

**INLAND REGIONAL CENTER
VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

September 19, 2022

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Audrey Andrade, Member at Large: 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: April Stewart, Member at Large.

Ms. Stewart called the meeting to order at 9:05.

MINUTES: Motion made to approve minutes of August 15, 2022: M/S/C Arnold/De Anda.

Esteban Ortiz from SCDD introduced himself and gave an overview of the Self Advocacy Group being developed.

Vendor Category Report:

- 1. Day Program:** Ms. De Anda reported they met last Wednesday and had 45 people in attendance. IRC was present and talked about the change in computer systems. There are issues with authorizations due to this change. IRC will be sending a survey to those providers still using the 14C to assist with the transition. They discussed the HCBS validation and remediation plans. The plans are submitted to IRC for review, then they are sent to DDS. If there are questions, please contact QA. Licensing still has not relaxed their Covid standards.
- 2. Health Facilities:** No Report
- 3. Infant/Children's Program:** Ms. Caicedo reported on the Pre-Vac of August 29th. IRC Program Managers and FRN were in attendance. They talked about Covid and families as well as changes to the Early Start programs. Referrals have increase due to these changes. There will be many changes to the Early Start programs. They did get clarification on the EVV program. It will not affect 805 nor 116 providers. FRN will host an IEP training on October 25th in English and on October 26th in Spanish. The Infant Development Association will host a training on September 23rd on How to Manage the Intensity of Early Intervention Work. Next meeting will be on the 26th at 8:30.
- 4. Residential Service L2-L3:** No Report
- 5. Residential Service L4:** No Report
- 6. Respite Program:** Ms. Delgado reported they did not meet last month as they meet every other month. She will be emailing dates to set up the Pre-Vac for October.
- 7. SLS:** No Report

8. **Specialist/Support Programs:** Mr. McKown reported his group has been dark. If anyone has any issues or concerns, they can email him.
9. **Transportation:** Ms. Arnold reported the current situation in California, related to the cost of fuel, has reached critical levels for the transportation vendors. Fuel prices are currently on average in excess of \$6.00 dollars per gallon and rising. Our current reimbursement rate is not close to factoring the excessive cost of fuel, nor does it factor the future anticipated rate of fuel costs increases.

With the national and global fuel challenges trickling down to our local gas pumps, prices per gallon will continue to rise and make transportation services even more dubious. The pandemic has had its own unique challenges. Day programs, homes and transportation vendors are all trying to get back to a level of normalcy for the consumers we serve. These fuel prices are causing a roadblock to these efforts.

The fuel reimbursement rate that is currently being used is **(.58 cents per mile)** to calculate fuel reimbursement for the transportation vendors. This reimbursement rate has never truly covered our expenses, but now with the surge of fuel cost nationally, we are in a critical situation. During the latest Burns Rate Study meeting, a representative with Burns and Associates indicated that the formula they were using was **(\$1.16 per mile)** for the new rate. Even at that level we would be far below the level needed to cover our "actual" fuel expenses.

Transportation vendors are requesting re-consideration how fuel reimbursement is currently calculated. We are requesting **\$1.45 cents per mile** for reimbursement to adequately cover fuel costs. This would properly cover fuel cost. We have reached a level of desperation that we have not experienced before. Please consider our concerns and remedy.9.

10. **Vocational Program:** Ms. Chatman reported on the Pre-Vac of September 14th. There were 36 people in attendance. Andrew Burdick from IRC shared that IRC is changing their system over to Atlas and due to that CIE and PIP auths are being put on hold until they figure out how to do them with the new system. However, you should still submit your face sheets. In addition, DOR and IRC are working together on transitioning those programs that still utilize the 14c. Andrew will be sending a Survey Monkey out to those programs. If you do not receive one and have a 14c please contact Andrew. Still in the process of reviewing program designs submitted for Social Rec. Should be hearing back soon. They discussed remediation and validation process. Many vendors are confused and there is a lot of anxiety surrounding what needs to be done and specific time-lines. Some have not received requests for every vendor code. No vendors have received the report from the virtual HCBS compliance validation meetings that were done years ago. Dan Moore reported that these reports do exist in a DDS shared file that has restricted access. If you would like your report, email your QA liaison with your name and vendor code and they should be able to get the report for you. DOR discussed the significant changes to their Supported Employment forms. They want to work with vendors and IRC to help support the transition of our individuals that are still working under the 14c with the onset of SB639 in 2025. DOR staff have been trained in Customized Employment and DOR is now ready to start adding this service. DOR has moved to their electronic filing system and individuals can now apply online for DOR services. One concern: Brought up by many vendors, is that clients are being exited from programs without giving any notice to the vendors. There are no IDT meetings being held, no conversation with the vendors to give them the opportunity to address any concerns or problems (if there are some). While we absolutely understand that it is client choice, an open line of communication is still very important. Maybe with the influx of new CSC's they are not aware of this best practice? Next meeting: 10/12 @ 11:00 Pre-Vac

11. **Behavioral Mod:** No Report

12. **Member At Large:** Ms. Andrade had nothing to report.

Committee Reports

- 1) **Legislative Committee Report:** No Report
- 2) **Membership Committee Report:** Ms. Stewart reported there is still an opening for Residential Level 2 & 3 and SLS/ILS. If anyone is interested in either position, please email Ms. Stewart or Ms. Goodsell.

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

DAY PROGRAMS: Tailored Day Service guidance from DDS should be distributed in Mid-September. IRC will hold off on creating the program design templates, until the regulations are finalized. ASD is scheduled to discontinue at the end of the calendar year. More direction is expected from DDS.

HCBS -FR Review of surveys for validation and remediation:

Validation:

- Total DPs in validation that must be found in compliance, via supporting documents: 58
- Total to be found in compliance (done): 43
- Total to still be reviewed for compliance: 11

For remediation, I know there will be questions, as we have the same. We met with DDS today and will coordinate a meeting with them to discuss those in remediation in the last week of the month. We will know more then on how to proceed. Any meeting prior to our meeting with DDS will not bear any real answers to those in remediation. Numbers of upcoming reviews:

Remediation:

- Total DPs in remediation:115
- Total to review and bring to compliance: 109

Many vendors in remediation have already been contacted to begin their initial collection of documents to go along with the self-assessment survey and the remediation questionnaire. Although some have already begun, on certain caseloads, we will begin in earnest in early October.

Community Services Division

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: The units has filled three open positions in the last five months. The roles of those staff will be expanding, to include the Emergency Specialist and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Cultural Specialist. The later includes our Cultural Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Emergency Specialist. A grant was offered by DDS to each RC to meet the unmet needs in terms of Language Access and Cultural Capacity. We will be securing two new full-time positions dedicated to the cause and six Parent Ambassadors. All will be under the guidance of the Community Engagement Unit and work in conjunction and collaboration with the Low to No POS Unit, as well as the Cultural Specialists.

QUALITY ASSURANCE: QA continues to be on point for the DDS risk mitigation follow ups. We suspect that there will be new directives and regulations given to the RCs, as DDS has created a 20 staff new Division of Community Assistance and Resolutions. The primarily responsibility of that DDS division is to oversee the Fair Hearing process of the RCs and in general the Risk Mitigation and Quality Assurance operations of the RCs. The fair hearings portion has been detailed much more than the risk mitigation portions, so unsure of what is to come, but expecting new mandates and hopefully newly funded position to go along with those mandates. So, when QA members ask for what feels like more and more detail and information, it is due to having to meet the DDS mandates and questions. Please bear with them and work with them to efficiently get issues resolved. The unit will also have three new QA Liaisons soon, with one position being filled last week. Two of those positions are a result of the growth we have and will continued to have to respond with.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION: RDTU has hired three of the four new staffers to backfill the staff who were promoted within the agency. Of the new staff, there will be a new Community Resource Development Plan/Affordable Housing Specialist and two new Resource Development Liaisons.

TRAINING: The Training Unit has will be shifting from the internal Atlas trainings back to a focus on Person Centered Thinking. They will be finishing the job description for a newly funded position for training staff and the community on IDEA C and the IEP process.
Overall, there will be many new faces in the Community Services Division.

Financial: Ms. Steuwer had no financial updates to give. She reported there are some issues with Atlas and authorizations. She told everyone to please be patient and providers will be paid for services provided to consumers during this time. Ms. Alloway shared that the Vendorization unit is updating provider records and will be sending emails requesting updated paperwork.

Training Offering: None

Resources: None

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Public Input: None

Next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2022, at 9:00 am via Zoom.