

**INLAND REGIONAL CENTER
VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

February 14, 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: Kedra Creer, Residential Level 4: Lynn De Anda, Day Programs: Jenn Delgado, Respite Programs: Ruth Goodsell, Member at Large: Doug McKown, Specialist/Support Programs: Rachel Steward, Behavior Modification.

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

MINUTES: Motion made to approve minutes of January 10, 2022: M/S/C Clarke/Delgado.

Josh Sudarma from DDS gave a presentation on the DSP Workforce Survey.

Alejandra Rivera from SCDD noted that said they would be receiving more Red Cross backpacks. They are partnering with vendors to offer training for the clients and the clients can receive a backpack. They will also be receiving more Covid test kits.

Lilliana Garnica, IRC Cultural Specialist invited everyone to participate in the POS Public Input. The English version will be held on Wednesday February 16th at 5-6 pm and the Spanish version will be held on Thursday February 17th from 5 -6 pm. Each meeting will cover last year's data on disparity and will talk about projects being offered to address the inequity of those being underserved.

Vendor Category Report:

- 1. Day Program:** Ms. De Anda reported on the Pre-Vac meeting of last week. Andrew Burdick and Beth Crane were on the call. They discussed IRC mandates and free Covid testing in Riverside County. They talked about the transportation and residential providers requesting to meet with the day program providers. Concerns for the group are staffing issues and losing clients because they are not open for in person programs due not having enough staff. They asked if ASD rates were extended and if so, is there a projected end date? They asked if the N95 requirement was a gold standard or a requirement. Answer: This is a requirement. It may end tomorrow except for Health Facilities.
- 2. Health Facilities:** Ms. Clarke reported their meeting is scheduled for this Wednesday. Their concerns are the staffing crisis and utilization of registry. There are different requirements for testing from Department of Social Services and Health Facilities. They are trying to blend both requirements but would like clarification. There are also different requirements between counties. Another concern is the move toward CalAIM.
- 3. Infant/Children's Program:** Ms. Caicedo reported they met on January 24th. They talked about the booster mandate being extended to March 1st. She let providers know if they need a translator when

doing assessments, the vendor is required to provide the translator. DDS directives were extended so they can continue working as they have been. Program Managers have asked providers to share their Covid protocols so they can support the providers with family reluctance to have virtual services. Families like to wait until everyone in the household is well, which causes children to lose services and there is no continuity of service. Send the protocols to the Program Managers. Next meeting will be on February 28th at 8:30.

4. **Residential Service L2-L3:** No Report
5. **Residential Service L4:** Ms. Creer reported on the Pre-Vac of February 1st. They are combining the meeting for all levels of residential service. Their concerns are staffing issues and being able to pay more than minimum wage to keep staff. They have questions regarding CPI requirements: How often should they be don't? What should training look like? They discussed emergency Covid procedures, PPE, N95 mask fitting and turnover in staff. Will there be help with the cost for mask fitting from licensing or regional center? They have questions regarding the Covid Enhanced Rate: What does this look like? Will it be coming back? The state has back dated supplemental pay back to January 1st for those who were out due to Covid. Covid test kits can be ordered through CDPH. The group is coming together.
6. **Respite Program:** Ms. Delgado reported there are no new updates at this time. Next meeting will be held on February 24th at 10 am via Zoom.
7. **SLS:** No Report
8. **Specialist/Support Programs:** Mr. McKown reported his group has not met. They stay in touch via email and address issues as they come up. If anyone has topics to discuss they can be sent to Doug, and he can schedule a meeting if needed.
9. **Transportation:** Ms. Arnold reported they discussed the Burns and Associates rate. They are trying to work better with the day programs and have better communication regarding working hours. The Transportation providers are requesting to meet with the day program providers. Next meeting will be held on February 25th.
10. **Vocational Program:** Ms. Chatman reported on the Pre-Vac of February 9th. They had 23 people in attendance. They discussed the IRC N95 mask mandate because it is very costly to fit the masks. They asked if the mask mandate has been sent out to those who do not attend the VAC meeting or receive the minutes. They also asked when the results of the HCBS surveys will be released to the vendors. They discussed openings on the VAC committee.
11. **Behavioral Mod:** Ms. Steward reported the Behavior Modification providers continue to meet with the Day Program providers. Their concerns are staffing issues and losing clients because there are no in person services. They discussed the ASD rates. She reminded the providers she is always available in anyone needs anything.
12. **Member At Large:** Neither Ms. Andrade nor Ms. Goodsell had anything to report.

Committee Reports

- 1) **Legislative Committee Report:** Legislative report was emailed.
- 2) **Membership Committee Report:** Ms. Goodsell reported

The Membership Committee met and voted virtually on the following recommendations for the upcoming VAC membership year:

The following members required no action as they are still in the middle of their term and have agreed to remain active:

April Stewart – Member at Large (Second Term Expires February 28, 2023)

Michelle Clarke – Health Care Facilities (First Term Expires July, 2023)

Johana Caicedo – Infant/Children’s Programs (Second Term Expires February 28, 2023)

Kedra Creer – Residential Services, Level 4 (First Term Expires February 28, 2023)

Doug McKown – Specialist/Support Programs (First Term Expires February 28, 2023)

Rachel Steward – Behavioral Modification (First Term Expires July 2023)

Audrey Andrade – Member at Large (First Term Expires February 28, 2023)

Ruth Goodsell – Member at Large (First Term Expires February 28, 2023)

The following have finished their first term and have agreed to a second term, expiring February 28, 2024:

Jen Delgado – Respite Programs

Marie Chatman – Vocational Programs

The committee also recommends the current Chair/Co-Chair remain in their current positions for the next year:

April Stewart – Chair

Felicia Arnold – Co-Chair

There are currently two vacancies on the VAC, due to recent resignations:

Residential Services Levels 2-3

Supported Living Services

The committee is seeking recommendations, letters of interest.

The following finished both terms in February of 2021, but agreed to extend their commitment for an additional two-year term, due to the continuity requested during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Felicia Arnold – Transportation (Extended Term Expires February 28, 2023)

Lynn DeAnda – Day Programs (Extended Term Expires February 28, 2023)

The Membership Committee puts forth this recommendation to the full Vendor Advisory Committee for approval.

Motion made to extend the term of Lynn De Anda for 1 more year: M/S/C Goodsell/McKown.

Regional Center Update: Mr. Toms thanked Dalila Balderas, QA, Eric Hamler for all their work handing out PPE. He then gave the following report:

1. More information has been shared on the DDS trainings for Direct Service Providers (DSP). There will be an on-line project provide to DSPs working for adults in Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) programs. The intent is to improve the quality of care and assist vendors during this worker shortage. The DSP will get training and stipends to improve the quality of care, so clients remain living in the home and community.
2. There is a Pilot Program to phase out subminimum wage programs but creating a new employment service model to support clients who need to transition out of Work Activity Programs. There is \$8.2M in the budget for the project.

- a. The pilot program coincides with Senate Bill 639 that was signed into law and will phase out subminimum wage in California, over the next three years. Multiple stakeholders will now draft a plan to complete the transition from subminimum wage to minimum wage employment opportunities or other types of day service models. The plan is to be submitted to the Legislature by January 1, 2023. The end date for day service providers to pay clients subminimum wage is December 31, 2024. January 1, 2025, SB 639 makes it illegal to pay less than the legal minimum wage
3. DDS will create a grant program for regional centers to work with their community-based organizations and local parks and recreation departments to expand resources and integrated activities for clients. There is approximately \$29.4M in the state budget for social recreation and camping services.
4. EVV was instituted in January. Lynette and Christina will work with the respite and SLS vendors that have not registered yet. 35% of the IRC vendors were registered as of February 2nd, while the state average was a at 10%. DDS will be putting much stronger emphasis on registration in the coming weeks, as CMS is scrutinizing the low numbers.
 - a. IRC has sent the vendor groups the DDS guidance and attestation form for the live-in caregivers who are exempt from the process. The vendors must fill out the forms and keep them ready for audit, for all clients with exempt live-in caregivers.
5. During January, the Omicron variant peaked on the week of the 10th. Since there has been a consistent decrease in the average number of daily cases. IRC went from 4-5 cases a day on average in December of 2021, to 50 a day at the peak, to now averaging in the teens for daily cases (15 last week).
 - a. IRC has begun tracking vendor staff that become positive for Covid and has created a fillable form for tracking. This is to track any problematic situations that may or do affect the client's health and safety. We are not asking for the names of the staff, but just keeping track of the numbers.
6. IRC has hired the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist who has historically worked in the Arizona DD system as a case manager. We are looking forward to seeing how our new hire can assist us in meeting our clients who are deaf or hard of hearing's needs.

Financial: No Rep

Training Offering: None

Resources: None

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Public Input: None

Next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2022, at 9:00 am via Zoom.