

Alta California Regional Center
Provider Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 14, 2021
Minutes

Present:

Eric Ciampa, UCP of
Sacramento, Inc., Chair
Michelle Ramirez, On My Own,
Co-Chair & Design. Dir.
James Astorga, F&A Astorga Care
Home
Janet Brandon, A.I.M. &
Associates
Garrett Broadbent, Meristem
Andrea Croom, INALLIANCE
Jacquie Dillard-Foss, STEP
Bonnie Douglas, Turning Point
Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored,
Inc.
Joe Hernandez, Aveanna
Healthcare Services
Joe Jaquez, EGACTION
Jessica Knuth, Reach Adult
Development
Monique Migdol, Tahoe
Community Integrations
Sergio Pinto, BEST Consulting,
Inc.
Robin Rhoades, Southside
Unlimited
Adam Ruggles, Medstar LLC
Joy Scott, Tri-County Caregiver
Relief
Laleh Sharpe, Maxim Healthcare
Services
Yvonne Soto, DDSO
Peter Stirling, Serenity Respite
Services
Paul Traglio, Kadiant
Carole Watilo, Progressive
Employment

Absent: (* excused)

Ed Doonan, LIFE, Inc.
Antonio Ranit, Antelope Hills
Manor

Visitors:

Jody Bailey
Marliese Bankert
Holly Borso
Vikie Cole
Jenna Darling
Maureen Fitzgerald
Sonya Fox-Watson
Adriene Gaudet
Kate Halecky
Doris Harrington
Priscilla Holmes
Braydon Holtzinger
Jenny Jones
Susana Magana
Nicky Schlupe
Stan Schmidt
Kathleen Short
Hannah Thompson
Jasmine Vollenweider
Katherine Wallen

Board Member:

Kelly Pennington

Staff:

Phil Bonnet, Executive Director
Lori Banales, Deputy Executive
Director
John Decker, Director of Community
Services
Camelia Houston, Director of
Intake & Clinical Services
Jean Onesi, Manager of Community
Services
Andy Ponce, Specialized Services
Manager
Olivia Procida, Manager of
Community Services
Lisa West, Executive Secretary

The Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) met at 9:33 a.m. on Thursday, January 14, 2021, by Webex/teleconference to discuss: 1) Board Update; 2) Executive Director's Report; 3) COVID-19 Impact Discussion; 4) Legislative Update; 5) Discussion re PAC Goals; 6) Subcommittee Reports; and 7) Announcements/Comments. All present provided self-introductions.

Without objection, Eric Ciampa made the motion to approve the Provider Advisory Committee meeting minutes of November 12, 2020 as submitted.

1. ***Board Update***

- Ms. Ramirez shared that the Board met in November and approved two new members – Kelly Pennington and Jennifer Stratton.
- The group updated ACRC's Whistleblower Policy, which clarified the process.
- Ms. Banales provided an overview of ACRC's 2019 Performance Contract Outcomes and draft 2021 Performance Contract with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).
- Under the Finance Committee report, Mr. Ahmad shared that ACRC's intake numbers have dropped significantly from April through October 2020. The agency is averaging 44 new clients per month, instead of 100 clients per month pre-pandemic times. Support costs have increased in residential, Supported Living Services (SLS), Respite/ Personal Attendant (PA) and Independent Living Services (ILS) during the current health crisis.
- The Board is discussing possibly establishing a new committee – the Legislative, Advocacy & Outreach Committee.

2. ***Executive Director's Report***

- Mr. Bonnet is pleased with today's attendance. More than ever, it's important to participate in these collaborative meetings. He finds these meetings helpful to ACRC's Management Team, although ACRC staff communicate with service providers on a regular basis.
- During the last few days, Mr. Bonnet is starting to feel a little bit more optimistic about the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are getting the worst reports that we have received over the last ten months, we are also getting good news. ACRC is working with DDS to advocate for our clients and community. The department released three letters yesterday that will help open the doors for more individuals to be vaccinated. Mr. Bonnet has notified his staff that they are eligible for the vaccine, too.
- As of this morning, ACRC has 534 clients that have tested positive for COVID-19, with 24 deaths. Fifteen clients are currently in the hospital. We also have 317 positive direct support professionals (DSPs) and 23 positive staff members.

- It's going to take a while for the vaccines to slow the spread. It's important to keep washing your hands and wearing masks. Within a couple of months, Mr. Bonnet is hopeful that we will start getting back to our somewhat normal life.
 - Cal Expo has been targeted as a potential mass vaccination site for Sacramento County.
- Our statewide service system's budget is now over \$10 billion. Governor Newsom's proposed 2021-22 fiscal year's (FY's) budget includes an increase of approximately \$700 million. Regional centers have spent a lot of money due to COVID-19 and it appears that DDS has acknowledged this. Mr. Bonnet hears stories every day that providers are having difficulty finding staff, so we have resorted to getting people from outside our service system to assist for the short-term.
 - A few months ago, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) suggested that the State of California would have an unexpected revenue windfall of \$26 billion for the budget year that begins July 1, 2021.
 - The May Revise will be a better indication of what the 2021-22 FY budget holds for our service system since that number has decreased.

3. ***COVID-19 Impact Discussion***

- On January 8th, DDS issued a Directive regarding a special rate for SLS providers when quarantine/isolation is necessary during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. The department has extended the Directives for Alternative Services. New Alternative Services rates for most providers started January 1, 2021, with the exception of transportation and employment providers.
- STEP, ACRC and Safeway Pharmacy have partnered to hold a COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic to assist getting our DSPs and clients vaccinated. Almost a year after the beginning of the pandemic, we will start to get people immune to this disease.
 - Ms. Dillard-Foss shared that the links to the clinic sign-ups will be available today.
- ACRC has sent out two different letters to each of our ten counties' Health Departments. Ms. Houston noted that ACRC's Clinical Team is supporting those clients that cannot give consent or don't have a conservator to do so.
 - Mr. Decker shared that staff looked at ways to prioritize our clients – those that live in care homes, have SLS and live in Family Home Agencies (FHAs) are first.
 - Clinical staff are working closely with CVS to help get our clients vaccinated.

- Smaller service providers may wish to contact their county's Health Department for assistance.
- ACRC is hoping to partner with empty day programs to do vaccine clinics at their sites. As soon as vaccines are available, those locations might be a great spot for individuals with developmental disabilities to go, since they are already set-up for these folks. ACRC staff have been speaking with Community Care Licensing (CCL), as well.
- Tomorrow's "Coffee with Community Services" will have a lengthy discussion about the vaccines.
- Mr. Decker shared that San Diego Regional Center (SDRC) will be updating regional center's SANDIS system so that vaccine data can be collected for our clients. At this time, we are asking that service providers retain this data and the regional center will let you know when and what information we need once the change has been made.
- Some steps that service providers can start taking to prepare for vaccinations:
 - Enter your staff's information into a spreadsheet, which will be continuously updated.
 - Put together a vaccination packet with one contact person, which will include information about the vaccine, what to bring the day you get the shot, and what to expect.
 - Agencies may wish to draft a letter that their staff can present with the DDS letter when their staff get vaccinated.
- How are service providers handling clients and staff that refuse to get the vaccine?
 - Ms. Brandon noted that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) states that you can require your staff to get the vaccine.
 - Ms. Watilo is hopeful that staff might change their minds after seeing others get the vaccine.
 - Ms. Douglas shared that her agency has had a Q&A with their staff so that people may feel a bit more comfortable getting the shot.
 - Ms. Dillard-Foss STEP shared that five videos were made to assist with this, including cultural considerations.
 - Ms. West will forward the links to those present.
 - Suggestion to keep positive communication with your staff.
- Mr. Decker and Ms. Houston have been in contact with all of ACRC's ten counties and everything that they have learned is based upon the county. Just because something is working in one county, doesn't mean that it will be offered in another.
- Mr. Bonnet inquired if any service providers have assisted clients who are unable or refuse to wear facemasks. How do you get vaccines into their arms? If anyone has ideas, please connect with him.

- Mr. Decker is also working on this issue and suggested that we might be able to hold a vaccine clinic at one of the empty day programs for this purpose.
- Mr. Ciampa noted that DDS communication and use of workgroups has dropped off drastically since October 2020.

4. ***Legislative Update***

- CDSA
 - The group discussed the budget.
 - Ms. Dyba noted that the proposed budget includes Home & Community-Based Services (HCBS) transition grants and Competitive Integrated Employment funding.
 - The 2021 Minimum Wage Rate Adjustment Request Workbooks have been posted on DDS' website.

5. ***Discussion re PAC Goals***

- About three years ago, the PAC set goals, outside of the Lanterman Act's mandates, and created a number of workgroups to discuss things further. This might be the time to chart a new path for this committee. Ms. Ciampa and Ms. Ramirez created a draft survey that can be revised, if necessary. Mr. Ciampa is hopeful that it can be sent out to committee member by this Friday, so that the committee can discuss this topic further at the February PAC meeting.
 - Mr. Ciampa reviewed the draft with those present.
 - Please reach out to him if you have any suggested revisions prior to its release on Friday.

6. ***Subcommittee Reports***

- Vendor Relations – Ms. Rhoades noted that collaboration is key. ACRC staff have asked for providers opinions.
 - The group is scheduled to meet tomorrow – she will share information at the February PAC meeting.
- ILS – Ms. Brandon shared that the group discussed the positives during remote services and also some positive outcomes. The group hopes that some things can remain an option after the pandemic is over.
- Cultural Diversity – the group met with Helen Neri, ACRC's Cultural Diversity Specialist, who shared information about the quarterly trainings that ACRC will be holding.
- Mr. Hernandez shared that the Communications workgroup will be meeting soon.
 - Once the survey is completed, we can discuss if the workgroups are set-up appropriately to meet our goals.

7. ***Announcements/Comments***

- Mr. Broadbent shared that Meristem reached out to see if anyone was interested in being a Financial Management Service (FMS) for their paid internship program.
 - Robert Bacsik, the Finance Director at ARCC Center Foundation in San Diego, is currently working with ACRC's Community Services to become an Employer of Record.
- Mr. Ciampa shared that UCP had a client switch to the Self-Determination Program (SDP). He is impressed with the internal chats that Service Coordinators (SCs) and staff are having.
- At the next meeting, the PAC will continue to discuss the impact of COVID-19, vaccinations, and the survey results.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, February 11, 2021**, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: ACRC Board of Directors
Phil Bonnet