

Alta California Regional Center  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Thursday, January 27, 2022  
Minutes

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

**Absent** (\* excused): Johnny Deng

**Staff:** Lori Banales, Iqbal Ahmad, Jennifer Amaro, Jennifer Bloom, John Decker, Michelle Hannan, Camelia Houston, Mechelle Johnson, Dan Kilmer, Judy Licciardello, Meghan Quallick, Erin Sterling, Barbara van Ingen, Johnny Xiong, Lisa West

**Facilitators:** Amy Fulk

**Visitors:** Sophia Agafonow, Steve Andrews, Breeanne Burris, Eric Ciampa, Maureen Fitzgerald, Ron Mainini, Peter Mendoza, Karen Mulvany, Erin Paulsen-Brady, Kim Rothschild

1. **Call to Order – Reading of ACRC’s Mission & Vision** - The Board of Directors met at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 27, 2022, by Webex/teleconference. Ms. Pennington read aloud ACRC’s Mission and Vision.
2. **Training – “Competitive Integrated Employment”**
  - Jennifer Bloom, Tracy Brown and Johnny Xiong, ACRC’s Associate Directors, gave a presentation on Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).
    - The CIE Roadmap was released in the spring of 2020.
    - ACRC held two trainings with Tom Pomeranz; both are posted on our agency’s website.
      - After these trainings, the four workgroups, based on age groups, reconvened. The stakeholder investment has been critical in our development of ACRC’s plan.
      - We heard that Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC), the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) were working together to develop employment trainings. ACRC is joining their efforts in finalizing a training series. So far, seven sessions have been developed. The next session is scheduled on February 17<sup>th</sup>, from 4 to 5:15 p.m.; the series will wrap up in the summer and success stories will be highlighted.
    - Those that we support are employable; we need to focus on readiness skills.

- ACRC has made progress on the planned activities related to CIE in our agency's Performance Contract with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

### 3. **Community Comments/Announcements**

- ◆ Ms. Fitzgerald expressed appreciation for the comprehensive training. She wishes that ACRC would consider placing their Board meetings on YouTube. In March of 1985, regional centers were charged with implementing services that are included in Individual Program Plans (IPPs). All regional centers have a contract with DDS. The Board may wish to consider adding a question about IPPs to the Strategic Plan Survey. She shared that public comments were not accepted at the last two Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meetings and urges the Board to consider this request.
- ◆ Ms. Mulvany noted that Ms. Banales will be covering the "Self-Determination Advisory Committee (SDAC) Self-Determination Program (SDP) Progress Report and Recommendations" in her report. She is pleased to see increased participation in this program. Ms. Mulvany also shared that she was able to provide public comment at the last SPC meeting.

### 4. **Consent Agenda – By consensus, the following consent agenda items were approved: a) regular session Board meeting minutes of November 18, 2021; and b) Client Advisory Committee (CAC), Executive, Finance, Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) and Strategic Planning Committee minutes.**

### 5. **New Business**

- ◆ Approve Updated Social Recreation Activities, Camp and Non-Medical Therapies Service Policy

**Discussion and Action:** The Executive Committee (BDC) is recommending approval of this updated policy. Ms. Banales shared that staff have been working collaboratively with DDS to make sure that the language is correct.

Once the Board approves this policy, it will be sent to DDS. Once their approval is received, the policy will be posted on our agency's website and then we will develop trainings for staff and continue with our outreach efforts for the implementation of these services. Ms. Banales noted that these services were reinstated on July 1, 2021, and we are currently staffing all requests with our internal Best Practice Committee to make sure that we are implementing these services consistently throughout the agency.

**Without objection, Dan Lake made the motion to approve the updated policy as presented.**

◆ Strategic Planning Committee

**Issue 1:** Strategic Plan Focus Area Definitions

**Discussion and Action:** The simplified definitions are noted under Tab 8 of the Board packet. Mr. Lake noted that it is important that the Board stay on the timeline that was approved at the November 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

- **Information only.**

**Issue 2:** Strategic Plan Survey

**Discussion and Action:** The simplified survey is under Tab 9 of the Board packet. This survey will be released in February.

**Without objection, Michelle Rewerts made the motion to approve the Strategic Plan Survey as presented.**

◆ *Finance Committee*

**Issue 1:** Monthly Financial Report

**Discussion and Action:** The Finance Committee is recommending acceptance of the November 30, 2021 financial report.

Mr. Ahmad noted that ACRC received the C-2 amendment. Overall, the statewide system is pretty healthy, although every business is impacted from the recent COVID surge.

**Without objection, Dan Lake made the motion to accept the monthly finance report as submitted.**

**Issue 2:** Independent Audit Report

**Discussion and Action:** AGT CPAs & Advisors have been ACRC's auditors for the last three years; this firm understands regional centers. This report reflects the statement of activities and a "clean" audit report.

Mr. Ahmad noted that this audit is a reflection our agency's management team.

**Without objection, Dan Lake made the motion to approve the independent audit report as presented.**

◆ *Committee Updates*

• CAC

- Ms. Wallace shared that the CAC met on January 11<sup>th</sup>.
  - Mr. Decker gave a detailed overview of ACRC's new quarterly newsletter – "Alta Connections".
  - The group provided feedback about qualities they feel are important in a client advocate. ACRC is currently hiring an Associate Client Advocate.
  - As ACRC's Board works on the strategic planning process, the CAC decided that they would like to develop some activities that focus on housing/living options.
  - Mr. Decker gave a brief update on several housing projects that ACRC has been working on.
  - CAC members provided updates on the various advocacy groups that they are a part of.

• PAC

- Ms. Ramirez shared that the PAC met on January 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - The committee is in the process of updating their matrix, which provides an overview of the services that each member's agency provides in ACRC's catchment area.
  - The vendor community is suffering right now. They are already experiencing a shortage of staff, in addition to the booster mandate. There is also a shortage of testing and results are delayed. It has become difficult for service providers to determine whether they can keep their doors open.
    - Ms. Ramirez expressed appreciation to ACRC for their efforts to distribute over 14,000 testing kits to service providers.
  - Several service codes will receive a rate increase in April. Vendor groups are trying to come together and push for speeding up the implementation of the rate study.
    - The PAC is drafting an advocacy letter requesting DDS to consider implementing the rate study sooner. Ms. Ramirez will share this letter with the Board once approved by the PAC.

◆ *Executive Director's Report*

- Ms. Banales shared that Governor Newsom released the proposed budget for the 2022-23 FY on January 10<sup>th</sup>; DDS' overview is included in the Board packet. This is an evolving process, with hearings being scheduled with both the Assembly and Senate.
  - \$12.4 billion has been assigned to the DDS statewide service system.

- Part of the proposed budget focuses on Early Start; reducing caseload ratios for children through age five to 1:40.
- ACRC continues to track daily COVID positive cases for the clients that we serve, direct support professionals (DSPs) and staff. From July 5<sup>th</sup> thru November 30<sup>th</sup>, we tracked the Delta variant. Those numbers included:
  - 310 positive clients, with seven deaths
  - 109 positive DSPs, with one death
  - 19 positive ACRC staff, with two deaths

Since December 1<sup>st</sup>, we have been tracking the Omicron variant. Since then we have tracked:

- 530 positive clients, with two deaths
- 182 positive DSPs
- 49 positive ACRC staff

Ms. Banales will be pushing back the return-to-work date that she was planning for February 1<sup>st</sup>. The new date will be based on data as staff continue to work remotely. ACRC has been working closely with our Public Health Departments to acquire rapid test kits to make sure that staff who are visiting clients in licensed care facilities can test prior to visits. We must continue to do everything within our means to best serve our clients, while not spreading COVID. We will continue to make sure that our supplies (rapid test kits and Personal Protective Equipment [PPE]) are replenished.

- Ms. Banales is proud of ACRC's quarterly newsletter, "Alta Connections", which was released on January 3<sup>rd</sup> in English and Spanish. We will be adding additional translations with each new release; the next issue will be translated into Korean, Russian, and Vietnamese.
- During the pandemic, our statewide service system has made some advances as we continue to learn how to provide services in this new norm. ACRC values our staff's dedication to the clients who rely on us every day.
- The recent Public Health Order (PHO) requires that every regional center employee receive their booster by February 1<sup>st</sup>; yesterday, that date was extended to March 1<sup>st</sup>. We currently need to verify 80 staff member's booster status. Because we do not want to put anyone on unpaid status, our Human Resources (HR) Department is reaching out to staff daily to make sure that everyone is aware of this mandate. HR is also working diligently on our hiring plan.
- The Board recently approved a Request for Proposal (RFP) for support for Board members. ACRC released this RFP and Mr. Decker has had some additional discussions with those that expressed interest, without submitting a proposal (e.g., developing a mentoring

program, supporting Board member thru technology, etc.).  
Facilitation is meant to support every Board member.

- Ms. Banales believes there are some viable options; we might have to get there in a different way.
- The Board has requested updates on open and closed programs since the last Board meeting. The following are newly vendored services:
  - Bridging Differences
  - Cherrytree Vision Services
  - Speech360
  - Palm Valley Care I – Geriatric
  - Machico Place
  - Warner Family Cottage
  - Vineyard Home LLC
  - Mason’s Home LLC

Closed vendors:

- Pride Opportunities Program – moved; lost license; no clients have lost services since they have been remote
- Pride Industries – moved; lost license; no clients have lost services since they have been remote
- Knowledge Empowers You (ILS)
- In collaboration with the WarmLine, a virtual “Mindfulness and Trauma” workshop is scheduled for Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, from 6 to 8 p.m. This workshop will focus on the current research around and use of mindfulness and acceptance practices for both trauma-exposed youth and the adult’s caregivers who serve them.
- Ms. Banales provided a detailed overview of the “Dashboard Indicators for the Quarter Ending December 31, 2021”, which is included under Tab 13 in the Board packet. It’s important to note the following:
  - Mr. Decker shared that the number of Special Incident Reports (SIRs) are increasing. He explained that these reports are based on the date that staff are notified of incidents. ACRC is receiving a huge number of COVID-19 SIRs due to the current Omicron surge; this is happening all across the state.
    - Concern remains regarding delays in the two-day reporting of SIRs to DDS, which affects the department’s response to regional centers in verifying the ongoing health and safety of clients.
  - At the end of December, provisional eligibility was put into place. As of January 24<sup>th</sup>, ACRC has 61 clients served under this category.

- As of January 2<sup>nd</sup>, ACRC is serving 50 individuals in the SDP. Collaboration with the SDAC is key to the success of this program.
    - February 2<sup>nd</sup> – lunch & learn workshop on Financial Management Services (FMS)
    - February 3<sup>rd</sup> – two virtual orientation sessions (noon to 1 p.m. or 5 to 6 p.m.)
  - Should you have any questions, please email Ms. Banales.
- ◆ *ARCA Delegate Report*
- Under Tab 14 of the Board packet, please find the DDS presentation from the January Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) Board delegates meeting. In the meeting, it became evident that many of the delegates do not understand the DDS oversight of regional centers and they have other responsibilities, as well.
    - Ms. Walker encourages everyone to review this information.
  - ARCA has been very active in providing training to Board members across the state with their ARCA Web Academies.
    - The January Web Academy highlighted ACRC's Coordinated Future Planning with Ms. Johnson and Mr. Decker.
    - The March 8<sup>th</sup> Web Academy will explore Board members' role in legislative advocacy. ARCA holds an annual Grassroots Day, where we shared information about the statewide regional center system with our local legislators. It's important to build those relationships.
      - Ms. Walker encourages Board members to attend these trainings.
  - Everyone received additional documents, including:
    - Sac 6 (Self-Advocacy Council 6) presentation – additional information can be found on Valley Mountain Regional Center's (VMRC's) website)
    - The adopted ARCA Conservatorship Policy Statement – due to the growing public awareness of conservatorship, AB 1663 is now being considered by the state's legislature to make changes to the current law. ARCA believes that Supported Decision Making represents an alternative to conservatorship; 12 other states have put this into law.
    - DDS' presentation from the January Board meeting regarding the Governor's proposed budget for the 2022-23 FY.
- ◆ *ARCA-CAC Rep. Report*
- Ms. Rewerts has invited Mr. Decker to speak with the group about ACRC's housing projects at the next meeting which is scheduled for Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.

◆ *Correspondence*

- Under Tabs 15 and 16 of the Board packet, please find information about ACRC's Caseload Ratio Plan of Correction and the 2018-19 and 2019-20 Annual Purchase of Service (POS) Reports.

6. **Closed Session** – At 6:07 p.m. the Board adjourned to closed session to discuss personnel issues.

7. **Announcement of Closed Meeting Discussion** - At 6:21 p.m. the Board reconvened in open session following a closed session in which personnel issues were discussed.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Lisa West  
Executive Secretary

cc: Lori Banales