

North Los Angeles County Regional Center  
**Vendor Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

March 3, 2016

- Present:** Deborah Cutter, Cynthia Fernandez, Michelle Heid, Jonathan Istrin, Ken Lane, Kristin Laurino, Marina Pink, Wayne Tashjian, and Dolly Wauls - Committee Members  
Alarianna Babayan, Garik Pefrosyan, Paola Avela, Dana Andrews, Janet Schilling, Valerie Kissell, Max Krauss, Marielena Rivas, Claire Moynihan, Rachel Hofman, Susan Rischall, Toni Tellez, Roschell Ashley, Cyndi McAuley, Mindy Hughes, Victoria Berrey, Eduardo Lemus, Phil Motherspaw, Donna Thomas, John Stenhouse, Dan Merrell, Nick Vukotic, Linda Cobuzzi, Debra Dinielli, Alexandra Rivera, Joe Tighe, Charisse Batug, Alejandra Bartecek, Anthony David, Ella Wu, Victoria Greenwood, Fayma Ishaq, and Leticia Leon – Guests  
Arsho Garlanian, Erica Beall, Yolanda Bosch, Kim Rolfes, Arpi Arabian, Erin Broughton-Rodriguez, Anna Polin, Sarah Cox, Kimberly Johnson-McNeill, Jennifer Kaiser, and George Stevens – Staff
- Absent:** Fredlyn Berger, Annie Cox, Mariela Feldman, Eleshia Johnson, Staci Jordan, and Scott Shepard
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**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Michelle Heid, VAC chair, called the meeting to order at 9:37. Michelle welcomed everyone and encouraged them to continue to come to the VAC meetings and also to the Board of Trustees meetings as you get information first hand. Introductions were then made.

**II. Public Input**

Victoria Berry reported that the Family Focus Resource Center is providing tours of the new Family Focus Resource Center, which is accessible from the outside of this building. Please join them after the VAC meeting for a tour and refreshments! Victoria also encouraged them to refer families to the resource center where they will have access to information and resources.

**III. Consent Items**

A. Approval of Agenda

**M/S/C** (K. Lane./K. Laurino) To approve the agenda as presented.

B. Approval of Minutes from the February 4<sup>th</sup> VAC Meeting

**M/S/C** (W. Tashjian/C. Fernandez) To approve the minutes as presented.

**IV. Executive Director's Report**

George Stevens gave the following reports:

A. New Funding for the System: The legislature and the governor have signed into law SBX-2 and ABX-2 which ensures additional funding for our system. The bills will go into effect July 1, 2016 and include:

1. A 7.5% increase for salaries and benefits for regional center operations and purchase of service budgets.
2. A 2.5% increase for administrative and other costs, both for regional center operations and purchase of service budgets.
3. The restoration of supported employment rates to 2006 levels.
4. 5% increases for supported and independent living services, in-home and out-of-home respite services, transportation services, and intermediate care facilities.
5. A comprehensive increase for competitive integrated employment programs.
6. An increase in vendor audit thresholds.
7. A rate study plan.
8. \$5 million for disparity issues for bilingual staff at regional centers, cultural competency training, and parent education efforts.

The Administration has put the total value of this package at \$300 million general fund and \$418 million total funds. The majority of that money will be provided via the Managed Care Organization agreement with the balance addressed in the Governor's May Revise. George stated that while this is a good infusion of blood for our system, we are still bleeding and need substantial rate reform to ensure the future of our system.

B. Appreciation Breakfast: The center will be sponsoring a breakfast to thank our legislators and the LA County Board of Supervisors for their support for the recent funding increase. We will also invite consumers, families, and members of the service provider community. The breakfast will be held Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, at New Horizons. More information to come!

C. Modified Legislative Message: In light of the newly approved funding, we will need to modify our legislative message for our grass roots activities. We want

legislators to know we are appreciative for the increase, but make sure they also know that the funding struggle is not over because substantial rate reform is still needed.

- D. Self-Determination: Our volunteer advisory committee continues to meet on a monthly basis and their meeting minutes are posted on our website. Once the federal waiver is approved, the center will be adding 174 consumers in the first 3-year period. When it is time, the center will be doing a lot of community outreach about the self-determination program, especially to consumers and families in under-served or who live in remote areas of our catchment area.
- E. Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) Final Rule: Will go into effect in California in March 2019. The CMS final rule will dramatically change the landscape of how we work with consumers and families. There is a lot of community education and training to be done. It doesn't seem that the state will be providing the regional centers with direction on this any time soon. As such, the southern California regional center directors have taken the lead to prepare our centers for its implementation and on February 11<sup>th</sup>, the directors held a joint meeting with their VAC chairs and directors of community services to discuss it and begin planning our first steps.
- F. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): President Obama signed the WIOA into law in July 2014. The purpose of the act was to help job seekers succeed in the labor market by providing access to employment, education, training, and support services while matching employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The implementation of this Act will have a big impact on the way we provide services as it will redirect high school graduates to work options. The Act must be implemented by July 1, 2016 and the center will be working in coordination with New Horizons to get this information out to our community.

## V. **Chief Financial Officer's Report** (Kim Rolfes)

- A. Budget: NLACRC has the highest purchase of service (POS) deficit in the state: between \$12.4 and 16.8 million. However, we are an entitlement system and it is the state's responsibility to fund us. Some of the regional centers are projecting POS surpluses, so DDS may be using their surplus funds to allocate to centers in deficit.

- B. Whistleblower Policy: The center is required to send out its whistleblower policy to all of its service providers on an annual basis. The policy will be sent out later this month.
  
- C. POS Expenditure Report: The center's FY 2014-15 expenditure report has been posted on the website. The expenditure information will be presented at 2 community meetings:
  - 1. Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. (San Fernando Valley office)
  - 2. Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 p.m. (Antelope Valley office)
  
- D. LA City and LA County Minimum Wage Increases: NLACRC is still waiting for direction from DDS regarding the process to seek a minimum wage increase due to both the LA City and LA County's minimum wage ordinances. DDS reported that information would be forthcoming to regional centers sometime during the month of April 2016 and once we receive direction from DDS, we will share the same information with our service providers. Also, we are waiting for DDS's direction on the implementation of AB1 (see Section IV.A. above) because it is not clear whether the rate increases provided in AB1 will be in addition to the LA City and LA County's minimum wage increases effective July 1, 2016 or if the rate increases provided in AB1 will be in lieu of providing a minimum wage increase. Once we receive direction from DDS on the implementation of the service provider rate increases provided in AB1, we will share the information with our service providers.

## **VI. Community Services Director's Report (Yolanda Bosch)**

Yolanda gave the following reports:

- A. Minimum Wage & Other Provider Increases: Yolanda's staff are working with the center's accounting department to process all of the provider rate increases. Please be patient; it is a very labor intensive process.
  
- B. DS 1891 Forms: Providers must submit/update their forms every 2 years. Although many providers finally submitted their DS 1891 forms for the last 2-year period, the new 2-year period began on January 1, 2016. Forms are easy to submit using the center's portal – or if providers need assistance, they should contact the community services department and staff will help walk them through the submission process.

- C. New Day/New Life Conference: The LA Autism Society held this conference on February 18<sup>th</sup> at a hotel at LAX. The conference focused on the new CMS federal rules that will go into effect in March of 2019 and California's new self-determination program. A really good PowerPoint presentation was shown that Yolanda would like to show to the VAC. Yolanda also learned that CMS will approve about 20 states shortly, and California will not be one of them, however, one of the main speakers at the conference felt that with California's history of its developmental disabilities system, it could be a leader in this effort. To implement the CMS federal rules, it will take a group effort: a collaboration between the regional center, its service providers, consumers, and families.

Erica Beall gave the following reports:

- D. Direct Support Professional (DSP) Advisory Meeting: Clay Mitchell with California Department of Education and a representative from DDS will be here on May 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am to hold a meeting to discuss DSP course offerings and enrollments. Residential service operators are needed to attend and offer input.
- E. Request for Proposals (RFPs): The next round of RFPs in the resource development plan were posted to NLACRC's website on February 29<sup>th</sup>. Eight projects have been listed. Proposals are due April 15, 2016. Please go to "How to Become a Service Provider" tab of website to view the RFPs.
- F. Residential Services Orientation: Registration for the spring RSO is open online. Please go to the website to register. RSO classes start April 4, 2016.

## **VII. Committee Business**

- A. Report on February 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting re: Implementation of CMS Final Rule: Michelle attended this meeting with George Stevens and Yolanda Bosch (see Section IV.E. above). Michelle urged service providers to find out if and how the implementation of the CMS final rule could impact them and the services they provide.
- B. Status of Managed Care Organization (MCO) Tax: Our system was used as a "bargaining chip" in an arena where we didn't belong. However, we are appreciative of the 1-time transfusion of funds, but we still need to get involved in substantial rate reform that will see our system into the future. Please continue to call, write, and/or meet with the governor and legislators! We need for them to remember that rate reform is still needed!

- C. Update on the Self-Determination Program: Some people are advocating for a different service model and support the idea of self-determination services being delivered by non-vendored providers. Our service provider community has a lot of great services to offer and we have been providing those services for many years. Service providers should find out how they could fit into the self-determination service arena.

- D. Identify Nominee(s) to Serve as VAC Chair in FY 2016-17

Michelle Heid was the only nominee.

**M/S/C** (W. Tashjian/J. Istrin) To nominate Michelle Heid to serve as the VAC's chair in FY 2016-17.

The election will take place at next month's VAC meeting.

- E. Discussion about Changing the VAC's Priority Issues to CMS Final Rule, Self-Determination, Behavioral Services Transition, and Mental Health

Michelle suggested this idea because changes are coming – and quickly – and we need to prepare for them. After discussion amongst the VAC members, the following actions were taken.

**M/S/C** (D. Cutter/K. Lane) To recommend to the Board of Trustees to approve the VAC change the focus of 3 of their 4 workgroups to: CMS final rule (including WIOA); self-determination; and behavioral service transition. The adult services group will remain as is.

**Action:** The Early Start group will continue to meet, but on a quarterly basis.

Deborah added that the mental health group continues to meet on a monthly basis with or without VAC participation.

- F. Sacramento Activities: A conference on developmental disabilities is being held in Sacramento this week. In addition, an all-day person-centered advocacy group meeting will be held for stakeholders on Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, and a budget hearing will follow the next day. Michelle will be attending the advocacy meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup> and the budget hearing on April 7<sup>th</sup>, as such she will not be able to attend the April 7<sup>th</sup> VAC meeting.

**Action:** Michelle will give a report on the advocacy meeting and budget hearing at the May 5<sup>th</sup> VAC meeting.

## VIII. Reports from the VAC Priority Issue Work Groups

- A. Early Start/Prevention Services: Annie wasn't present, but provided a written report, which included the following highlights:
1. An Early Start interagency meeting is being planned in collaboration with the Family Focus Resource Center.
  2. The use of private insurance for therapies was discussed.
  3. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services for young children in Early Start are covered by the regional center, unless the child autism; in that case insurance would cover the service.
  4. The Early Start family outcomes survey measures the helpfulness of early intervention services; California did poorly last year and vendors are being asked to support families in understanding the language used in the survey.
  5. Early Start programs were asked to continue to educate their legislators about the importance of early intervention services.
- B. Children's Services: Wayne reported the there was a lot of discussion about the behavioral services transition. They also talked about the need for additional behavioral service providers to help them staff the behavioral services orientation for families in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys. NLACRC is currently evaluating how it can best support parents. The tele-health model will not be accepted by the regional center for behavioral services. There was discussion about the development of a checklist for supervisors to use to help enhance children's services when in the home.
- C. Adult Services: The group is planning a provider fair to provide consumers, families, and service coordinators to meet and talk with services providers and to gather information about the variety of services available.
- Action:** Marina Pink will contact Victoria Berrey, from the family focus resource center, about the development of a social media strategy to get the word out about the provider fair.
- D. Mental Health Issues: Deborah reported that the group discussed 3 different cases. There are many key players at the meetings to help problem solve.

## IX. Report on Board Committee Meetings

- A. Administrative Affairs: Ken reported the center's FY 2014-15 audit and tax return for 2015 are being presented to the Board of Trustees. There was

discussion about the center's move from Van Nuys to Chatsworth. The ICF/SPA numbers are coming down and new hires are up!

- B. Board of Trustees: Michelle stated that most of the discussion topics at the recent board meetings were already discussed earlier during this meeting. Michelle encouraged people to attend the monthly board meetings; the next one will be held Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 p.m. at the center's main office.
- C. Consumer Services: Michelle reported that the committee was given its 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter reports on exceptions and exemptions, consumer diagnosis, and hearings/appeals. The committee is also given a monthly report on the center's community placement plan (CPP) goals and activities. The CPP pertains to consumers moving out of the developmental centers and into the community.
- D. Government & Community Relations: Michelle reported that the committee tracks many different bills that would have an impact on people with developmental disabilities. AB 1565 (Lackey), the bill that proposes a 10% rate increase for our system, will probably die, but everyone should call and thank Assembly Member Lackey (from the Antelope Valley) and thank him for introducing this bill.
- E. Housing: Jonathan reported that the committee was given a report on the center's CPP activities and generally track any bills that pertain to housing for our consumers. State senators have proposed spending \$2 billion to build or rehabilitate permanent housing for mentally ill people living in the streets. They are also calling for \$200 million over 4 years for temporary rent subsidies to bridge the gap until the new housing is completed. Officials estimated the construction funds, combined with federal and local money, could generate 10,000 to 14,000 units for California's 116,000 homeless people, more than 60% of whom live outdoors. The Housing Committee will hold its last meeting in May; the housing activities are going to be moved under the purview of the board's Strategic Planning Committee.
- F. Nominating: The committee has completed interviewing board applicants and have begun their interviews with VAC applicants. They will be interviewing CAC applicants in April, with all nominees being presented in May and the elections taking place at the June board meeting.
- G. Strategic Planning: The Housing Committee hasn't met since February 1<sup>st</sup>.

**X. Open Issues for Discussion** – No further issues were identified for discussion.

**XI. Agenda Items for the Next Board Meeting**

The following items were identified for the VAC's section of the March 9<sup>th</sup> board meeting agenda:

- A. Minutes from the March 3<sup>rd</sup> VAC Meeting
- B. Approval to Change the VAC's Priority Issue Groups

**XII. Announcements/Information/Public Input**

- A. Next VAC Meeting: Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30 a.m. (break out groups)

**XIII. Adjournment**

Michelle adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Submitted by,

*Jennifer Kaiser*

Jennifer Kaiser  
Executive Assistant

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