

**INLAND REGIONAL CENTER  
VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**VIA ZOOM**

**MINUTES**

**September 18, 2023**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Felecia Arnold, Transportation: Johana Caicedo, Infant/Children Programs: Marie Chatman, Vocational Programs: Lynn De Anda, Day Programs: Jenn Delgado, Respite Programs: Doug McKown, Specialist/Support Programs: Rachel Stewart, Behavioral Modification Programs: April Stewart, Member at Large.

**Ms. Stewart called the meeting to order at 9:03.**

**MINUTES: Motion made to approve minutes of July 17, 2023: M/S/C De Anda/Arnold.**

1. **Day Program:** Ms. De Anda reported the providers met last Wednesday. They discussed the free ACRE training by IRI. It is capped at 200 participants. Providers can get a stipend from DDS for each individual trained on the ACRE program. The providers voiced concerns over not being able to get a hold of case managers when changes or discussions are needed. They have heard similar concerns from families. They talked about the Fall Festival. They will meet again next month.
2. **Health Facilities:** No Report
3. **Infant/Children's Program:** Ms. Caicedo reported on the August meeting. They discussed the Fall Festival and the Early Start Resource Fair that will be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. They talked about the training from September 11<sup>th</sup> on Embracing Vulnerability and Creating Effective Parent and Professional Relationships. The next training will be held on November 13<sup>th</sup> regarding Community and Home Visit Safety. They talked about the end of the provider training and were hoping for an update regarding the training. They discussed concerns with the Quality Incentive Program and are asking for an update.
4. **Residential Service L2-L3:** No Report
5. **Residential Service L4:** No Report
6. **Respite Program:** Ms. Delgado reported providers have concerns about not receiving POS billing. They also have concerns with regional center communication. If anyone has any issues, they can email Ms. Delgado. If anyone needs to be added to the email list, also let Ms. Delgado know.
7. **SLS:** No Report
8. **Specialist/Support Programs:** Mr. McKown said his group did not meet but the providers know they can contact him at any time via email with issues or concerns.
9. **Transportation:** Ms. Arnold had no update. Providers are still concerned with the Burns rate. Gas is up, inflation is up yet their rate will go down in 2024. The providers will meet on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September.

**10. Vocational Program:** Ms. Chatman reported her group met last Wednesday. DOR and IRC were present. DOR gave an update on the transition from Sub-minimum wage. DOR is looking to have a rate study on Value Based Purchasing. If anyone would like to join the workgroup to collaborate and develop a plan, contact Joyce at DOR. IRC reported authorizations backdated 30 days or more, will need Director approval. They discussed the Fall Festival and the DDS QIP incentive training. They have questions regarding the process and when they will get paid. Vendors have to pay within 90-days, and they are worried they will not have reimbursement from IRC before they have to pay. The providers are disappointed in the way the VAC meetings are going. They feel providers are not being listened to and they are not seeing resolutions on issues. They would like more collaboration. They will meet next month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month.

**11. Behavioral Mod:** Ms. Steward was not at the Day Program Pre-Vac with the Behavioral Modification providers, so she had no report. They continue to meet with the Day Program Providers.

**12. Member At Large:** No Report

### Committee Reports

1) **Legislative Committee Report:** No Report

2) **Membership Committee Report:** SLS and both Residential programs need a representative. If anyone is interested, let Ruth or April know.

### Regional Center Update:

Mr. Toms gave the following report:

He reminded everyone that the DSP just came out Thursday. It is a massive process involving 1000's of vendors. This is also an unfunded mandate. It will look a lot like the Early Start process. A training for the vendors will be given which will include all the processes and structures. He also reminded everyone we need to get back to the original process for the VAC. Questions should be asked at the Pre-Vac meetings. The QA liaisons will bring the questions back. The Directors need 10 days to get an answer. Many are having their Pre-Vac meetings close to the VAC meeting which does not allow time to collect questions and get answers.

1. The quarterly data on PIP and CIE has been shared and IRC has secured the second spot amongst RCs in the state, in both categories. Job well done by the day program and transportation vendors.
2. The DDS grant for all DSPs has been finalized. It will be like the Early Start grant program at the start of the year. DDS has created a library of certified classes that DSPs can take and there will be funds set aside for the cost of the training and paid to the vendors by IRC. This is specific to the RC, so work with your vendoring RC. IRC will begin working on the specifics of this grant and provide vendor training on processes. Given the size of IRC's vendor population and the complexity of the documentation and billing, this could be problematic, so we need time to develop an appropriate system.
3. A workgroup on RC Performance Measures was conducted on August 3, 2023. Updates were given to the development of each measure. The state is in the first phase of implementing the measures.
4. The FHA rate models will finally align with the ARM rates, specifically the 4-bed rate. IRC has the system in place, but the statute never aligned. The rates will finally align at the state level and bring our current model into the standard. No real changes are needed with our FHAs.
5. The rate structure for transportation that came out because of the 2023 extension of remote services is still set to expire at the end of the calendar year. I want to mention this again, as it must be planned for by our vendors. DDS is also looking at the rate model to determine if the monthly rate will continue past December 2023. One of the main intentions of the rate model is to work within a structure of billing and paying at an hourly rate.

6. DDS continues to develop the strategies and processes for the implementation of the rate model by July of 2024. This is only 9.5 months away and will be a huge workload issue for the RC and the vendors. In the works is how to consolidate various service codes (example – 055) and how to change the current rate structure that allows for monthly, weekly, and daily rates and create a system based on an hourly rate model.
7. DSP bilingual stipend (different from note #2) is still being finalized, but no updates provided. Essentially, a vendor's DSP can get an DDS stipend for using a language other than English, while serving clients.
8. There has been some discussion and movement on the deaf plus community and their litigation against DDS and the RC system. As this will ultimately change how services are and can be provided, more will be shared with the vendor community, as it comes through. An example of the changing needs, IRC did their first health and safety waiver for a deaf client, to meet the very specific needs of that client. We learned a bit through that process and all cases like that one will have an added layer of oversight, by the IRC Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist.
9. SB138 passed.
  - a. It allows DDS to create and operate complex needs homes.
  - b. It will require that a standard IPP form be created, as well as a unified respite assessment, vendorization process and intake process.
  - c. It will require the development of a common set of data definitions to be created for race and ethnicity. We are hoping that this will reduce the use of "Other," as a common answer.
  - d. Definitions for generic services will be created.
  - e. Starting 1-1-25, after the 15-day intake period, RCs will have to find a person eligible or begin the 120-day assessment process.
10. The Community Services (CS) Division has begun the structural changes needed to respond to all the changes made in the system, over the last three years. Just about every new directive and change is managed through the CS and fiscal divisions. There will be Program Administrators in the Quality Assurance, Training and Community Engagement units. New Program Managers will be hired, so there will be a good amount of flux in the division over the next six months. A restructuring of the QA unit is being undertaken, as well as the training unit. Resource Development and transportation will be reviewed in the present and future, but how we do so will be determined by the changes in the rate structure and DDS direction.

Ms. Amy Alloway talked about the document retention process that Vendorization is going through. DDS has mandated which documents must be on file and updated as they expire. She thanked the vendors for their help with getting the documents. She also said vendors can contact her for documents needed so it doesn't hold up any payments, referrals etc.

**Financial:** No Report

**Training Offering:** None

**Resources:** None

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Public Input:** None

Next meeting is scheduled for October 16, 2023, at 9:00 am via Zoom.