

**INLAND REGIONAL CENTER
VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

March 21, 2022

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Audrey Andrade, Member at Large: Felecia Arnold, Transportation: Johana Caicedo, Infant/Children Programs: Marie Chatman, Vocational Programs: Michelle Clarke, Health Facilities: Lynn De Anda, Day Programs: Ruth Goodsell, Member at Large: Doug McKown, Specialist/Support Programs: Rachel Steward, Behavior Modification: April Steward, Member at Large.

Ms. Arnold called the meeting to order at 9:03.

MINUTES: Motion made to approve minutes of February 14, 2022: M/S/C Steward/Caicedo.

Patricia Herrera, Regional Manager at SCDD, gave a presentation

Vendor Category Report:

- 1. Day Program:** Ms. De Anda reported they met last week. Over 50 vendors participated as well as IRC. They discussed authorizations dropping off and they are addressing the issue with the case manager. They talked about staff using personal vehicles to transport and how to protect the agency. They are looking for updates on the mask guidelines. Is the N95 still required? Vendors are frustrated by the turnover at IRC because they cannot keep up with who the case manager is. They were told to go to the IRC website, use the directory to find the Program Manager or they can ask their liaison. They have created a joint meeting with Transportation on April 13th.
- 2. Health Facilities:** Ms. Clarke reported they met last month and about 15 vendors participated. They talked about concerns with the state moving towards managed care and how that may affect them. They have ongoing concerns with staffing and hiring. Surveys have started again. There are concerns with Covid testing for those not insured and the cost. They will meet again this week.
- 3. Infant/Children's Program:** Ms. Caicedo reported on the Pre-Vac of February 28th. They had about 50 providers in attendance. Treva Webster thanked the Infant Program providers for the patience through the Pandemic. Ms. Webster reminder the providers to please send outstanding POS as soon as possible so it can be resolved. Ms. Webster and the Early Start Program Managers attend the Pre-Vac meetings to resolve issues at the meeting. Providers are thankful for their attendance. They discussed the DDS Directive that has extended remote services until June 30th. They talked about the continued mask mandate even as counties relax their standards. Ms. Caicedo participated and the Family Resource Network Annual Planning meeting. The next parent/vendor training is planned for June. They discussed concerns with the changes the CDC made to milestones which may affect assessments and children coming into early start. The vendors are not happy with the changes. They will discuss this more on the next meeting on March 28th.

4. **Residential Service L2-L3:** No Report
5. **Residential Service L4:** No Report
6. **Respite Program:** Ms. Stewart gave the report for Ms. Delgado: Respite meeting was held via zoom on 2/24/22 at 10:00am. Approximately 15 attendees. We were joined by Vince Toms at our meeting to discuss EVV related concerns. The group was updated regarding EVV deadline of March 1s for all vendors to register with the state solution. Vendors who have not yet registered will be contacted by Lynette to discuss support. We conducted a group survey to gauge respite vendor's ability to launch and comply with EVV mandates in their agencies. Results showed that while most agencies are able to begin the initiative, it has been difficult to get both Respite employees and consumers onboard for various reasons such as technical ability, desire to convert to a digital clock in, resources in and out of agency. Vendors are challenged with resources to train employees to utilize the solution as well as follow up on compliance. Discussion was held regarding service location and how this is affected and/or understood by implementing EVV. Vendors were updated that they can expect some refreshed internal processes at IRC in dealing with respite service location.
7. **SLS:** No Report
8. **Specialist/Support Programs:** Mr. McKown reported his group has not met. Providers have his email. They meet as needed and discuss issues via email.
9. **Transportation:** Ms. Arnold reported they discussed the rate that will change in 2026. Some providers are concerned with the rates based off of DDS and Burns and Associates calculations because it was based off a specific number of consumers in a vehicle, and many have more than that number in their vehicle. The transporters will meet with the Day Program providers on April 13th. They are having issues with TSR's as they don't have the correct dates and times of program on them. When they contact residential, they are told the times are different which makes it challenging for route planning. A huge issue for the group is the high price of gas. Next meeting is April 22nd.
10. **Vocational Program:** Ms. Chatman reported on the Pre-Vac on March 16th. Andrew Burdick and Beth Crane as well as DOR were in attendance. Andrew and Beth reminded everyone to make sure to include transportation as well as all other necessary parties at the IDT meetings. They also asked providers to let them know if they have wait lists for their programs so this can be communicated to consumers and families. The link for the meeting with Transportation was sent out to all providers. DOR discussed changes to coding on authorizations. DOR will also increase their rates to match DDS rates. DOR asked for ideas to help with the transition due to AB 639 for subminimum wage. The vocational providers have a question for IRC: When will they see the increased rate from the rate study that is effective April 1st? Next meeting is April 13th.
11. **Behavioral Mod:** Ms. Stewart reported they met with the Day Program providers. Andrew Burdick gave an update on the Paid Internship program. There will be more information on April 7th at 11 am. Providers were encouraged to make sure Transportation is at the IDT meetings. They do have questions for Transportation on the side of Day Program and Behavior Modification programs. They will also attend the Day Program and Transportation meeting on April 13th. The Behavior Modification providers will be attending either Day Program Pre-Vac or Residential Pre-Vac. Each provider will decide which Pre-Vac better meets their needs. Ms. Stewart will attend both.

- 12. Member At Large:** Neither Ms. Andrade nor Ms. Goodsell had anything to report. Ms. Stewart encouraged the providers to advocate to move the implementation of the rate study up by one year. If passed, it could mean an increase this July instead of next year.

Committee Reports

- 1) **Legislative Committee Report:** No Report
- 2) **Membership Committee Report:** Ms. Goodsell reported there is an opening on the committee for SLS and Residential Level 2 & 3. If anyone is interested, please let Ruth or April know. They are open to nominations also. A letter describing the duties can be sent out to the person and they can decide if they would like the position or not. Ms. Goodsell will also check into attending the Pre-Vac for both those service categories to talk about the positions. Ms. Stewart noted it doesn't take much time to be a representative. The duties are to attend the VAC meetings, facilitate the Pre-Vac meeting for that service category and maybe about 30 minutes each month to put together the agenda, email it and answer questions.

Regional Center Update: Mr. Toms gave the following report:

1. BA.2 is the new variant of Omicron, which was BA.1. It is more contagious than the original strain and is creating a surge in Europe. It will probably create a surge in the US in the coming months. Make sure you keep up to speed with the directives and changes that may come from this possible surge.
2. Although ASD rates are still in effect and there has been nothing formal regarding any changes or end dates, it is assumed that changes are forthcoming in the next few months. Most likely the rates will end, but remote service for day services will most likely continue and be billed in a traditional manner (This is only an assumption at this writing and can change). IRC Day Services will be meeting this week. The goal is to start field visits with the day service providers and work on the continued reopening plans.
 - a. Any changes to service provision like changing from ASD to traditional must be done through an Inter-Disciplinary Team (IDT) meeting. Please ensure all member to include but not limited to care providers, transportation vendors and SCs are invited and participate.
3. Thank You! To our SLS and respite vendors who have registered for the EVV system. We only have about 6 outstanding vendors, at this time. Thanks go out to Christina, Lynette, Dalila and QA for working with the vendors to register and also Jenn Delgado and April Stewart for allowing the team to meet with the PVAC respite group.
4. Keep an eye on the DDS website and the IRC site, as many of the pandemic directives and initiatives are being rolled back or ended, so be on top of the changes.
5. HCBS Final Rule is scheduled for March 2023. It will change center-based programs. There are not a lot of directives yet but it may happen quickly.

Vince let Ms. Caicedo know EVV will be begin in January 2023 for the Early Start providers. He will connect with her in June or July to start attending the Pre-Vac meetings so they can start getting ready. He also let Respite know they are working on the policies for who can be a preferred provider and they are making some flexibility in location of service provision as long as driven by IPP. More information will be coming.

Ms. Stewart said she will continue to send out information on the rate study as it becomes available. DDS has released the rate targets and full breakdown for calculations. So far, she has not seen anything built into the rate modes for the unfunded mandates. Lobbying needs to continue. She encouraged providers to look at the breakdowns and find the issues for their service categories in order to challenge it. Figure out what is missing, note how it is impacting them and what needs to change.

Financial: Ms. Steuwer reported the first batch of rates from DDS came in late Friday. They are for service codes 062, 091, 093, 109, 110, 111, 520, 950, 952 and 954 which affect about 710 vendors. Please be patient with POS. This will be a very challenging process and will take time but be assured they are working daily on this project. For those vendors who did not return their worksheet, they will be last for the increase as Burns and Associates are working on those worksheets that were received.

Training Offering: None

Resources: None

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Public Input: None

Next meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2022, at 9:00 am via Zoom.