

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2023

Present: Suad Bisogno, Alex Kopilevich, Andrea Devers , Dana Kalek, Cal Enriquez , Nick Vukotic, Jodi Agnew-Navarro, Erica Beall, Daniel Ortiz, Bob Erio – **Committee Members**

Ruth Janka, Evelyn McOmie, Arshoulous Garlanian, Liliana Windover, Hailey Lauderdale– **Staff Members**

Michelle Heid - Legucator, Dolly Sharma -Minutes Services, Catherine Carpenter, and approximately 63 Service Providers- **Guests**

Absent: Lisa Williamsen

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Suad Bisogno, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:34 am.

II. Public Input

Liliana Windover reminded the Committee that there are volunteer opportunities for NLA Committees, those interested can contact Board Support.

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

M/S/C (L. Williamsen/D. Ortiz) To approve the agenda as presented

B. Approval of Minutes from the May 4, 2023 Meeting

M/S/C (J. Agnew-Navarro/D. Kalek) To approve the Minutes as presented

IV. Legislative Report – Michelle Heid

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

Legislative Update

June brings about a busy time in the legislature where they are working to get bills through Appropriations and final steps in the house of origin while also working towards finalizing the State Budget. Governor Newsom released his May Revise, but the financial projections of the state are estimated at this time due to the extended tax deadline for most Californians. June 2nd brings the deadline for each house to pass bills introduced in that house. For bills with a fiscal impact this also means passing through Appropriations and this is where many bills remain on suspense meaning they will not continue through the process this year. Some of these may become 2-year bills and may continue through the process in 2024, but there will not be action taken on them further this year.

The May Revision Estimate continues to support the needs of consumers and proposes new policies to continue efforts to improve service access and to achieve better outcomes and consumer experiences. In addition to caseload and utilization updates, the proposed FY 202324 funding supports the following new and updated items:

- Coordinated Family Support Services
 - Rate Model Assumptions
- Regional Center Operations Policy Update
- START Training
- Community Placement Plan Reappropriation
- Lanterman Act Provisional Eligibility

ARCA Responds to Governor's Revised Budget

In response to the Governor's May Revision, the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) has submitted a formal response to the Senate and Assembly Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittees. The letter emphasizes particular support for expanding the Participant-Directed Services model to include social recreation, reinvesting money for affordable housing, matching various regional center salaries to state equivalents, and opposition to any plan to bring back family fees.

AB 222 (Arambula) Civil Rights Department: Californians with disabilities workgroup Convene a workgroup to make recommendations to the Legislature for the development of accessibility and antidiscrimination laws for people with disabilities, as defined. The bill was heard in the Committee on Judiciary and passed to the Committee on Appropriations, where it was referred to the suspense file.

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 gathering relevant data and providing increased oversight of regional center operations and performance. The bill would require the State Department of Developmental Services to evaluate regional center performance, which would be implemented using a common set of performance measures. The bill would require the assessments to use performance measures in 7 specific domains: community integration, employment, equity in access, case management, client and family choice, experience and satisfaction, human and civil rights, and health and safety. The bill would require the department to establish standards for these performance measures, as specified, by July 1, 2024. This bill was heard in Committee on Appropriations where it was passed and is currently awaiting a third reading in the Assembly before moving to the Senate.

Legislative Hearings

The following Budget Subcommittee hearings on Health and Human Services were held to discuss proposals in the Governor's 2023-24 May Revision Budget. Senate and Assembly committee hearings can always be viewed or listened to live or recorded. As we move out of the public health emergency, some hearings are allowing public comment via telephone or other electronic means while others are only allowing in-person testimony.

Fun Fact

According to Bloomberg, California is poised to overtake Germany as the world's 4th largest economy, continuing to outperform the nation and other countries in GDP growth, companies' market value, renewable energy and more. California's economy has proven relatively resilient, first through the pandemic and now through the current period of elevated inflation. So much so, that the Golden State's gross domestic product is poised to overtake Germany's as the fourth largest in the world after the US, China and Japan. It had already leapfrogged Brazil (No. 7) and France (No. 6) in 2015 and supplanted the UK (No. 5) in 2017.

DS Task Force

The DS Task Force provides guidance on the delivery of services to Californians who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. 42 individuals serve on the full DS Task Force while an additional 115 serve on the 5 Task Force Workgroups (Community Resources, Oversight, Accountability and Transparency, Safety Net, Service Access & Equity, and System & Fiscal Reform). Meeting information is available as well as recordings of the meetings at the website above.

Quality Incentives Workgroup Meeting

The workgroup met on May 4th, 2023. DDS shared proposed QIP measures for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023-24 and invited discussion and public comment. Updates on completed activities included data submission from Adult Residential Facilities for Persons with Special Health Needs (ARFPSHNs) and analysis, and 2022 DSP Workforce Survey analysis. Priorities for the QIP in 2023-24 are to develop new "core" measures that will be available to all providers, expand the Prevention and Wellness measures to other vulnerable populations (beyond ARFPSHNs), fully implement Employment measures (including Employment Satisfaction), and to continue building the QIP infrastructure.

DSP Workforce Survey

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is collecting data from agencies that employ Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) about factors that impact the workforce. The DSP workforce is experiencing challenges such as high turnover and vacancy rates, which can affect the lives of individuals needing support. Stakeholders have expressed support for learning more about the employment of DSPs to inform policy changes, designing recruitment and retention efforts, and examining the impact of rate increases over time. The data collection effort will collect data, through an online survey, on vendor agencies' direct service professionals (DSPs) for calendar year 2022 and will establish baseline information from which DDS, agencies and stakeholders may assess challenges, evaluate the impact of existing initiatives and shape future policies to improve workforce stability. The 2023 DSP Workforce Data Collection began in early May 2023 and will end June 30th, 2023. Registration is required to participate. Vendor agencies who are eligible to participate in the data collection and complete the survey in its entirety will receive an \$8000 incentive after the data collection has ended.

DDS Early Start Standardized Information Packet

DDS has released a standardized information packet for Early Start services and geared toward parents and other caregivers of infants and toddlers up to age 3 who may have, or are at risk to have, developmental delays or disabilities.

Office of Administrative Hearings Advisory Committee (OAHAC)

The Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Advisory Committee for Lanterman Act Programs was created by Welfare and Institutions Code section 4717 in 2022 . The committee is responsible for providing non-binding recommendations about mediation and hearing operations under the Lanterman Act for people with developmental disabilities in California. It is composed of stakeholders including individuals served by regional centers, family members, and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD). The Committee is required to meet two times a year. Their inaugural meeting was on May 15th, 2023.

National Access and Functional Needs Symposium

The second annual National Access and Functional Needs Symposium will take place virtually on July 11 and 12, 2023 from 9:00am – 12:00pm (PDT), hosted by the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (CDHSEM), and New York University (NYU). Providing equal, accessible, quality service to every individual impacted by disaster, including those with access and functional needs (AFN) is an essential element of emergency management. The National AFN Symposium brings together the disability community with emergency managers, disaster planners, and first responders from across the country in an online forum to foster an environment of trust and understanding vital to advancing the mission of access and functional needs throughout the nation. The symposium is sponsored by the American Red Cross and Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM). There is no cost to register.

Minimum Wage Update

Michelle shared that minimum wage increases will be updated in-real time per California law and will be added to the trailer bill language. It was noted that some employers can be forced forced to increase their wages due to minimum wage increases statewide.

V. **Executive Director’s Report** – Ruth Janka

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

Governor’s May Revise of the State Budget

The Governor’s Budget includes \$14.2 billion total funds (TF) (\$8.6 billion General Fund [GF]) for FY 2023-24; a net increase of \$1.6 billion TF (\$1.4 billion GF) over the updated FY 2022-23 budget, or a 12.7 percent TF increase. The modernization of the Core-Staffing formula was not included in this budget revise, there will be continued advocacy efforts from NLA and ARCA to secure the proper funding to support all of the operations in the organization.

Regional Center Performance Measures (RCPM) Program

Equity and Cultural Humility, Service Coordinator Competency in Cultural and Ethnic Diversity NLA will be submitting a training plan to DDS by the June 1, 2023 deadline. While DDS only requires service coordinators, first line supervisors and intake staff to be trained, NLACRC will provide training to all staff, pursuant to the Center’s Inclusion, Equity and Diversity policy. Equity And Cultural Humility, Linguistic Diversity Due to updates needed in the database to meet the performance measure requirement of ensuring four language-related data fields in

SANDIS are completed, the deadline has been extended to June 30, 2023.

Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA)

ARCA continues to testify in budget hearings as well as continue to coordinate discipline group meetings for the regional center system, conduct ARCA committee meetings, and collaborate with stakeholders and the department in identifying ways to address systemic issues and implement directives and mandates. ARCA's next board meeting is scheduled for June 15 -16 in Sacramento.

Percentage of Rate Adjustment used for Wages and Benefits for Direct Care Staff

Per DDS, starting January 1, 2023, providers that received a rate increase must use a percentage for staff wages and benefits. DDS has posted an online tool showing the required percentage applicable to each service. Please contact Contract&Compliance@nlacrc.org for questions.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD)

SCDD met on May 23, 2023 from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m, where new members Sonia Jones, Nestor Nieves and Jessica Brown were sworn in. DDS presented an update on the Governor's Budget, highlights included the expansion of provisional eligibility to children ages 0-2, additional positions for regional centers for enhanced monitoring of HCBS Final Rule compliance, and funding for service coordinator positions. SCDD is advocating for the establishment of an Employment First office, as well as seeking to promote alternative to conservatorships for youth. SCDD will receive \$5M from the General Fund to develop the "Supported Decision Making Technical Advisory Program. The next SCDD meeting will be held in person in Sacramento on July 18, 2023.

Recruitment

May 8, 2023 new hires included 6 Consumer Services Coordinators (4 Bilingual Spanish), 3 Office Assistant II-Bilingual (Spanish), and 2 Accounting Specialists. New hires effective May 22, 2023 included 3 Consumer Services Coordinators (1 Bilingual Armenian), and 1 Health & Safety Waiver Specialist (Bilingual Spanish). 16 new hires for May. The Center is actively recruiting for all open positions including a Human Resources Director (posting for Public Information Manager will be made this week).

Retention

NLACRC is engaging in multiple activities to increase staff retention and demonstrate appreciation of staff for their efforts and dedication while we continue to recruit to fill open positions. Please see the following: The Center will provide an employment incentive again this year; we are evaluating the year-end surplus to determine the amount. The amount will be equitable across positions; the Center has authorized six (6) 8-hour days of overtime for staff in May and June; staff may work overtime, up to 8 hours per day, on designated flex Fridays and Saturdays; the Center is hosting unit lunches to facilitate team building for units and departments and demonstrate appreciation for the work and dedication of staff across the organization.

DDS Direct Service Professional Training Stipend and Incentive Program Pilot

NLACRC has launched the DSP Training Stipend Program Pilot; direct service professionals may take up to two courses and receive \$500 stipend for completion of each course. NLACRC has three service providers, 2 from the San Fernando Valley and 2 from the Antelope Valley, who have volunteered to pilot the program and DSP staff have begun taking the online courses. Service provider staff eligible for the program must work directly serving consumers for at least 50% of the time; staff ineligible for the stipend may also take the courses.

Alex Kopilevich mentioned that there has been some communication issues when a designated CSC separates from NLA. He suggested a notification of some kind be sent to vendors from NLA to notify them of the CSC's departure from the organization. Ruth stated that she will follow up on this request.

In regards to minimum wage, it was noted that the state minimum wage, not the local minimum wage, is the threshold that are required to be followed by providers. If a provider needs a state minimum wage adjustment, there is further guidance from NLA and DDS on how to implement the updated rates.

VI. Chief Financial Officer's Report – Vini Montague

Vini reviewed the report as presented in the packet.

It was reported that as of April 2023, the D1 Allocation was \$791,780,596 and there is a projected surplus of \$49,559,110. D2 Allocation was received last week, the allocation for FY23-24 and NLA will receive an additional allocation of \$59.5 million that includes \$794,000 in social recreation grants, \$2.4 million for start-up funds and approved projects, \$33.5 million for the provider rate reform and \$4.2 million for the training stipend program. Total D2 allocation is \$936,000,000.

The Committee was reminded that the Year End rollover is coming up and the last business day of the FY is June 30, 2023. The Case Management software will be temporarily unavailable after that date to initiate the rollover and to generate the new FY authorizations to be mailed out in July.

NLACRC continues to work with Sandis to assess potential solutions for requests regarding a vendor portal.

Vendors who need to contact an accounts payable supervisor were directed to contact Bob Kuntai, who will be filling Ed Gonzales' role on an interim basis.

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

GO-Kits

The Regional Center continues to work on the efforts of distributing the emergency Go kits to the identified individuals residing in high Fire Danger Zone. Thank you to the ILS and SLS agency that have started working with the individual they serve and have supported them with accessing the Go Kits. Reminder to SLS and ILS if you have individual in your program that have

been identified by the department, you have received a list through Drop Box notifying you of the names. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our Emergency response specialist Roy Ortega at ROrtega@nlacrc.org

NLA Success Stories

NLACRC was able to gather success stories from our community, including a few programs that were able to work with individuals they serve to share their successes. We appreciate the efforts made to be able to highlight and celebrate success at this year's board dinner. The stories will also be shared on our website once the June event has occurred.

Pilot Program

POS pilot in progress thus far we are looking to rolling it out Supervisor POS approvals early in the new fiscal year.

VIII. Community Services Director's Report – Arshalous Garlanian

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

2023 DSP Workforce Data Collection

Survey opens May 1, 2023, and registration is required to participate in the survey. There is an incentive payment for agencies that complete the survey in its entirety. The survey will close on June 30, 2023.

2023 Service Provider Training/Webinars/Symposiums.

Upcoming Training: Variety of Trainings to support Service Provider Community on enhancing HCBS services.

Person-Centered Thinking: Certificate Program- through Mains

May 30, 31, June 2, 6, 7, 9 9:00 am – 12:00 pm (virtual)

Symposium: The Power of Language

June 20, 2023, 10am-2pm (Virtual)

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 Resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org.

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

By June 1, 2023, regional center providers of personal care and home health care services subject to EVV are required to be transmitting Cures Act compliant data to the state's EVV system either via CalEVV, free to use state supplied EVV system, or via an alternate EVV system of the provider's choosing which meets the state's requirements. DDS hosts Open office hours for Providers to ask questions. Upcoming Office Hours will be posted on the DDS EVV page.

Virtual Learning Modules

NLA has partnered with Open-Feature Learning, who will provide self-guided learning modules on a broad range of topics such as Supportive Employment, Person Centered Thinking

Approaches. This resource is free and offers CEU opportunities to vendors who are interested. Vendors interested in registration can contact David Ramos at NLA.

Soc Rec RFV

NLA continues to have the Request for Vendorization open for Social Recreation, CAMP, and Non-Medical Therapy services.

Tailored Day Services (TDS)

On 12/1/2022, DDS rolled out a one-page addendum to update program designs for vendors interested in providing Tailored Day Services. To find the Addendum, please visit the NLA website. Tailored Day Services Addendums. Please submit the TDS addendum to the NLA Resource Development team at resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org.

Vendorization Maintenance

General reminder to please submit your insurance and organizational charts to Contract&compliance@nlacrc.org.

Provide notice of changes (address, entity, name) to ResourceDevelopment@nlacrc.org

Any questions related to DS 1891 forms, annual program evaluations (in-home respite providers) or the rate study implementation (rate increases for 01/01/2023) please contact Contract&Compliance@nlacrc.org.

IX. Committee Business

A. Jynny Retzinger Award

This award is given in honor of Jynny Retzinger, who was a longtime NLA Board Member and parent who had an active role in advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities. This award commemorates Jynny's passion and dedicated work and is awarded annually to other community advocates. This year, the Jynny Retzinger award is presented to Henry Bruell, CEO of Pathpoint. Henry demonstrates commitment to advocacy and has been an invaluable resource for guidance, strategizing and developing ideas to better support the vendor community. Henry was particularly instrumental during the pandemic as he provided support in challenging circumstances. The Committee shared their appreciation and congratulations for Harry.

Harry thanked the Committee for the honor and shared his vision of continuing to

B. Transitioning VAC Members Update

Suad shared that Nick Vukotic will be transitioning off of the Committee after 6 years of service and dedication. Nick's team ongoing support for the ALS Foundation, LA Children's Hospital, Alzheimer's Association, the VA Edwards Airforce Base. He also provides advocacy for families and DECFS foster children. Suad thanked Nick for his service to the Committee. Nick shared his appreciation to the Committee and participating vendors for all that he has learned during his tenure.

Bob Erio is also terming of after 6 years of work on the Committee. Bob has served on the Nominating and Administrative Affairs Committees at NLA and helped design the CIS Socially Integrated Multigenerational Program model and among many accomplishments, has advocated for senior services at NLA since 2008. Suad thanked

Bob for his many years of leadership, guidance and support.

Suad also recognized Don Lucas for over 36 years in the field. From starting as a vocational counselor, to day program director to Community Services Manager. He formed rested Services that serves over 2500 individuals in the LA and Ventura County areas in areas of respite, personal assistance, ILS supported living and money management.

C. Committee Goals for FY23-24

The Committee discussed potential goals for the next FY. One recommendation was to incorporate some kind of language around legislative advocacy within all work groups. Also, the inclusion of language about Self-Determination and transportation. This item will be further discussed at the August Committee Meeting.

D. Draft Critical Calendar for FY23-24

This calendar was reviewed as presented in the packet. The Committee will continue to meet monthly. Suad recommended the inclusion of a Committee Orientation and Welcome to the August calendar. Ruth Janka will make the addition.

X. Committee Work Group Reports

A. Early Start Services - Dana Kalek

Dana announced that the early start training reimbursement was discussed and there is still funding available. She also mentioned that Dr. Natasha Swain, VP of Government Affairs is involved in addressing this item. Ruth Janka announced that the intake rates is climbing to the highest rate in NLA history. Dedicated outreach efforts continue across the community on a regular basis.

B. School Age Services -Cal Enriquez

There are no updates to report.

C. Adult Services - Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall

There are no updates to report.

XI. Board Committee Reports

A. Administrative Affairs - Bob Erio

There are no updates to report.

B. Consumer Services -Erica Beall

There are no updates to report.

C. Government & Community Relations -Andrea Devers

There are no updates to report.

D. Nominating -Suad Bisogno

The Committee had a special meeting to discuss term renewal.

- E. Strategic Planning - Daniel Ortiz
There are no updates to report.

XII. Review of Meeting Action Items

- A. Revisions to the draft Critical Calendar

XIII. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting

- A. Minutes of the June 1st Meeting

XIV. Announcements/Public Input

- A. Next Meeting: Thursday, August 3, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.
- B. Committee Attendance
- C. Committee Member Roster

XV. Adjournment

Suad adjourned the meeting at 11:15 am.

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: July 20, 2023 at 9:00am

- B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)
For meeting schedule and information
Contact: Cal Enriquez – cenriquez@accreditednursing.com
Next workgroup meeting: TBD

- C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall)
For meeting schedule and information
Contact: Suad Bisogno - Suad@irioc.org
Next workgroup meeting: July 3, 2023 at 11:00am

Submitted by:

(*) *Elizabeth Alvarez*

Executive Administrative Assistant

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