

Alta California Regional Center
Provider Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 13, 2022
Minutes

Present:

Eric Ciampa, UCP of
Sacramento, Inc., Chair
Michelle Ramirez, On My Own,
Co-Chair & Design. Dir.
Garrett Broadbent, Creative Living
Options
Andrea Croom, INALLIANCE
Jacquie Dillard-Foss, STEP
Bonnie Douglas, Turning Point
Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored,
Inc.
Kate Halecky, Southside
Unlimited
Jessica Knuth, Reach Adult
Development
Sergio Pinto, BEST Consulting,
Inc.
Antonio Ranit, Antelope Hills
Manor
Joy Scott, Tri-County Caregiver
Relief
Yvonne Soto, DDSO
Carole Watilo, Progressive
Employment

Absent: (* excused)

James Astorga, F&A Astorga Care
Home
Janet Brandon*, A.I.M. &
Associates
Ed Doonan, LIFE, Inc.
Joe Jaquez, EGA CT
Adam Ruggles, Medstar LLC
Laleh Sharpe*, Maxim Healthcare
Services
Paul Traglio*, Kadiant

Visitors

Jody Bailey
Gregg Brandon
Breeanne Burris
Maureen Fitzgerald
Adriene Gaudet
Jennifer Gomez
Priscilla Holmes
Braydon Holtzinger
Christina Ibia
Jennifer Jones
Susana Magana
Michelle Ramirez
Jen Roney
Stan Schmidt
Royisha Singh
Jasmine Vollenweider
Katherine Wallen

Staff:

Lori Banales, Executive Director
Jennifer Bloom, Associate Client
Services Director
John Decker, Director of Community
Services
Jordan Eller, Specialized Services
Manager
Camelia Houston, Director of Intake &
Clinical Services
Mechelle Johnson, Director of Client
Services
David Lopez, Client Advocate
Andy Ponce, Intensive Case Unit
Manager
Olivia Procida, Manager of
Community Services
Lisa West, Executive Secretary

The Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) met at 9:34 a.m. on Thursday, January 13, 2022, by Webex/teleconference to discuss: 1) Board Update; 2) Executive Director's Report; 3) COVID-19 Impact and Vaccine/Booster Mandate Discussion; 4) System Reform and Legislative Update; 5) PAC

Committees & Reports; 6) PAC Matrix Update; and 7) Announcements/Comments. All present provided self-introductions.

Without objection, Eric Ciampa made the motion to approve the Provider Advisory Committee meeting minutes of November 4, 2021 as submitted.

1. **Board Update**

- Ms. Ramirez shared that Board met on November 18th.
 - The Board approved the 2022 Performance Contract.
 - They approved the four strategic planning focus areas, which include: housing/living options, employment, client/family supports, and community inclusion and engagement.
 - The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is meeting several times this month. More information will be forthcoming.
 - Several (12) new service providers opened their doors since the last Board meeting, while three closed. ACRC held a virtual Townhall Meeting in the South Lake Tahoe/Truckee area to discuss service options for our clients/families due to recent program closures.
- Mr. Ciampa shared that the Board has asked this group to review the statutory requirements of the PAC annually. This information will be reviewed at the March PAC meeting and then a letter will be drafted to the Board.

2. **Executive Director's Report**

- Ms. Banales shared that as employers, we are all in this together regarding the vaccine mandates and approval of exemptions. Now we have an additional layer of coordinating testing and the booster mandate. Exemptions still apply, even if the employee was vaccinated they can put forward an exemption request for the booster. ACRC has scheduled two booster clinics for our employees; one had to be cancelled due to not having enough individuals signed up.
- COVID numbers are increasing. When the Delta variant presented from July 6th to November 30th, ACRC tracked 310 clients, 109 direct support professionals (DSPs) and 19 staff. From December 1st until yesterday, we have already reached the same number of positive cases for DSPs in just six weeks. More ACRC staff are also testing positive. Those individuals that are not vaccinated are having more severe reactions to COVID.
- ACRC has received several thousand rapid test kits, which we are using for staff that are being sent out into the community. Mr. Decker and our Emergency Response Coordinator contacted the Sacramento County Public Health Office and secured 18,800 rapid test kits for

service providers; we are keeping about 200 kits for our own staff. We will continue to replenish our supplies.

- Community Care Licensing (CCL) has issued penalties to some care homes regarding the mandates. To assist, ACRC staff will be adding this to our quality assurance reviews.
- Since vendors serve clients over several counties, the rapid test kits will be delivered to service providers who responded to the survey and serve clients in the Sacramento region.
 - Several service providers are helping deliver the kits to other providers.
- Ms. Dillard-Foss shared that individuals can go to the State of California website and complete an application requesting a three-month supply of test kits.
(<https://testing.covid19.ca.gov/get-started/>)
- Governor Newsom released his proposed 2022-23 fiscal year (FY) budget on Monday. The overall budget for the State of California is \$286.4 billion; the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS') budget is \$12.4 billion and includes:
 - \$1.6 billion total funds through March 2024 for the Home and Community-Based Services Spending Plan
 - Language Access & Cultural Competency
 - Coordinated Family Supports
 - Enhanced Community Integration for Children & Adolescents
 - Social Recreation and Camp Services
 - Rate Model Implementation
 - Information Technology Modernization
 - \$24 million through January 2024 for Early Start Part C
 - Family Wellness
 - Develop Culturally & Linguistically Sensitive Services
 - Outreach
 - Technology
 - Technical Assistance & Monitoring
 - Initiatives in Collaboration with the California Department of Education
 - 2022-23 FY Updated Policies, Regional Center Operations (OPS)
 - Performance Incentive Program
 - DSP Workforce Training & Development
 - Enhanced Service Coordination for Low-No Purchase of Services (POS)
 - Specialized Home Monitoring
 - Lanterman Act Provisional Eligibility
 - Specialized Caseload Ratio for Complex Needs
 - Regional Center Emergency Coordinators
 - 2022-23 FY Updated Policies, POS

- Service Provider Rate Reform, including quality incentive payment
 - SB 3 Minimum Wage Increase
 - Social Recreation & Camp Services
 - START Training
 - Lanterman Act Provisional Eligibility
- 2022-23 FY New Policies – Regional Centers & DDS
 - The state wants to do an intentional draw down of funding specifically for children ages one to five be served in a 1:40 caseloads. Regional centers will need to negotiate this piece since children are currently served through 17 years of age.
 - Communication assessments for clients who are deaf. Each regional center now has a Deaf Specialist. This individual will provide support to planning team meetings (PTMs) and build up available resources.
- In the current FY's budget, there was funding to bring down caseloads statewide (851 positions) – this will be implemented July 1, 2022. DDS has requested funding for an additional 577 Service Coordinator (SC) positions to further assist caseload reduction.
 - This will be a heavy lift – ACRC will do everything possible to come into compliance with the mandated caseload ratios.
- Concern was expressed regarding the funding for DDS and regional centers regarding staffing, but service providers are not getting any assistance. Until we fix the problem of the “big quit”, we will continue to have issues finding interested individuals to hire.
 - Ms. Banales believes that the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) will advocate at the legislative level for service providers once the message is clear. Ms. Dillard-Foss reported that the legislature doesn't know the level of concern. Drafting a letter from ACRC's PAC might be beneficial.
 - Mr. Ciampa and Ms. Dyba will draft a letter that will be shared with the Chairs of the PAC's committees/workgroups. This PAC will lead a movement to support funding regarding the ongoing workforce crisis.
 - The letter will be reviewed/approved at the February PAC meeting.
- ACRC strives to connect with our clients/families, service providers and community partners. Our first quarterly newsletter was released on January 3rd and is posted on our agency's website – “Alta Connections”.
 - Mr. Decker welcomed feedback.

3. **COVID-19 Impact and Vaccine/Booster Mandate Discussion**

- California Community Living Network (CCLN) has made a recommendation to fund service providers with a "COVID Coordinator".
 - No action has been taken on this yet; another call is scheduled for next week.

The group has also requested that regional center Executive Directors be given back the authority to approve Health & Safety Waivers versus going to DDS for this.

- A number of agencies are experiencing outbreaks and are quarantining right now. These have the potential of affecting other service providers, as well.

4. **System Reform and Legislative Update (ARCA, CDSA, CCLN, DS Taskforce, Lanterman Coalition)**

- ARCA
 - Ms. Fitzgerald noted that ACRC's Board President, Rita Walker, is the President of ARCA, as well. She would be a resource for collaborative opportunities.
- CCLN
 - If the state has a surplus, why wait to fund the rate study? Also, make the implementation easy on regional centers.
- DS Taskforce & Workgroups
 - The Employment workgroup met once and will be meeting again on January 24th. The group is working to make systemic changes for the State of California.

5. **PAC Committees & Reports**

- Vendor Relations
 - Ms. Dyba would like to increase attendance at these meetings. She requested that members advise her of their availability.

6. **PAC Matrix Update**

- Mr. Ciampa shared that this discussion began at the November meeting. Through these discussions, a slight update was suggested to the PAC's matrix. The matrix is meant to ensure that the PAC's membership represents the services that are provided in ACRC's catchment area.
 - The modifications are reflective of the rate study categories.
 - This revised matrix will be sent out to all PAC members. Please complete and return to Ms. West so that the information can be reviewed at the March PAC meeting.
- Mr. Ciampa would like the PAC to consider assigning members to attend meetings across the state. This strategy would ensure that the PAC's input is considered; this group could influence statewide/local discussions.

- Mr. Ciampa and Mr. Pinto will work together to index statewide issues; they will bring forward a proposal at the February PAC meeting.

7. ***Announcements/Comments***

- Mr. Decker shared that ACRC's Community Placement Plan (CCP) and Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP) were submitted to DDS. With community support, 11 projects are included in these plans.
 - Additionally, ACRC requested \$10,000 in additional funding so that we can have a demonstration unit with assistive technology at Mirasol Village; the hope is that this would assist a client who will then be less reliant on direct care staff. If DDS approves this, we can replicate the idea at other sites.
 - We are also putting together a proposal for a children's home for health/medical needs.
- There are discussions underway about retroactive rate increases for COVID relief.
- At the February meeting, the PAC will review the updated matrix, approve the letter to the legislature and review the proposal for statewide meeting assignments.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, February 10, 2022**, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: ACRC Board of Directors
Lori Banales