

Alta California Regional Center
Provider Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 9, 2021
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, A.I.M. &
Associates
Garrett Broadbent, Meristem
Bonnie Douglas, Turning Point
Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored,
Inc.
Joe Hernandez, Aveanna
Healthcare Services
Joe Jaquez, EGACT
Jessica Knuth, Reach Adult
Development
Robin Rhoades, Southside
Unlimited
Adam Ruggles, Medstar LLC
Joy Scott, Tri-County Caregiver
Relief
Laleh Sharpe, Maxim Healthcare
Services
Yvonne Soto, DDSO
Carole Watilo, Progressive
Employment

Absent: (* excused)

Andrea Croom*, INALLIANCE
Jacquie Dillard-Foss*, STEP
Ed Doonan, LIFE, Inc.
Monique Migdol*, Tahoe
Community Integrations
Sergio Pinto*, BEST Consulting,
Inc.
Antonio Ranit, Antelope Hills
Manor
Peter Stirling, Serenity Respite
Services
Paul Traglio*, Kadiant

Visitors

John Angelonides
Jody Bailey
Breeanne Burris
Maureen Fitzgerald
Sonya Fox-Watson
Kate Halecky
Braydon Holtzinger
Claudia Loveless
Susan Miner
Christa McClure
Jen Roney
Summer Rowley
Nicky Schluep
Stan Schmidt
Kathleen Short
Tiffany Spiecker
Geneva Steward
Jasmine Vollenweider
Katherine Wallen

Staff:

Lori Banales, Executive Director
Iqbal Ahmad, Chief Financial Officer
Jennifer Bloom, Associate Client Services
Director
Tracy Brown, Associate Client Services
Director
John Decker, Director of Community
Services
DeLayna Eskridge-Brown, Service
Coordinator
Camelia Houston, Director of
Intake & Clinical Services
Mechelle Johnson, Director of Client
Services
Johnny Xiong, Associate Client
Services Director
Lisa West, Executive Secretary

The Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) met at 9:34 a.m. on Thursday, September 9, 2021, by Webex/teleconference to discuss: 1) Board Update; 2) Executive Director's Report; 3) Approve New Member; 4) Independent Audits; 5) General Provider Contract; 6) CA Budget and Legislative Update; 7) COVID-19 Impact Discussion; 8) PAC Committees & Reports; and 9) Announcements/Comments. All present provided self-introductions.

Without objection, Garrett Broadbent made the motion to approve the Provider Advisory Committee meeting minutes of July 8, 2021 as submitted.

1. **Board Update**

- Ms. Ramirez shared that the Board meeting was held on July 22nd.
 - David Lopez, ACRC's Client Advocate, gave a presentation entitled "The Client Advocate Role at Alta California Regional Center".
 - The Board will begin the process of strategic planning at their Board Training scheduled for September 23rd, prior to the Board meeting.
 - Mr. Ciampa noted that the PAC would like to be included in this process, while the PAC continues with their own strategic planning process to develop goals that the group can focus on over the next few years.
 - The Board approved two new members – Dan Lake and Amy Lampe.
 - Ms. Banales shared data on COVID positive cases and vaccination status of clients.
 - The Client Advisory Committee (CAC) members expressed interest in sending another message out to clients about the importance of vaccines.
 - This year's budget will include funding for new positions at each regional center – a disaster preparedness specialist and a deaf specialist.
 - Several new programs have opened since the last Board meeting, with five closing.
- PAC members are encouraged to attend ACRC Board meetings.

2. **Executive Director's Report**

- Ms. Banales continues to be excited about the opportunity to be ACRC's Executive Director. She will be working with the advisory committees to develop some important initiatives. It is important to make sure that our clients voices are heard.

- There has been an uptick in positive COVID cases that is quite significant and unfortunate. Since July 6th, we have reported the following to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS):
 - 150 new positive cases for clients, with five deaths; four clients are currently in the hospital. The majority of these cases are for individuals that are not vaccinated.
 - 71 new positive direct support professionals (DSPs), with one death.
 - ACRC believes DSP data is under-reported.
 - 13 ACRC staff, with two deaths, both were unvaccinated.

We will continue to move forward and promote vaccination. The data supports that vaccinations do matter and save lives.

- ACRC currently has 17,354 clients eligible for vaccinations, with 50.1% vaccinated. We have reached out to over 16,000 of those individuals, with additional outreach efforts to the remaining 1,000. 4,274 clients have declined vaccination, with an additional 3000+ clients refusing to disclose.
 - Staff are doing targeted outreach based on the ethnicity data that our agency is tracking.
 - We are getting close to hosting booster clinics; we may want to partner with service providers.
 - As Ms. Ramirez mentioned, after the July Board meeting, one of our client Board members spoke with Ms. Banales and a group of clients and ACRC staff got together to shoot a video encouraging everyone to get vaccinated. This will be posted on our social media soon.
- 85% of ACRC staff are vaccinated. Ms. Banales expects that this number will increase due to the recent FDA approval of the vaccines, in addition to staff impact.
 - 10% of ACRC staff have declined vaccination, with 5% refusing to disclose.
 - Beginning September 1st, we were planning to have staff come into the office two days a week. That has now been pushed back to November 1st. About 20% of our employees have volunteered to come into the office on specific days of the week.
- The Caldor Fire is about 53% contained; staff are continuing to monitor 423 clients. The SCs are also under duress, due to their homes being at risk. ACRC partnered with our health care partners who stepped in to assist, as well.
- The Bridge Fire is about 65% contained. 60 clients may be evacuated; we are watching this fire closely.
- ACRC is moving forward with the hiring of an Emergency Disaster Coordinator, who will hopefully start on October 1st. We have also posed the Deaf Specialist position. Ms. Banales noted that this is a

- priority for our regional center. The 45 to 55 new SC positions will be enacted in the next fiscal/budget year.
- ACRC brought on 77 new hires this last year and 78 employees left the agency. We are struggling to hire and retain staff, as well.
 - Ms. Banales formed a recruitment/retention workgroup that is gathering suggestions on how to retain staff.
 - The Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC)/Service Provider Ad-Hoc Workgroup is meeting every other week. This great collaboration provides an opportunity for service providers to learn how they can integrate their services into the Self-Determination Program (SDP) – what might be required of them, what should they do if a client approaches them for SDP services, etc. The group is developing a PowerPoint presentation that will be reviewed at their next meeting which is scheduled for Monday, September 20th. They are also developing one-page flyers on specific topics.
 - Ms. Burris would like to share additional information with the PAC at the October meeting.
 - Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)
 - There were some issues with the link for the Tom Pomeranz CIE Training scheduled for Tuesday, September 21st from 9:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. It was clarified that anyone that would like to attend will be able to do so – the link will be available that day.
 - The CIE Roadmap was released by DDS and was broken down into four age groups. ACRC created individual workgroups for each of these and invited our stakeholders to join in on the discussions. We are compiling all of the feedback, which will be shared with DDS.
 - Next Monday, ACRC will be holding an internal meeting to decide how to roll out the DDS Roadmap to our agency staff, so that they can begin conversations with clients/families. The target date for this is October 1st.
 - Suggestion to include service providers in these discussions/workgroups.
 - Coordinated Future Planning
 - The task force has met and the learning objectives will be posted on our agency's website by October 1st.
 - ACRC Service Provider Hiring Challenges Survey
 - Mr. Decker reviewed the data that was collected from the survey that we sent out.
 - 185 responses were received, representing 46 service codes from all of ACRC's ten-county catchment area.
 - This survey was discussed at last week's "Coffee with Community Services". There is also an opportunity for service providers to

partner with N&R Publications to create an 8-page custom publication focused on the DSP worker shortage crisis.

- This data will be posted on ACRC's website. If there is any interest in having agency staff analyze this data further, please contact Mr. Decker.

3. **Approve New Member**

- As discussed at the July PAC meeting, Robin Rhoades will be retiring in November. Kate Halecky has been working at Southside Unlimited for ten years and has attended the required number of meetings to be considered for membership. She provided a brief introduction of herself.

Without objection, Joy Scott made the motion to approve Kate Halecky for PAC membership.

4. **Independent Audits**

- Mr. Decker shared that a letter was sent to service providers yesterday clarifying what exemptions can be granted by regional centers for the completion of an independent audit or an independent review.
 - He noted that if this is the first year that you are required to complete an independent audit or review, you are not eligible for an exemption.

5. **General Provider Contract**

- Mr. Ahmad and Mr. Decker have been reviewing the current vendor agreement that ACRC has with service providers. They are considering some additional draft language and have received feedback from Mr. Ciampa and Ms. Ramirez, as your Chairs of the PAC. They also understand that everyone is concerned about increased costs for their agencies.
 - Please know that we are continuing to move forward with this, but want to simplify it as much as possible. How we approach it, while understanding current issues, is extremely important.
 - We will continue to discuss this at the October PAC meeting.

6. **CA Budget and Legislative Update (ARCA, CDSA, CCLN, DS Taskforce, Lanterman Coalition)**

- CA Budget
 - Mr. Ciampa noted that the legislative session is ending. We will soon see how the bills that we have been tracking fare.
- Legislative Update
 - No updates were provided.

7. **COVID-19 Impact Discussion**

- Mr. Ciampa is thankful for all of ACRC's efforts in getting clients vaccinated. Ms. Banales provided additional data:
 - Clients in Independent Living Services (ILS) – 2400+ clients; 1199 reported vaccinated (49%)
 - Clients in Supported Living Services (SLS) – 645 clients; 85% are vaccinated
 - Clients in congregated living settings – 2000+ clients; 91.2% are vaccinated
- Some service providers have put a pause on in-person services due to the spike in COVID positive cases. Safety must continue to be a priority.
- Reinvention of services should still be a topic of conversation. DDS has placed additional requirements on alternative services which are needed and important.

8. **PAC Committees & Reports**

- Diversity & Equity
 - Ms. Brandon shared that the Cultural Diversity Committee has been renamed and now Jacquie Dillard-Foss is the Chair. Both of them had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Banales, who assisted in developing a survey, which will be sent out to service providers. The survey will gather data on the diversity of service provider staff.
 - The draft survey will be sent to PAC members in order to gather input at the October PAC meeting, prior to its distribution.
 - Mr. Hernandez requested to be included in this discussion as the Chair of the Communication & Outreach Committee.
- Vendor Relations
 - Ms. Dyba shared that the group met to review the "cheat sheet" that Mr. Decker created to show what the role of the Community Specialists is.
 - This will be finalized soon. The group is scheduled to meet again next week.

9. **Announcements/Comments**

- Due to Veteran's Day, the November PAC meeting will be held on the first Thursday of the month – November 4th.
- Mr. Broadbent shared that he has accepted a position as the new CEO of Creative Living Options (CLO) beginning October 1st. Eric Steward will be attending the PAC meetings on behalf of Meristem beginning next month.
 - Mr. Ciampa clarified that if Mr. Broadbent would like to continue as a member of the PAC, he will need to resubmit an application.

- DDS released information regarding the 2021-22 Service Access & Equity Grants. The Bidder's Conference is scheduled for September 16th.
 - Helen Neri, ACRC's Cultural Diversity Specialist, will be available to assist service providers who are interested in applying for these grants. She will be attending the "Coffee with Community Services" scheduled for tomorrow, September 10th, at 11 a.m.
- Stan Schmidt, with CIWP, assisted one of Ms. Brandon's staff who lost her home in the Caldor Fire. This is an example of the kindness of our community.
- The October PAC agenda will include the SDAC PowerPoint presentation, the General Provider Contract and the Diversity & Equity survey.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, October 14, 2021**, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: ACRC Board of Directors
Lori Banales