

Alta California Regional Center
Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, January 26, 2023
Minutes

Present: Carmen Aguilar, Jackie Armstrong, Dan Lake, Amy Lampe, Elaine Linn, Kelly Pennington, Michelle Ramirez, Michelle Rewerts, Anwar Safvi, Steven Sanchez, Retha Seabron, Yang Sun, Patty Wallace

Absent (* excused): Johnny Deng*

Staff: Lori Banales, Iqbal Ahmad, Jennifer Bloom, Tracy Brown, John Decker, Mai Gee Her, Camelia Houston, Mechelle Johnson, Faye Tait, Lisa West

Facilitators: Amy Fulk

Visitors: Steven Andrews, Jaclyn Balanay, Garrett Broadbent, Maureen Fitzgerald, Benita Shaw

1. **Call to Order – Reading of ACRC’s Mission & Vision** – The Board of Directors met at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 26, 2023, by Zoom/teleconference. Ms. Lampe read aloud ACRC’s Mission and Vision.
2. **Training – “Alternative Services”**
 - Mechelle Johnson, Director of Client Services, and John Decker, Director of Community Services, gave a presentation on “Alternative Services”.
 - Mr. Decker noted the changes that took place on January 1st. ACRC’s January newsletter, entitled “Alta Connections”, highlights these changes and the Department of Developmental Services’ (DDS’) recently released new Directives.
 - He clarified that a Directive is not law, but rather requirements to ensure the health and safety of those we serve.
 - Ms. Johnson shared that ACRC has implemented these Directives. While focusing on Person-Center Planning, staff were trained on the way forward in December. Service providers are being trained using the same materials.
 - Although alternative services ended, some services can be provided remotely (i.e., either over the phone or virtually). One of the points that remains consistent is services are driven by a client’s Individual Program Plan (IPP).
3. **Community Comments/Announcements**
 - ◆ Mr. Bonnet acknowledged the work that ACRC’s Board and staff are doing.

4. **Consent Agenda** – **By consensus, the following consent agenda items were approved: a) regular session Board meeting minutes of November 17, 2022; and b) Board Development Committee (BDC), Client Advisory Committee (CAC), Executive Committee, Finance Committee and Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) minutes.**

5. **New Business**

◆ *Approve Board Members Terms of Office*

- Mr. Lake noted that Kelly Pennington, Jackie Armstrong and Anwar Safvi would like to serve another term on ACRC's Board.

Without objection, Amy Lampe made the motion to approve Kelly Pennington's, Jackie Armstrong's and Anwar Safvi's next two-year term as presented.

◆ *Finance Committee*

Issue 1: Monthly Financial Report

Discussion and Action: Dr. Sun shared that the Finance Committee met on January 9th and reviewed the October 31, 2022 financial report. Mr. Ahmad also reviewed the service provider rate increases that took effect on January 1st.

Without objection, Kelly Pennington made the motion to accept the monthly financial report as submitted.

Issue 2: Independent Audit Report

Discussion and Action: Mr. Ahmad reviewed the summary with those present and highlighted that this was a "clean" audit. This is the last year that ACRC can have AGT CPA & Advisors conduct ACRC's independent audit due to the limitations stated in law.

Without objection, Jackie Armstrong made the motion to approve the independent audit report as submitted.

◆ *Committee Updates*

- CAC

- Ms. Wallace shared that the CAC met on January 10th.

- Ms. Banales shared that Governor Newsom released the proposed state's budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year (FY) that morning and noted that she believes the Governor is preparing Californians for a tighter budget year.

- Robin Black, ACRC's Legal Services Manager, spoke to the group about the Board's approved Conservatorship Policy and Supported Decision-Making (SDM).
 - Ms. Banales asked for volunteers from the CAC to assist with developing trainings for ACRC staff, education and our community.
- CAC members shared updates from various advocacy meetings that they attend.
- PAC
 - Ms. Ramirez shared that the PAC met on January 12th.
 - The group reviewed the proposed budget and discussed the Independent Living Services (ILS) rate issue. They are hopeful that this can be addressed in trailer bill language (TBL).
 - With the January rate increases, service providers have received 50% of their total increase from the Burns & Associates Rate Study. The remainder will be implemented in July 2024.
 - The group discussed the 90/10 issue.
 - Christa McClure's PAC membership was approved.
 - Staffing and COVID issues remain a concern.
- ◆ *President's Report*
 - Mr. Lake reminded Board members that their nominations for Board Officers for the 2023-24 FY are due today.
 - The Nominating Committee will be meeting to draft the slate.
 - Ms. Banales' annual evaluation will be starting soon.
 - Board members have been invited to tour Mirasol Village and the HALO Clinic on Tuesday, February 14th.
 - It's wonderful to have this many Board members in-person today.
- ◆ *Executive Director's Report*
 - Ms. Banales noted that the ACRC Quarterly Dashboard Indicators for the Quarter Ending December 31, 2022 are included in the Board packet.
 - Over the last several months, ACRC has seen a delay in meeting the required 45-day timeline in Early Start. One of the issues is identifying the service provider in order to conduct the required Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
 - Ms. Banales spoke with DDS and inquired about utilizing AB 637 to waive the median rates for Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech, and Physical Therapy (PT). DDS supports moving forward with one request for all three therapeutic services.

- ◆ Ms. Bloom shared that staff are starting to reach out to our Early Intervention service providers to confirm that they will increase their service capacity if median rates are waived.
- Under the Intake timelines, ACRC does have a backlog. The median rates for psychological evaluations were waived through the use of AB 637 effective November 1, 2022, which has set the stage for Early Start. Prior to November 1st, ACRC was receiving 15 to 18 slots per month, and now we are receiving between 30 and 40.
 - Staff continue to request additional slots for these comprehensive assessments.
 - During the pandemic, we lost vendors. With AB 637, we have six vendors back and new ones are coming through, as well.
 - The majority of referrals to our agency is for autism.
 - ◆ ACRC requires the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) assessments for these individuals. We have contracted with an individual to provide free “booster” trainings for our staff psychologists and service providers.
- Early Intervention is critical in providing children and families with a jump start on services. Many children “graduate” out of the program upon reaching three years of age.
- Ms. Banales has invited Jennifer Bloom to join her Executive Management Team, as the second Director of Client Services. Her initial focus will be meeting our identified goals in Early Start and childhood development.
- Workforce remains an issue at regional centers, as well. As Ms. Banales has mentioned at previous meetings, ACRC has partnered with Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) and the Workforce Collaborative is moving forward.
- The completion and submission of Title 19 notes to DDS is how ACRC draws down federal funding. We require each Service Coordinator (SC) to complete 400 units per month (one unit = 15 minutes). This allows for ACRC to have an accurate case record, which documents the measures that the SC has taken to assist our clients.
- Special Incident Reports (SIRs) are due to DDS within two days. ACRC maintains 89% for the current and previous quarters.
 - It has been reported that DDS may be changing this process.

- We recognize that staffing issues with our regional center, as well as with service providers, may play a factor in this reporting.
 - Ms. Banales noted that the number of reportable items/events remain high, and there are many more non-reportable SIRs that are received by our specialists, as well.
 - ACRC currently has 211 clients enrolled in the Self-Determination Program (SDP); in January 2022, there were 57 clients.
 - Ms. Johnson believes this reflects the level of interest in the program.
 - ACRC has recently created an SDP unit, which will allow SCs to continually engage with clients/families. Four of the six SC positions have been filled. Our three Participant Choice Specialists (PCPs) are also part of this unit.
 - Our statewide service system needs additional Financial Management Service (FMS) agencies to address workload. ACRC staff meet with our FMS' on a quarterly basis to discuss any concerns/issues.
 - ◆ There are systemic, statewide issues that hinder FMS agencies ability to keep pace with SDP participant needs. DDS is addressing these concerns.
 - Our local Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC) has transitioned to meeting every other month.
 - When looking at total client count, it's important to consider the number of individuals that contact ACRC seeking eligibility/services. At the end of 2021, ACRC had just under 28,000 clients. As of December 31st, we have seen a 7.3% increase totaling almost 30,000 clients.
 - Mr. Decker noted that it's also important to note the increase in costs for services. Clients continue to have choice in how they are served.
- The Board has requested updates on open and closed programs since the last Board meeting. The following are newly vendored services:
 - Dancing Dolphin (Sports Club)
 - Family Taekwondo Academy (Sports Club)
 - Cutting-Edge Aquatics (Sports Club)
 - Songbird Health CA LLC (Client/parent Support/Behavior Intervention)

- The Inclusion Way LLC (Community Integration Training Program)
- Villa Natomas Elderly Care LLC (Geriatric Facility)
- 3Strands Global Foundation (Individual or Family Training)
- Indocare House 1 (Supplemental Residential Program Support)
- Lomond Home (Specialized Residential Facility)
- Granite Meadow Home (Specialized Residential Facility)
- Quiescence Care Home (Specialized Residential Facility)
- Placer ARC Adult (Adult Development Center)
- JRPC Adult Day Program (Adult Development Center)
- PRIDE Industries (Adult Development Center)
- PRIDE Industries (Behavior Management Program)
- Impact Behavior Analysis (Behavior Analyst)
- Access Language Connection (Interpreter)
- Fees Psychological (Clinical Psychologist)
- Kimberly's Family Home (Out-of-Home Respite Services)
- Secure Medical Transit (Transportation)
- MTS Transportation (Transportation)
- Life Coach Supported (Supported Living)
- Telecare El Verano (CCH Facility)
- Agcaoil Residential Care Home (Adult Residential Facility)
- Milestone Care Home (Adult Residential Facility)
- Quinley Residential Care (Adult Residential Facility)
- Safe Haven Trusted Care (Adult Residential Facility)
- Sunni Vista Care Home (Adult Residential Facility)
- Melyndas 2 Care Home (Adult Residential Facility)

Closed vendors:

- Next Step (Behavior Management Program)
- Fulgencio Family Home (Adult Residential Facility)
- Vinsons Care Home #2 (Adult Residential Facility)
- Vinsons Care Home III (Adult Residential Facility)
- The federal government gave states an opportunity to ask for an extension of the Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule. California did receive an extension but we are required to have two of the federal requirements in place by March 2023.
 - ACRC staff are verifying service provider's paperwork. We have hired two temp staff to assist with this process and we have also partnered with a vendor who is going out and assisting service providers one-on-one.
 - DDS has invited ACRC to meet weekly on this matter.
- The Santa Day and CAC Housing videos were shared with those present.

- As Ms. Wallace mentioned in her report, CAC members will be working with ACRC staff in developing trainings for SDM. The Board approved Conservatorship Policy will help guide the training for community-based organizations.
 - Along with ACRC's three Client Advocates (David Lopez, Jacob Miller and Reyva Johnson), Lisa Cooley, Amy Lampe, Kimberly Terrell and Patty Wallace have volunteered to assist.
- Mai Gee Her, ACRC's Cultural Diversity Specialist, joins us today to share some information about the Service Access & Equity (SAE) Grant that ACRC was awarded for our Intake Navigator Project.
 - Clients/families have benefited from our Service Navigator Project that we implemented with the WarmLine.
 - The Intake Navigators will assist our diverse population with their initial contact with the regional center.
 - The La Familia Counseling Center, Inc. (Spanish speaking) and the Hmong Youth and Parents United (Hmong speaking) will be hiring these navigators.
 - In her time as an Intake Specialist, Ms. Her came across families that didn't understand the process, had fears, etc. It's also important to understand that some languages do not have words for some developmental disabilities. With this project, we hope that families will have a positive experience and have the support that they need to access our services.
 - ◆ The Board would like occasional updates on this project.
- Each year, regional centers are required to hold Purchase of Services (POS) Expenditure Data Meetings. This is an opportunity for our regional center to look at trends and target areas that we would like to focus our efforts on. These meetings help to review past and current data, and take what we have learned and move forward. ACRC will be hosting two meetings this year via Zoom on Tuesday, March 21st, from 5 to 7 p.m., and Monday, March 27th, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.
 - Ms. Banales is pleased to announce that ACRC has hired a Data Scientist/System Operator – Elijah Jenkins has been with ACRC for many years, working with clients that reside in the developmental centers.
 - We have found that the same individuals attend both meetings, so we will move forward, like last year, in building on the information of the first meeting and expanding the opportunity for discussion and input.

- The budget includes:
 - Funding for regional center's Uniform Fiscal System Modernization (UFSM) and Consumer Electronic Records Management System (CERMS) projects.
 - DDS will receive funding to create an Autism Services Branch, which will have six permanent positions.
 - The Safety Net continues to have support and the Language and Equity funding remains.
 - The implementation of the Early Start inclusive preschool grants has been delayed until the 2024-25 FY.
- The Association of Regional Center Agencies' (ARCA's) Grassroots Day is scheduled for Wednesday, March 29th, and will be held virtually again this year. We need your voice to help educate our local legislators about the issues that regional centers are promoting. Individual experiences should be highlighted.
 - Ms. Banales is hopeful that Board members will consider participating.
- Ms. Houston shared that ACRC's Dental Coordinator, Shannon Willoughby, started on December 1st.
 - Ms. Willoughby is working with ACRC's Community Services Department to revise our current Dental Services Procedure to assist with streamlining the process.
 - She has contacted Dr. Glassman to shorten the line for sedation dentistry.
 - Ms. Willoughby is also working with the HALO Clinic, as well as ACRC's Behavior Specialists, to help with the desensitizing process.
 - She is meeting with the Dental Coordinators across the state, as well as attending county meetings in ACRC's catchment area.
- ◆ *ARCA-CAC Rep. Report*
 - Ms. Lampe shared that the group met on December 2nd.
 - Due to attendance issues, they tabled the project discussion regarding affordable housing hearings.
 - The group discussed the importance of emergency preparedness.
 - The next meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, January 27th, from 10 a.m. to noon. They will be discussing affordable housing.
- ◆ *ARCA Delegate Report*
 - Ms. Pennington noted that the ARCA Board met on January 20th.
 - They are currently working on updating their Strategic Plan and are seeking feedback.

6. ***Adjournment***

The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: Lori Banales