

Alta California Regional Center
Legislative Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 27, 2008
Minutes

Present:

Kathy Lee, Co-Chair
Rebecca Brubaker
Tom Hopkins
Spencer McClay
Cindy Richards

Facilitator:

Larry Prosser
Barbara Salazar
Marilyn Smith

Board Members:

Nancy Lea

Absent: (* excused)

Gail Janke*, Chair
Earl O'Neal
Rick Tomlinson

Visitors:

Anh Nguyen, ARCA
Sam Seaton, PRIDE Industries

Staff:

Phil Bonnet, Executive Director
Lisa West, Executive Secretary

The Legislative Ad-Hoc Committee met at 1:04 p.m. on Wednesday, February 27, 2008, in the Executive Conference Room at Alta California Regional Center to discuss: 1) Legislative Update/Possible Legislative Initiatives for 2008; and 2) Other. All present provided self-introductions.

By consensus, the minutes of the January 23, 2008, Legislative Ad-Hoc Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

1. ***Legislative Update/Possible Legislative Initiatives for 2008***

Issue: The committee needs a legislative update and to discuss possible legislative initiatives for 2008.

Discussion and Action: Anh Nguyen, from the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA), provided information on the following items:

ARCA Conferences

➤ ARCA's Grassroots Day

ARCA's Grassroots Day is scheduled for next Wednesday, March 5, 2008, at the State Capitol. Her agency scheduled 112 out of 120 legislative appointments and many volunteers from ACRC will be in attendance.

With the assistance of Dr. Mike Clark, from Kern Regional Center, ARCA's Community & Education Outreach Committee was able to develop colorful packets for Grassroots Day. They will also be having poster campaigns, entitled "Meet Your Neighbor", throughout the year.

ARCA will have a "green" room (Room #437), at the State Capitol, where individuals can pick up name tags and supplies. Ms. Nguyen encourages families and consumers to tell their own personal story. She shared that ARCA would like to receive feedback regarding how individuals thought the day went.

➤ A New Day Conference

Ms. Nguyen shared that Mr. Bonnet will be Chairing "A New Day 2009 – Living and Working in California" which is scheduled to be held on February 5th & 6th, 2009 at the San Francisco Marriott. This conference is being built for approximately 600 attendees and will be focused on employment and housing. A "save the date" flyer will be sent out this Friday, February 29th. ARCA is still finalizing the program, which will include breakout sessions on: transitioning from school into adult life, best practices and corporate culture for companies employing people with disabilities, etc.

2008-2009 Fiscal (FY) Year Budget Update

Governor Schwarzenegger's initial budget that was introduced on Thursday, January 10, 2008, included a \$14.5 billion deficit. He called a special session of the legislature and they have acted on some mid-year cuts. Ms Nguyen shared that there is confusion regarding what cuts are proposed for the current year, fiscal year and budget year.

Legislative analyst office is projecting the deficit at \$16 billion and growing. Since, regional centers are "payers of last resort" the cuts in the budget may have a huge impact on who is responsible for funding issues.

ARCA's position on several reductions can be found on their website (www.arcenet.org).

Ms. Nguyen shared that, with recent propositions regarding legislative term limits, legislators are terming out. Leadership will be changing:

- Senator Darrell Steinberg has been named to replace Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata. Senator Steinberg is an advocate for the regional center system and Chaired the California Legislative Blue Ribbon Commission on Autism. ARCA's legislative advisor, Rick Rollens, also has a good relationship with him.
- Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez will term out at the end of the year, but no replacement has been named yet.
- Senator Dave Cogdill has been chosen to replace Senate Republican Leader Dick Ackerman.

- The Assembly Republican Leader, Michael Villines, is the only one of the four leaders who will remain, and is not termed out until 2010.

Significant Legislation

ARCA will be sponsoring the following bills this year:

- **SB 1175 (Steinberg) – Regional center housing options**
Five years ago, then Assemblyman Steinberg authored AB 2100, which authorized regional centers to come up with different housing models for consumers. The idea was piloted with the Bay Area Housing Project, which Mr. Bonnet toured, with members of his staff, late last year. He was very impressed with the options.

SB 1175 would encourage the development of a permanent housing stock for people with developmental disabilities in the community. The regional centers would not own the homes, but would assist non-profit housing corporations to purchase and retain these homes.
- **AB 1824 (Beall) – Regional center employee liability**
This bill would eliminate the long-standing sunset date on an existing provision which provides protection from civil liability for regional center staff from acts performed in good faith that result in an injury or death. This protective measure allows for and encourages regional center staff, especially at the service coordination level, to advocate for consumers to explore community-based service options, maximizing their potential while not placing themselves at personal risk.
- **AB 1825 (Beall) – Dispute resolution process**
This bill would establish procedures for dispute resolution between a regional center and any publicly funded agency over provision of or payment for services that are contained in an individual program plan (IPP) or an individualized family service plan (IFSP) for children under six years of age. This process would make sure the child continues to receive services while the dispute is being resolved. After resolution, one side would reimburse the other.

Ms. Nguyen shared that ARCA may request support from members of this committee by asking for individuals to come and speak with the legislators at various hearings regarding these bills.

Ms Nguyen conveyed that advocacy and grassroots need to happen every day. She encourages everyone to contact their legislator and maintain a presence with their staff and in the community – make sure everyone knows that we are still here! ARCA's office is always available to assist in any way possible.

ARCA will be "watching" other bills this year, which include:

- **AB 2424 (Beall) – Persons with developmental disabilities: education and employment**
Protection & Advocacy Inc. would like to strengthen the IPP and ARCA has worked over the last year with them to clarify some of the changes that they are proposing. Although this bill will have a huge operations cost to regional centers, no fiscal monies are attached to it.

- **AB 2635 (Beall) – Developmental disabilities: state employment**
This bill came out of Senator Chesbro's SB 1270 and takes the next steps in the process. The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) convened a workgroup to discuss options for consumers. The diversity of the group was amazing. The SCDD produced a report and DVD on SB 1270 and submitted it to the Governor on May 1, 2007. The final report outlined some specific goals regarding employment.

- **SB 1317 (Steinberg & Cox) – Developmental services: habilitation services**
The goal is to move away from the "sheltered" workshop setting. Some individuals are mainly independent. There are currently different models of support that don't fit into any particular model (not a work activity program and not a traditional site based program). The "career opportunity program" is a new way of looking at employment. Agencies would bring professionals into the program to work as a mentor or trainer ("reverse integration"). This bill would clarify that certain agencies will get credit for employing persons with disabilities.

Mr. Seaton shared that a "career opportunity program" is a nonprofit agency that provides all of the following for its employees with disabilities:

- onsite rehabilitation services
- a supported employment program
- an integrated professional work environment of employees of employees with disabilities and those without disabilities working collegially on customer contracts at the same location (ratios are set by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS))
- hourly wages based on the prevailing wage
- equal eligibility for benefits for disabled and nondisabled full-time employees
- the opportunity for promotion and advancement within the organization
- the opportunity for employees with disabilities to participate in the primary business operations of the nonprofit in service of diversity

supplier contracts for external commercial or government customers

Ms. Nguyen shared that informational meetings were held late last year by Assemblyman Jim Beall to strengthen and modernize the Lanterman Act. She also shared that all SCDD meetings, due to cost containment measures, will be held at the DoubleTree hotel in Sacramento. By law, these are open meetings and the meeting schedule is posted on their website: www.scdd.ca.gov.

Committee expressed their appreciation to Ms. Nguyen for her continued assistance.

- **Information only.**

2. **Other**

- Mr. Seaton shared that SB 1687 (McLeod) would establish a statewide participation goal of not less than 2% for developmentally disabled business enterprises to participate in all contracts awarded by a state department for construction, services, materials, supplies, equipment, alterations, repairs or improvements. This bill will open up an employment window for ACRC's consumers.
- Mr. Seaton shared that if anyone would like to visit PRIDE Industries, please contact him at (916) 788-2114.

The next Legislative Ad-Hoc Committee meeting is scheduled on **Wednesday, March 26, 2008**, at 1:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary to the
Board of Directors

cc: ACRC Board of Directors
Phil Bonnet