities, and received a legislative update.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

SCDD met on July 18, 2023 and voted to accept recommendations of the Cycle 46 Committee to provide grants to remove barriers related to employment for people from marginalized populations in the San Francisco/Bay Area, establish self-advocacy training and education to young and young adults with developmental disabilities in the Los Angeles area, and to develop materials and establish training 14 opportunities in the Los Angeles area for people with developmental disabilities seeing employment and develop educational materials regarding the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities for employers. There was also a report of the results of the Self-Determination Program Evaluation which was based on direct feedback provided by people served by regional centers and people who support them.

Consumer Advisory Committee

NLACRCCRC is seeking VAC support in promoting CAC meeting participation. Vendors are being asked to post meeting information in common areas where individuals gather.

Staffing

Recruitment August 14th New Hires: 4 total

3 Consumer Services Coordinators (1 Bilingual Spanish) and an HR Specialist 1, Priscila Reyes.

August 28th New Hires: 5 total - all Consumer Services Coordinators (3 Bilingual Spanish).

NLACRCCRC Career Day scheduled for Saturday, September 9th at the Chatsworth location from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Executive Administrative Assistants Hailey Lauderdale and Elizabeth Alvarez have both separated from the agency to pursue other employment opportunities. We wish them both well! Executive Administrative Assistant Liliana Windover will be retiring this year, with her last day of work being October 12, 2023 and her official retirement date being December 31, 2023. We will miss her! Administrative Assistant Monike Paz joined the Center in August and is doing a fantastic job of supporting the Board.

Provider and Community Engagement and Outreach

Met with Senator Menjivar's team, along with NLACRCCRC's Consumer Services Directors Cristina Preuss and Donna Rentsch, and DEI Supervisor Raphael Munoz, to present information regarding regional center eligibility, the application process, service coordination and services in both Early Start and the Lanterman Programs on Tuesday, August 22nd. See

Senator Menjivar's tweet at

Attended The Nurture Collective's grand opening on August 24th, a new infant development program in the Antelope Valley, to tour the program and meet program staff. This much needed resource offers feeding therapy, occupational therapy and infant development programming in a spacious environment.

NLACRC is joining the 6 other Los Angeles County regional centers in "L.A. Parent" magazine in promoting our Early Start Program across Los Angeles County. The full page ad, in both English and Spanish, will describe the importance and availability of early intervention services, free of charge, in Los Angeles County, and will include contact information for all 7 regional centers.

Social Recreation Reimbursement Office Hours

Community Services Department will release September office hours next week. Drop-in office hours provide CSCs with assistance completing Social Recreation Reimbursement forms. Note, consumers/families may attend office hours with their service coordinator and may bring receipts for "on-the-spot" reimbursement submissions for social recreation activities approved in the IPP/IFSP.

V. Chief Financial Officer's Report – Vini Montague

Vini reviewed the report as presented. Highlights include:

The deadline for submitting billing for FY21-22 (between the dates of July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022) will be February 6, 2024.

DDS is currently conducting a routine, 2-year audit on FY22-23.

It was also noted that Residential Placement and Admission Agreement process is being streamlined. NLACRC plans to have a central, generic e-mail address that will be monitored by NLACRC staff. Vini will share the email once it has been set up by the IT department.

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

Evelyn McOmie reviewed the information as presented in the packet. Highlights include:

Contacting Case Management

NLACRC staff are available during office hour via phone, email, and text. Our Ring Central system allows for callers to text the office direct dial number and a message will be received by the CSC- the CSC with the app on their cell phone will receive it in text formation/those who do not have the app downloaded on their cell phone will receive the text message on their computer. In addition, NLACRC has updated the contact list on the NLACRC website.

DDS EVV Outreach to Providers:

DDS is following up on accounts created for Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) where there may be errors or assistance needed by service providers. DDS will be contacting providers for

NLACRC regarding any items that have an error to provide training or assistance. NLACRC will be cc'd on the outreach emails. Kimberly Johnson McNeil will be point of contact for DDS.

Final Update on New POS Process

POS process is now fully up and running, earlier than previously anticipated. So far, about 2,000 POS approvals per month as observed in the last 2 months (8,194 approved as of 8/31). NLACRC is soliciting feedback from vendors on this new process.

Consumer Advisory Committee

The CAC is seeking participation and the vendor community is being asked to help spread the word to those who may be interested in contributing to the committee. In addition, in LA will be sharing information with the vendor community for those who would allow the CAC to come to their programs for a 20 to 30 minute presentation on the CAC for interested participants. The Committee is seeking to coordinate this outreach in an effort to increase participation to serve on the Committee.

Internal DOR Referral Criteria

To establish more effective means of assessing employment needs, NLACRC is developing a tool for CSC's to utilize in order to determine when best to write a DOR referral instead, to work with supportive employment providers for an employment path for support. This is currently in development and is planned to be ruled out later in the Fall.

VII. Community Services Director's Report – Arsholous Garlanian

Arsholous reviewed the report as presented in the packet. Highlights include:

NLACRC Vendor Fair

NLACRC will host an in-person Vendor Fair on September 26 & 27th at the San Fernando Valley Office and October 3rd, in the Antelope Valley office from 10-2pm.

HCBS Compliance

NLACRC continues to work with Service providers to validate HCBS compliance. Our HCBS Specialist will schedule site visits to review Validation and Remediation plans submitted by Providers. Additionally, a 1:1 consultation will be provided for programs with Remediation plans.

Reimbursement for Early Start Provider Training

One-time, time-limited funding for early intervention service providers training. Reimbursement is available for 1) cost of training fees and/or 2) staff time to attend training. Submit your request for funding to 21ResourceDevelopment@NLACRCcrc.org. The Deadline to submit reimbursements is September 30th.

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

The DDS Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) team is hosting open office hours this month. Office hours are a time to ask questions about EVV's "Topic of the Day", troubleshoot and or get information about future events.

DSP Training Stipend Update

An incentive program for up to two \$625 stipends per employee and \$150 reimbursement for admin will be launched (current expectation of DDS guidance 1st week of September) related to DDS approved training available on the ARCA learning center portal. NLACRC will send an email blast and update our website.

Quality Incentive Program: Employment Access & Equity Incentive Payments

To request incentive payments available through the QIP Employment Access measure, every service provider must complete a certification form and submit to the Department at QIPEmpAccess@dds.ca.gov.

Quality Incentive Program: Employment Capacity Incentive Payments

To request incentive payments available through the QIP Employment Capacity measure, service providers must complete a certification form and submit to the Department at QIPEmpCapacity@dds.ca.gov.

VIII. Legislative Report - Michelle Heid

Michelle reviewed the report as presented in the packet. Highlights include:

Legislative Update

On September 1st both the Senate and Assembly Appropriations Committees met to decide the fate of many bills. The Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by Senator Portantino, met and voted on 489 bills that were determined to have a significant fiscal impact on the state. The Assembly Appropriations Committee, chaired by Assemblymember Chris Holden, met and voted on 276 bills.

AB 1147 (Addis)

Disability Equity and Accountability Act of 2023 Would enact the Disability Equity and Accountability Act of 2023, which would make various changes to the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act for purposes including providing increased oversight of regional center operations and performance. The bill was significantly amended on 9/1/2023 limiting the scope of the legislation, however, it maintained some aspects supported by the community. Status: This bill was passed by Senate Appropriations on 9/1/2023. It was then read a second time and amended before being ordered to a third reading.

Senate Leadership

California State Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins (D39) announced she will step down from the top senate leadership position in 2024 ahead of the next election. Unable to seek re-election due to term limits, Senator Atkins and the Senate Democratic Caucus have chosen Senator Mike McGuire (D2) to take over the top spot, but an exact date has not yet been announced. Senator McGuire will serve as Senate President pro Tempore until he terms out of the legislature in 2026. The term "pro tempore" means "for the time being" and is sometimes abbreviated as "pro tem". The state's Lieutenant Governor, Eleni Kounalakis is the President of the Senate, and votes in the event of a tie in senate proceedings.

ARCA Supports Budget Trailer Bill AB 138/SB 138

ARCA sent an immediate letter of support for Trailer Bill AB 138/SB 138 to legislative Budget Committee Chairs, Senator Nancy Skinner and Assemblymember Phil Ting. In the endorsement, ARCA praised the bill for providing “a solid basis for gathering actionable data to inform future policies” in their continued commitment to providing culturally-responsive services and service access equity. DDS, regional centers, and stakeholders have been working together to create standardized templates and procedures for Individual Program Plans and other processes, and the trailer bill further codifies these efforts.

Fun Fact

Senator Toni Atkins has served as State Senate President Pro Tem since 2018 and served as Assembly Speaker from 2014 to 2016. She is the first woman to hold the top spot, and the first person in 150 years to serve as both Senate President Pro Tem and Assembly Speaker, according to the Pro Tem's office.

FREE Caregiver Workforce Training

CalGrows, a no-cost workforce training and development program for caregivers for older adults and adults with disabilities, is now open for registration. Hundreds of courses are available in multiple languages, and cover a wide range of topics relating to activities of daily living, understanding various disabilities and conditions, person-centered practices, legal and ethical issues, crisis prevention & intervention and more. These free trainings are available to paid direct care workers, Home and Community-Based Services caregivers, and unpaid family and friend caregivers. Caregivers in the paid direct care workforce are also eligible for up to \$6,000 in financial incentives and career pathway development benefits. Free coaching support is also available to help with courses, career planning, and goal setting. The Arc of California was one of dozens of organizations across the state awarded the CalGrows Innovation Fund grant to develop trainings and provide resources to support aging family caregivers of adults with developmental disabilities.

National Disability Voting Rights Week

National Disability Voting Rights Week is September 11-15, 2023, hosted by the American Association of People with Disabilities’ REV UP Voting Campaign. REV UP was started by AAPD in 2016 and stands for “Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power!” REV UP’s mission is to build the power of the disability vote by making sure disabled voters are registered and ready to vote in every election, and by advocating for accessible voting processes, from register to vote to casting a ballot. REV UP has a toolkit available that includes social media graphics, a fill-in press release document, a Plan to Vote checklist, and more in the folder linked above.

September 26th Project - Emergency Preparedness Checkup

The September 26th Project is an annual emergency preparedness checkup reminder for autism and special needs families, created in honor of Feda Almaliti, past VP of National Council for Severe Autism, and her son Muhammed. The pair passed away on September 26th, 2020 in a house fire, a tragedy that rocked the autism community. Prompting to take just 10 minutes each year to check over plans for fire safety, natural disaster, and wandering prevention, lives can be saved and tragedy avoided.

IX. Government and Community Relations Request

Jodie announced that the Government and Community Relations Committee is hosting virtual and in-person legislative and advocacy forums in February 2024. The Committee is seeking Vendors who would be interested in hosting an in-person event at your site. Anyone interested is welcome to contact Board Support for more information.

X. Committee Business

A. Committee Goals, Priorities for FY 2023-24

Dana Kalek, Cal Enriquez and Erica Beall reviewed the goals as presented in the packet. After discussion, it was proposed to include verbiage related to the mechanics of ensuring that individuals have no delay in accessing School-Age Services. Cal Enriquez will revise the document as discussed.

M/S/C (E. Beall/S. Weinberg) To approve the Priority Goals for Early Start and Adult Services as presented. The Priority Goals for School-Age will be approved to include the revisions that will be made by Cal Enriquez that will be sent to the Committee via email.

B. VAC Workgroups for FY 2023-24

The workgroups were reviewed as presented

M/S/C (E. Beall/S. Weinberg) To approve the FY2023-24 Workgroups as presented.

C. Meeting Conflict: Vendor Fair & VAC Meeting October 5th - Kimberly Jones

This issue was resolved as the Vendor Fair has been rescheduled to October 3rd in the Antelope Valley NLACRC Office.

D. NLACRCCRC Hybrid Meetings Capability

a. In regard to a question about if NLACRC offices are capable of facilitating hybrid meetings, it was confirmed that the San Fernando Valley and Antelope Valley Offices are currently hybrid capable; the Santa Clarita Office is still in progress. The current dates being held for VAC in-person meetings are October 5, January 4th and March 7th, respectively.

E. Back to Basics – Message to BOD/Follow-up

Erica Beall mentioned that the Adult Services Workgroup have requested feedback from the Committee on recommendations for how stakeholders, Board Members, can all engage with NLACRC to provide support for the CSCs in order to streamline and expedite the authorization process. It was decided to add this item to the next VAC agenda for further discussion as the Committee takes the time to collect their recommendations.

F. COVID-19 Related Updates

a. Updated local Public Health Orders

i. Masking Requirement for Healthcare Workers Rescinded

Ruth shared the order from the LA County Public Health office has been fully rescinded. NLACRC and vendors are no longer required to wear masks. This information has been distributed to all vendors but Ruth will re-send the information to the VAC for detailed review and consistent with each vendor's operational guidelines.

XI. Committee Work Group Reports

A. Early Start Services - Dana Kalek

Dana announced that there was a guest from LA County Public Health who discussed mobile nurses that provide childhood mobile vaccinations. There are steady referrals coming in. Program Evaluation reports are due September 30th.

B. School Age Services -Cal Enriquez

The workgroup discussed VAC priorities and goals and will continue to solicit resources and guest speakers for the VAC to assist in developing outcomes, goals, and priorities.

C. Adult Services - Sharon Weinberg

The group discussed VAC priorities, goals and outcomes and the Back to Basics message.

XII. Board Committee Reports

A. Administrative Affairs - Andrea Devers

Andrea shared that she has not received any information on how to attend this meeting or when they occur. Monike Paz will add Andrea to the Administrative Affairs meeting distribution list.

B. Consumer Services -Erica Beall

There are no updates to report. She also mentioned that she will not be able to attend the next Consumer Services Committee meeting and asked for volunteers to attend in her absence. The Board has previously discussed signing for Service Delivery and is being addressed in the Consumer Services Meeting. Jaklen Keshishyan will serve as the VAC representative and Monike Paz will add Jaklen to the distribution list for the Committee.

C. Government & Community Relations -Jodi Agnew-Navarro

David Coe is the new Committee Chair that was voted in. Discussion surrounded legislative bills, budget items, priorities, and how to disseminate more information to families and the best methods for doing so.

D. Nominating -Suad Bisogno

There are no updates to report.

E. Strategic Planning - Ruth Janka

Ruth stated that the Committee is in the process of conducting the Individual and Family Satisfaction Survey, which has gone out to consumers. The survey will gather

information in response to the specific areas of the Strategic Plan.

XIII. Review of Meeting Action Items

Meeting Action Items attached in separate document.

XIV. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

A. Minutes of the August 3rd Meeting

XV. Announcements/Public Input

A. Next Meeting: Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

B. Committee Attendance

XVI. Committee Work Group Information

A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek)

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Dana Kalek - dkalek@cdikids.org

Next workgroup meeting: September 21, 2023 at 9:00 am (via Zoom)

B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Cal Enriquez – cenriquez@accreditednursing.com

Next workgroup meeting: September 4, 2023 at 9:30 am (via Zoom)

C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall)

For meeting schedule and information

Contact: Suad Bisogno - Suad@irioc.org

Next workgroup meeting: TBD

XVII. Adjournment

Jodie adjourned the meeting at 11:39 am.

Submitted by:

(*) *Monike Paz*

Executive Administrative Assistant

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