

Alta California Regional Center  
Provider Advisory Committee Meeting  
Thursday, October 8, 2020  
Minutes

**Present:**

Eric Ciampa, UCP of  
Sacramento, Inc., Chair  
Michelle Ramirez, On My Own,  
Co-Chair & Design. Dir.  
James Astorga, F&A Astorga Care  
Home  
Janet Brandon, AIM &  
Associates  
Garrett Broadbent, Meristem  
Andrea Croom, INALLIANCE  
Jacquie Dillard-Foss, STEP  
Bonnie Douglas, Turning Point  
Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored,  
Inc.  
Joe Hernandez, Aveanna  
Healthcare Services  
Joe Jaquez, EGACT  
Monique Migdol, Tahoe  
Community Integrations  
Sergio Pinto, BEST Consulting,  
Inc.  
Robin Rhoades, Southside  
Unlimited  
Adam Ruggles, Medstar LLC  
Joy Scott, Tri-County Caregiver  
Relief  
Laleh Sharpe, Maxim Healthcare  
Services  
Yvonne Soto, DDSO  
Paul Traglio, Kadiant  
Carole Watilo, Progressive  
Employment

**Absent:** (\* excused)

Ed Doonan\*, LIFE, Inc.  
Jessica Knuth, Reach Adult  
Development  
Antonio Ranit, Antelope Hills  
Manor

Peter Stirling, Serenity Respite  
Services

**Visitors:**

Jody Bailey  
Sonya Bingaman  
Breanne Burris  
Vikie Cole  
Jenna Darling  
Maureen Fitzgerald  
Sonya Fox-Watson  
Adriene Gaudet  
Olivia Gomez  
Kate Halecky  
Earl Holmes  
Priscilla Holmes  
Braydon Holtzinger  
Jennifer Jones  
Susana Magana  
Nicky Schlupe  
Kathleen Short  
Jasmine Vollenweider  
Katherine Wallen

**Staff:**

Phil Bonnet, Executive Director  
Iqbal Ahmad, Chief Financial Officer  
Lori Banales, Deputy Executive  
Director  
John Decker, Director of Community  
Services  
Camelia Houston, Director of  
Intake & Clinical Services  
Jean Onesi, Manager of Community  
Services  
Olivia Procida, Manager of  
Community Services  
Lisa West, Executive Secretary

The Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) met at 9:31 a.m. on Thursday, October 8, 2020, by Webex/teleconference to discuss: 1) Board Update; 2) Executive Director's Report; 3) COVID-19 Impact Discussion; 4) Legislative Update; 5) Discussion re PAC Committee/Workgroup Volunteers; 6) PAC Priorities – Subcommittee Reports; 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 September 10, 2020 as submitted.**

### 1. ***Board Update***

- Ms. Ramirez shared the Board met on September 24<sup>th</sup>.
  - The Board held a training regarding ACRC's Whistleblower Policy and Board member roles and responsibilities.
  - During the Board meeting, Mr. Bonnet provided an update on COVID-19 stats.
  - The group discussed the fire season and the impacts of the planned power outages.
  - To answer a question from the community about closures of programs during the pandemic, Mr. Bonnet shared information about closures and new service options that have taken place since mid-March.
    - Ms. Ramirez noted that ACRC has acquired 58 new residential placements, and opened 12 new care homes.
  - Mr. Ciampa noted that the Board reconsidered their position regarding Ms. Ramirez representing the PAC as their designated representative to ACRC's Board of Directors. The Board moved forward with her Conflict of Interest (COI) statement and mitigation plan, which was forwarded to the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).
    - The mitigation plan indicates that Ms. Ramirez cannot participate in any decisions related to ACRC campaigns that differ from the message of California Disability Services Association (CDSA). She also cannot vote on any fiscal matters, just as any other PAC representative.

### 2. ***Executive Director's Report***

- Mr. Bonnet shared that ACRC staff have been thinking about ways in which to communicate more directly with service providers.
  - Mr. Decker noted that starting on October 16<sup>th</sup>, ACRC will be hosting "Coffee with Community Services" every Friday from 11

- a.m. to noon. This is a weekly opportunity for service providers to ask questions and to receive updates from the regional center.
- Staff are committed to disclosing things that might be helpful and relate to you as service providers. We do our best to release information as soon as possible.
  - As of this morning, ACRC has 143 clients that have tested positive for COVID-19, with ten fatalities. We also have 77 positive direct support professionals (DSPs) and one ACRC staff member (95% of our staff continue to work remotely). In our statewide service system, 2,950 clients have tested positive, with 162 deaths. There have been 844,000 people in the State of California who have tested positive, with 16,350 deaths.
    - It appears that less than 1% of our clients statewide have been infected, although we know that many may have not been detected. We have seen a slowdown of newly reported cases and hospitalizations have gone down, as well.
    - With fall coming, things may change rapidly if people begin to congregate indoors.
  - The limited rollout of 2,500 clients in the Self-Determination Program (SDP) continues, although it is moving rather slowly. ACRC's Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC) and staff have invested a lot of time into this program. Mr. Bonnet is happy to report that a few of our clients have "flipped the switch". It's important to note that in June 2021, every regional center client over the age of three in the State of California will have this choice.
    - In August, DDS sent a survey out to those individuals who were initially chosen for the pilot project but have since dropped out. Many of them indicated that they were happy with the services that they were receiving from regional centers. There are concerns about client's budgets, taking into account unmet needs, and staying cost-neutral for our service system (data is showing that it's about 30% higher). The budgeting process is complicated and may be a bit overwhelming for some folks. Several regional centers have received Fair Hearing requests related to SDP.
      - The "Self-Determination Program Withdrawal Survey September 2020" is posted on DDS' website.
    - Ms. Banales will provide more information as it relates to the clients that have "flipped the switch" at ACRC during the November PAC meeting.
    - Suggestion was made to have this as a topic of discussion at an upcoming "Coffee with Community Services". Service providers are seeking tools to assist with serving clients in this program.

- ACRC is still accepting input on our draft 2021 Performance Contract with DDS.
- Annually in March, regional centers submit their caseload ratios to DDS. ACRC is not in compliance with a several of the mandated categories, therefore, we are seeking input from our stakeholders prior to submitting our plan of correction to the department. While we have been experiencing growth during the pandemic, we are averaging approximately 100 new clients per month (net), Service Coordinators (SCs) may have more time to connect with the clients on their caseloads since they do not have to drive to meet up with them.
  - One suggestion would be for ACRC to receive more funding, so that they would be able to hire more staff.
  - If you have any additional input, please contact Ms. Banales.
- Regional center Boards must submit their Annual Composition Survey to DDS by August 15<sup>th</sup>. For the first time, ACRC's Board was notified that we are short on white people.
- Mr. Bonnet would like to briefly discuss PPP – the Paycheck Protection Program. There have not been formal discussions about whether service providers are planning on keeping their PPP loans, as well as regional center retainer payments. On August 8<sup>th</sup>, the federal government released more guidance on this subject. Regional center retainer payments were intended to assist service providers in maintaining their staff. Also, if a service provider received a PPP loan, retainer payments may be in jeopardy.
  - Ms. Dillard-Foss has a copy of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Appendix K, which provides more guidance on this issue; this will be forwarded to everyone.

### 3. ***COVID-19 Impact Discussion***

- Mr. Ahmad noted that ACRC sent a billing memo to service providers on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>. Within that memo, there is a link to an electronic certification statement for alternative services created by DDS. Nonresidential service providers must complete and submit that document in order for ACRC staff to process their billing.
- While other regional centers have put additional requirements on what the department has released, ACRC has only asked that the Purchase of Service (POS) be cancelled if a client does not want to participate in a program's alternative services option.
- As we enter into 2021, Ms. Dillard-Foss believes service providers will need as much oversight as possible. Recently, she was surprised to see Individual Service Plans (ISPs) that only included the client and the day program. She believes that if you remove the regional center, the State of California is one step closer to managed care. Excluding the regional center is not part of Person Centered Planning. In the middle

of a public health crisis, we need to make sure that everyone is included in these conversations.

- Mr. Decker clarified that when there are issues between service providers or if a client wants to discontinue or add an alternative service, SCs need to be involved in the conversations. If no changes in the POS are needed, service providers do not need to involve regional center staff.
- Mr. Jaquez noted that ACRC's Community Services has been very helpful in regards to alternative services. His agency has included them in the needs assessment process with clients/families.
- Not including Supported Living Services (SLS) and Independent Living Services (ILS) providers in conversations about alternative services might cause unnecessary tension. Mr. Dillard-Foss noted that these service providers have been with the clients since the beginning of the pandemic. She has heard that some clients have started to demand more hours, which requires a Planning Team Meeting (PTM) to assess the needs of the client.
- All parties need to be careful and make sure that the alternative services that are agreed upon follow the DDS Directive.
- Mr. Ciampa shared that service providers are beginning to feel like they have to fill the gap in services and keep the statewide service system working. As a team, we need to move forward.
- ACRC Community Services Specialists are available to answer service provider's questions. Mr. Decker noted that some providers are having a challenging time figuring out alternative service options. ACRC staff want to assist in any way possible – service providers are encouraged to participate in the Friday "Coffee with Community Services" discussions.
- As Chair of the Cultural Diversity Subcommittee, Ms. Brandon inquired if there have been challenges during this time. Mr. Bonnet shared that ACRC hosted our Annual POS Expenditure Meeting virtually at the end of August, with 65 individuals in attendance. Over the past several years, staff have focused their attention on reaching out to those clients who had no POS' in the system and it has been a successful process.
  - At an upcoming PAC meeting, Ms. Banales will invite Helen Neri, ACRC's Cultural Diversity Specialist, to come and speak about some of our disparity grant projects.
- Mr. Decker welcomes feedback on ways to encourage peer-to-peer support between service providers.

#### 4. ***Legislative Update***

- CCLN
  - The organization CSLN changed their name to “California Community Living Network”.
  - They have had several meetings with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the California legislature and the budget outlook is not good.
  - The group has asked for the requirement of employers providing 80 hours of sick time to employees who test positive for COVID-19 to be written out of the bill. This may cause a financial burden on some service providers.
  - Agencies are also concerned employees who test positive for COVID-19 will file workers’ compensation claims.
  - They have had some great conversations around the P.A.V.E project and about rethinking services, rethinking outcomes, and rethinking service deliverables.

#### 5. ***Discussion re PAC Committee/Workgroup Volunteers***

- The PAC has several standing and ad-hoc subcommittees. It is expected that every voting member participate in at least one of these workgroups.
- Mr. Ciampa reviewed the list of volunteers.
  - The PAC will add a Legislative Subcommittee; volunteers include:
    - Jacquie Dillard-Foss, as Chair
    - Andrea Croom
    - Joe Jaquez
    - Carole Watilo
  - Ms. West will send the list out to everyone. If there are any revisions, please contact Mr. Ciampa prior to the November PAC meeting.

#### 6. ***PAC Priorities – Subcommittee Reports***

- The Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC) has grant funding available for training. They are currently holding Person Centered Planning Training, along with Independent Facilitator Training.
- Ms. Watilo shared that some certification training has been held for service providers.
- The new PAC brochure is now posted on ACRC’s website.
- There have been some side conversations about transportation during COVID-19. This includes company transportation, as well as residential and day programs. The group has discussed the difficulties with the DDS Directives when it comes to transportation; there are 16 different ways that transportation providers are paid throughout the state. DDS is continuing to review options and a stakeholder meeting will be

scheduled to discuss rates prior to service providers submitting their November billing. Utilization is key to this – it doesn't matter what the rate is unless services are being used.

#### 7. ***Announcements/Comments***

- Mr. Decker acknowledged service providers efforts in completing the recent Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) surveys. The statewide average was 80% and ACRC's was 89%.
- ACRC, with the assistance of SCDD, has secured more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We will be hosting a giveaway for residential providers next week. On October 30<sup>th</sup>, we will be holding a Halloween drive-thru and encourage clients, DSPs and staff to wear costumes – we might give out a sweet treat, too!
- Everyone was encouraged to remind the folks that you support to get their flu shots.
- If any member is interested in helping to facilitate collaboration between ACRC and other service providers (outside of PAC meetings), please connect with Mr. Ciampa.
- At the next meeting, the PAC will discuss "HCBS – The Reinvention of Services".

The next PAC meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, November 12, 2020**, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Lisa West  
Executive Secretary

cc: ACRC Board of Directors  
Phil Bonnet