

North Los Angeles County Regional Center
Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

January 5, 2023

Present: Suad Bisogno (Chair), Alex Kopilevich, Andrea Devers, Bob Erio, Dana Kalek, Don Lucas, Erica Beall, Jodie Agnew-Navarro, Lisa Williamsen, Nick Vokotic, Cal Enriquez, Rosalyn Daggs, Catherine Carpenter – **Committee Members**

Lizeth Chavez, Lilliana Windover, Gabriela Eshrati, Arshalous Garlanian, Cristina Preuss, Vini Montague, Malorie Lanthier, Evelyn McOmie– **Staff Members**

Michelle Heid - Legucator, Dolly Sharma -Minutes Services, Azucena Bustillos - Interpreter, and approximately 102 Service Providers- **Guests**

Absent: Daniel Ortiz

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Suad Bisogno called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

II. Public Input

No public input

III. Consent Items

A. Approval of Agenda

M/S/C (A. Kopilevich/E. Beall) To approve the agenda as presented

B. Approval of Minutes of the November 3rd meeting

M/S/C (A. Kopilevich/D. Kalek) To approve the Meeting Minutes for the November 3rd meeting as presented

IV. Executive Director's Report – Suad Bisogno for Ruth Janka

Suad reviewed items in the report on behalf of Ruth Janka, as presented in the packet. Highlights include:

Director of Consumer Services – Adult and Transition Services

While the Center continues to recruit for this Director position, Consumer Services Managers Donna Rentsch and Emmanuel Gutierrez are providing support and direction to the SFV Adult and Transition teams.

NLACRC's Board of Trustees has finalized the Center's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, which includes five focus areas: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging, Development & Growth of an Engaged Workforce, Employment & Day Services, Health and Wellness, and Safe, Affordable, & Accessible Housing. The full plan may be accessed on the Center's website at <https://www.nlacrc.org/about-us/strategic-plan>.

Alternative Service Delivery

Alternative service delivery ceased effective 12/31/2022; remote service delivery remains for certain services such as tailored day services and early intervention services. Of note, remote service delivery is the provision of traditional services virtually. The service must be delivered as stated in the service provider's program design with the exception that it may be delivered via remote electronic communication, the current directive extends the authorization of this through 2/1/2023.

Extended Remote Service Delivery for ILS, day programs and look alike day programs

DDS issued a directive on 11/23/22 allowing independent living skills training, adult day programs and "look alike" day programs to provide traditional services through remote service delivery through 12/31/2023. This directive is intended to protect health and safety, and acknowledges the current staffing shortages. Providers must notify the regional Center of the consumer's preference for remote services and document the monthly amount for consumer will receive. Regional centers shall confirm that remote services will be effective in meeting needs and are preferred by the consumer.

Office of the Ombudsman

DDS has established the Office of the Ombudsperson to assist individuals and their families who are applying for or receiving regional center services under the Lanterman Act. Effective December 1, 2022, this office became available to provide information, facilitate resolution to disagreements and complaints, make recommendations to the Department, and compile and report data. Information about the Office of the Ombudsperson can be found on NLACRC's website in the Publications & Resources section.

Lanterman Act Hearings Advisory Committee

DDS and the Office of Administrative Hearings are establishing an advisory committee to provide input regarding mediations and hearings conducted by the OAH. The committee will have up to 18 members, with at least half of the membership being individuals and families served by the regional Center. Other members will include Disability Rights California, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Association of Regional Center Agencies, Office of Clients Rights Advocacy and other developmental advocacy services organizations. Committee will meet virtually twice per year.

V. Chief Financial Officer's Report – Vini Montague

Vini was not in attendance to report.

VI. Community Services Director's Report – Arshalous Garlanian

Arshoulous reviewed items in the report as presented in the packet.

Department Announcement:

The department is pleased to announce the promotion of Venus Rodriguez Khorasani as the Community Services Manager.

Alternative Nonresidential Services

NLA continues to engage with consumers on the options for services including but not limited to traditional, traditional services delivered remotely and/or tailored day services with the conclusion of the provision of Alternative Services on December 31, 2022.

Remote Services:

The Department issued a directive on November 23, 2022, that provides consumers the ability to voluntarily choose remote delivery for Day Programs, Look-a-like day programs, and independent living services through December 31, 2023. Providers must notify consumer CSC's of the consumer's preference and document the number of remote services each consumer receives monthly. If you have questions related to Remote Services, contact Resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org.

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 NLA Resource Development team at resourcedevelopment@nlacrc.org. Program designs can be reviewed to determine who is eligible for TDS.

Transportation

In response to concerns raised regarding Transportation Services and the transition from Alternative Services, the Department is working with a small group of providers to help inform a temporary option while a long-term alternative is explored. Information about the temporary option is forthcoming and expected to begin in January 2023.

NLACRC Tech Lending Library Resource

Resource available for individuals and families who are in need of technological equipment (such as a laptop, iPad or Tablet). Supply is limited. Please contact your CSC for additional information as well for a referral to the service.

2023 Service Provider Trainings/Webinars/Symposiums

Community Services is excited to announce many trainings/webinars/symposiums this coming year. Some of the types of training include Person Centered Thinking, Cultural Diversity training, Open Futures Learning, Universal Lifestyles, etc.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Transportation provider

NLA is seeking service providers to operate transportation services and transportation assistant services to serve people with developmental disabilities who reside in the San Fernando Valley region of Los Angeles County. The applicant(s) selected to provide

transportation services and transportation assistant services in the NLA service region will work closely with R&D Transportation Services Inc. (R&D), transportation broker, who provides scheduling, routing, quality assurance, and oversight of all contract transportation billing invoices. The deadline for submissions is January 29, 2022.

Request for Proposal (RFP)/Grant: Enhanced Community Integration for Children and Adolescents

NLACRC has received an allocation of \$848,800 to fund projects that will enhance inclusive social and recreation programs for families, children, and adolescents with I/DD in underserved communities. The deadline for Submission is January 8, 2023. All awardees must have fully executed contracts by March 2023.

Soc Rec RFV

With the restoration of Social Recreation, CAMP, and Non-Medical Therapy Services, NLACRC's continues to have the Request for Vendorization open for these types of services & will remain until the need for the resources is met. There are no start-up funds associated with these projects.

Open Proposal Period (OPP)

Cycle will begin the last week of January and interested applicants can submit a request for any currently vendorizable service/service code.

HCBS Compliance

NLA will continue to provide technical assistance to providers on their validation and remediation forms. If NLA has contacted you for follow-up regarding your agency's validation or remediation status, please reply ASAP. ■ For any questions regarding your agencies, please get in touch with the NLA HCBS team at hcbcompliance@nlacrc.org. For more information on the HCBS Final Rule please visit our website at <https://www.nlacrc.org/serviceproviders/hcbs-cms-final-rule>.

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

Effective January 1, 2023, Home Health Agencies must be registered and use the electronic visit verification (EVV) system. Home Health care services subject to EVV: 460 Participant-Directed Nursing Services, 742 Licensed Vocational Nurse, 744 Registered Nurse, 361 Skilled Nursing. Agencies providing: 854 Home Health; 856 Home Health Aide; 707 Speech Pathology; 773 Occupational Therapy; 772 Physical therapy; 359 Home Health Aide; 372 Speech, Hearing, & Language; 375 Occupational Therapy; 376 Physical Therapy. DDS EVV page at <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/evv/>

DDS to host Open office hours for Providers to ask questions.

Upcoming Office Hours:

- January 12, 2023, 5:30-6:30pm
- January 17, 2023, 2:00-3:00pm

Annual Program Evaluations

Community-based day programs (Service Codes 505, 510, 515, 520 and 805) were due for Fiscal Year 2022 September 30th. All programs submitted their evaluations. In-home respite

agencies (service code 862) annual program evaluations are due for calendar year 2022 to: contract&compliance@nlacrc.org by Friday, March 31st.

Rate increases

ARM rate changes effective January 1, 2023. Accounting will update rate, there is no action required from service providers. To request an adjustment based on increased payroll cost of \$15.50/hour per CA State minimum wage, submit request by March 1, 2023

Negotiated rates: Submit request to NLA Accounting at raterequest@nlacrc.org

DDS-set rates: Submit request to DDS Fiscal team at RateAdjustRequest@dds.ca.gov

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/vendor-provider/minimum-wage/>

AB 136 / 2019 Rate Study Implementation Updates

Effective January 1, 2023, rate adjustment of “50% of the difference between rate in effect March 31, 2022, and the fully-funded rate model”. This is the 2nd of 3 phases.

As a reminder, four goals guide rate reform: 1) consumer experience, 2) equity, 3) quality and outcomes, and 4) system efficiencies.

Per WIC, 4519.10(c)(1)(B), a priority of this phase 2 rate increase is to enhance wages and benefits for direct services staff who spend a minimum of 75 percent of their time providing support, care, supervision, or assistance to consumers.

Providers must maintain documentation that the percentage included for direct care staff wages and benefit costs included in the rate model is used to increase wages, salaries, or benefits of eligible staff members by at least the same percentage as provided in the rate models. Eligible service providers will receive the same dollar amount increase effective January 1, 2023 as received April 1, 2022. January invoices will reflect updated rates

Rate Letter & Excel calculations will be shared via Dropbox.com Any questions regarding rates should be referred to Contract&Compliance@nlacrc.org.

Vendor Support Forum

NLACRC hosted the first Vendor Support Forum on November 10th. NLA was present to help answer questions and discuss current changes to service delivery. The following Vendor Support Forum is on January 12, 2023 at 10 am.

Quality Incentive Program- Service Access and workforce capacity

The first round of funded incentives included 1,492 providers, the second phaser included 423 providers, and approximately 191 remain to be reconciled. The Department anticipates providing regional centers with the third and final round of funded incentive payments by January 4, 2023. Letters went out to 15 NLACRC vendors that were part of the second round of funded incentives.

Free COVID-19 Tests:

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has re-initiated test distribution, and each household can order four free COVID-19 tests. Tests will start shipping the week of December 19th. The order form can be found at: <https://special.usps.com/testkits>.

Braiding Resources to Collaboratively Develop and Strengthen Housing & Services Partnerships

Join the Housing and Services Resource Center (HSRC) to learn how state and local systems can develop lasting cross-sector partnerships to increase access to accessible, affordable

housing and supportive services for people with disabilities, older adults, and people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The webinar will include real-time captioning and ASL interpreting. If you need any additional accommodations, or if you have questions, please email HSRC@acl.hhs.gov. This will take place on January 9th, 2023 at 2-:00 pm

Community Living Fund Program RFI Respondent Teleconference

DOR is seeking 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations to provide services to individuals with disabilities, including older adults, through the Community Living Fund Program. This program advances California's Master Plan for Aging and No Wrong Door models by expanding the capacity of disability and aging services and programs to provide person-centered institutional transition and diversion services for people of all ages and with any type of disability who do not qualify for existing services. Request For Interest (RFI) Response Required By: Friday, January 13, 2023.

VIII. Legislative Report – Michelle Heid

Michelle reviewed this report as presented in the packet. A few highlights include:

Legislative Update

Results from the November election have been certified and there were no major surprises across the state, but Santa Clarita did get a new Assemblymember, Pilar Schiavo who defeated Suzette Valladares in a close contest. Governor Gavin Newsom and Lt. Governor Eleni Kounalakis were reelected to their seats and all the democratic candidates won their statewide races. US Senator Alex Padilla won his first election as he was appointed to the seat by Governor Newsom when it was vacated by then Senator and now Vice President Kamala Harris. The Democrats will retain their supermajority status in both houses of the state with 32 Democrats in the Senate and 62 in the Assembly.

On December 5th 2022, the California Legislature began a new 2-year legislative session which began with the swearing in of many new legislators. Thirty-seven (37) of the 120 California Legislators are newly elected to state office. Legislators did not waste time and bill introduction began on the first day of the session. There will be hundreds more bills introduced before the bill introduction deadline on February 17th, 2023.

Governor Gavin Newsom also called for a special session to pass price gouging penalties on oil companies and push forward new efforts to increase transparency and accountability. The action came following a state hearing to investigate the unprecedented spike in gasoline prices that occurred in the fall.

January 1st, 2023 will be the effective date for many laws passed in 2022 including measures to reform conservatorship and supported decision-making, fight climate change, protect women's right to choose, support small businesses, pay equity, and relevant to the disability community AB 1663 and CARE Court will begin implementation. <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2022/12/12/new-laws-taking-effect-next-year-and-why-they-matter/>

California Budget Cycle Begins

Governor Gavin Newsom will start the 2023-2024 budget season off with the release of his January Budget proposal by January 10th. The Legislature's budget analyst predicts the state will see a deficit in the coming year of \$25 billion and possibly more if there's a recession. This comes just five months after spending the \$100 billion surplus that was seen during the 2022- 2023 budget year. The Assembly has released its Budget Blueprint which notes last year's \$1.2 billion investment in provider rates and the implementation of the new rates in 2023 and 18 Page 3 of 13 Engaging and Empowering the Disability Community 2024. The plan mentioned adjusting state formulas for inflation, however, there was no specific mention of regional center operations funding, which has not been adjusted in over 20 years. <https://abgt.assembly.ca.gov/sites/abgt.assembly.ca.gov/files/2023%20Budget%20Blueprint%20Final.pdf>

Fun Fact

The 91st Annual California State Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony was held on December 1st, 2022 with singing, dancing, and musical performances rounding out the celebration. Governor Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom were joined by special guest Layla Datskyy, an 8-year-old from Fair Oaks, CA who is served by the Alta California Regional Center. Since 1983, the State Capitol Tree has been decorated with ornaments hand made by children and adults with developmental disabilities. It's been 39 years since Governor Deukmajian began the tradition of inviting a child served by one of the state's regional centers to kick off the holiday season by hanging an ornament and lighting the tree.

Safety Net Workgroup

The workgroup met last on November 16th and December 5th, 2022. Data was presented on the Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources and Treatment (START) program which serves individuals residing in-home and out-of-home, providing person-centered, trauma informed, evidence-based, positive support for individuals ages six and older. Information about the number of individuals served by START teams and reasons for referral to the program were presented. A look at pre- and post-enrollment outcomes based on psychiatric hospital admissions and emergency room visits shows a marked decrease in incidents.

Lanterman Act Advisory Committee

The Department of Developmental Services is now accepting applications to serve on the Lanterman Act Hearing Advisory Committee. The Committee will make recommendations on how to improve the various hearing/mediation processes. This committee will meet virtually (online) two times per year (with additional meetings possibly requested by DDS or OAH) to give the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) and DDS input on conducting the mediations and hearings. The Committee will have up to 18 members. Individuals and families receiving 25 Page 10 of 13 Engaging and Empowering the Disability Community regional center services will be at least half (1/2) of the total members. Other members include Disability Rights California; the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, representatives of regional centers; the Association of Regional Center Agencies; the Office of the Clients' Rights Advocacy; and developmental services advocacy organizations. Applications are due by January 31st, 2023. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LAHACMembership>

Little Hoover Commission

Modeled after the federal Hoover Commission, the Little Hoover Commission is an independent California state oversight agency, and is currently studying California's Department of Developmental Services system (DDS), looking at current disparities in service access, the underlying causes of these disparities, and the current state efforts to address them. They will then provide recommendations for how the state government can improve the consistency and timeliness of service delivery for the individuals and their families who rely on the state's developmental services programs. The Commission conducts public hearings and advisory committee roundtable discussions as part of their information gathering and study process. Recordings of these will be available on their website. The Commission had 3 hearings on October 13th, November 10th, and December 8th and held an Advisory Committee Roundtable on October 27th. Videos of the hearings can be viewed on the website above. It is expected that a report will be issued following these meetings.

ARCA Webinar Series

Beginning in late 2021, the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) began presenting a series of webinars on topics relevant to the disability community in CA. These webinars can all be viewed at the website above and include topics such as employment, regional centers and how services start, social recreation (one webinar for providers and another for individuals and families), and understanding the HCBS final rule. In addition to the webinar recordings resources on the topics are often provided.

Statewide Medi-Cal Managed Care Enrollment for Dual Eligible Beneficiaries in 2023

Starting January 2023, most dually eligible beneficiaries not already enrolled in Medi-Cal managed care will be enrolled in Medi-Cal plans in 2023. This will impact individuals enrolled in Medi-Cal and Medicare, often referred to as medi-medi patients. DHCS sent beneficiary notices at the end of 2022. The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) provided a video to explain the changes which can be accessed at: <https://youtu.be/EAeoGcBeiPI> For more information on Medi-Cal managed care plan choices, please visit <https://www.healthcareoptions.dhcs.ca.gov/>

Medi-Cal Managed Care Procurement in 2024

On August 25, 2022, the Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) issued a news release announcing its intent to award contracts to commercial managed care plans (MCPs) to deliver Medi-Cal services to Californians across the state, beginning in 2024. They subsequently announced the intended awardees which include Molina Healthcare, Anthem Blue Cross Partnership Plan, and Health Net. This impacts patients and providers in 21 counties across the state including Los Angeles County where patients will have 3 managed care plans to choose from: Kaiser, LA Care, and Molina Healthcare. Limited information is available regarding how this procurement plan will impact patients, but it appears that those in LA County will lose access to Health Net, Anthem, and Promise Health Plan (Blue California) leaving those patients to transition to another MCP. DHCS estimates 1,053,700 patients in LA County will transition to a new MCP. This procurement effort is part of DHCS' broader efforts to redefine how care is delivered to Medi-Cal beneficiaries, 99 percent of whom will be enrolled in managed care by 2024. DHCS' priority is to ensure minimal disruption to members, and ensure continuity of coverage, as they transition to MCPs that remain contracted with DHCS, effective January 1, 2024. This transition will

also impact providers who serve individuals with developmental disabilities including ABA providers some of which have had difficulty contracting with MCPs leading to inadequate provider networks and limiting access to care particularly for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

IX. Committee Business

- A. DSP University Levels 1, 2 & 3 Rate Models - Suad Bisogno
This section will be a placeholder on the agenda to provide continuous updates from DDS, there are no updates at this time.
- B. Vendor Support Forum Update - Suad Bisogno
This meeting has been scheduled for January 12th at 10 am. This will compile requests and questions for David Ramos for further discussion during the forum. Committee Workgroup information are listed in the packet for those who would like to get involved.
- C. In-Person VAC Meeting
After the in-person gathering, an in-person Committee Meeting was discussed. Registration will be available for those who want to attend, not to exceed 30 individuals with a Zoom option for anyone else who would like to attend. It was decided to plan the in-person meeting for Thursday, April 6, 2023 at the San Fernando Valley Location. Per current NLA practice, masks will be required.

X. Committee Work Group Reports

- A. Early Start Services - Dana Kalek
Dana reported that after the November meeting, intake was the highest that it has ever been. There is a separate intake department that will be starting, more details to come. The department will expediate the process of intake assessments and obtaining services within 1–2-week period.

Concerns have been raised in regards to insurance companies are not paying for services. There has been communication that invoices can be submitted to NLA as the payor of last resort if unable to collect from insurance. Anyone who is having issues can contact the Billing Department for further assistance.

Laptops are being lended to families who need it for Telehealth Services. CSCs will be able to provide more information.
- B. School Age Services - Cal Enriquez
There is nothing to report at this time, the next School-Age Workgroup will take place in February.
- C. Adult Services - Suad Bisogno, Erica Beall
Suad shared that providers are still having challenges communicating with Service Coordinators. If providers are unable to reach the CSC, please CC their reporting manager. CSCs who have transitioned out of NLA should have an automatic response

should an email be sent to that account.

Billing issues were discussed in regards to CIE and PIP payments, which will further be discussed at the Vendor Support Forum. A new protocol for CIE and PIP contracts was requested from NLA, in addition to referral packets that are more accurate and with employment as a goal in the IPP.

Self-Determination was discussed, particularly that individuals are having issues getting budgets approved, which causes a delay in the start of services. Suad reached out to the Self-Determination team to establish a process where vendors can better support individuals/families.

Questions were raised on the timeline of the Tailored-Day Service process. Also, clarification was requested on when to report information to Lizeth Chavez or the Employment Specialist role.

Anyone interested in joining this workgroup can contact Suad at: suad@irioc.org

XI. Board Committee Reports

A. Administrative Affairs - Bob Erio

Bob reported that at the December meeting, there was routine discussion in regards to the COVID rates continued, as well as tailored-day services. Payments for ICF payments were about \$4.5 million dollars in the red, although he asked for clarification. IN regards to staffing, NLA reports that they are 85% staffed, with 17 new hires and 9 separations, there was a net positive of 8 positions filled in December

B. Consumer Services - Erica Beall

There was nothing to report for this month.

C. Government & Community Relations - Andrea Devers

There was nothing to report for this month.

D. Nominating - Suad Bisogno

Registration was closed for VAC applications, there were 7 applications total. There was 1 individual who resigned, and 3 people who are phasing out in June 2023 due to term limits. There will be 4 vacant positions. There are currently no representatives for Health Licensed Facilities and Transportation on the Committee. Anyone who is interested can reach out to Suad at: suad@irioc.org

E. Strategic Planning - Kimberly Bermudez

There was nothing to report for this month as Kimberly was not present.

XII. Review of Meeting Action Items

Lizeth to send out additional RSVP information for the in-person meeting on April 6th, 2023.

XIII. Board Meeting Agenda Items

The following items were identified for the Committee's section of the next Board

Meeting agenda:

A. Minutes of the January 5th Meeting

XII. Announcements / Information Items / Public Input

B. Next Meeting: Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 9:30 am.

C. Board Approved VAC Priorities for FY 2022-23

D. Committee Attendance

E. Committee Member Roster

Public Input

Michelle Heid asked if services like ABA and AST are allowed to be provided via Telehealth. There has been conflicting answers from NLA, Michelle was asking for clarification. She also inquired if there is a permanent allowance for Telehealth services via Early Start. Suad stated that Michelle was welcome to send the questions to herself or David Ramos for discussion at the Vendor Support Forum.

Jodie Agnew-Navarro shared at Registration is open for attendees and sponsors for the upcoming March Cal-Tash Conference.

XIV. Adjournment

Suad Bisogno, Committee Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:34 am.

XV. Committee Work Group Information:

A. Early Start Services (Dana Kalek)

Contact: Dana Kalek - dkalek@cdikids.org

B. School Age Services (Cal Enriquez)

Contact: Cal Enriquez – cenriquez@accreditednursing.com

C. Adult Services (Suad Bisogno & Erica Beall)

Contact: Suad Bisogno - Suad@irioc.org

Submitted by:

(*) *Lizeth Chavez*

Executive Administrative Assistant

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