

Alta California Regional Center
Provider Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 4, 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
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
Sergio Pinto, BEST Consulting,
Inc.
Adam Ruggles, Medstar LLC
Laleh Sharpe, Maxim Healthcare
Services
Yvonne Soto, DDSO

Absent: (* excused)

Ed Doonan, LIFE, Inc.
Kate Halecky*, Southside
Unlimited
Monique Migdol, Tahoe
Community Integrations
Antonio Ranit, Antelope Hills
Manor
Joy Scott*, Tri-County Caregiver
Relief
Peter Stirling, Serenity Respite
Services
Paul Traglio*, Kadiant
Carole Watilo*, Progressive
Employment

Visitors

Jody Bailey
Garrett Broadbent
Breeanne Burris
Viridiana Cervantes
Maureen Fitzgerald
Sonya Fox-Watson
Braydon Holtzinger
Jennifer Jones
Robin Rhoades
Jen Roney
Nicky Schlupe
Kathleen Short
Royisha Singh
Geneva Steward
Hannah Thompson
Jasmine Vollenweider

Staff:

Lori Banales, Executive Director
Iqbal Ahmad, Chief Financial Officer
Tracy Brown, Associate Client Services
Director
John Decker, Director of Community
Services
Camelia Houston, Director of Intake &
Clinical Services
Mechelle Johnson, Director of Client
Services
David Lopez, Client Advocate
Jean Onesi, Manager of Community
Services
Andy Ponce, Specialized Services
Manager
Olivia Procida, Manager of
Community Services
Johnny Xiong, Associate Client
Services Director
Lisa West, Executive Secretary

The Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) met at 9:33 a.m. on Thursday, November 4, 2021, by Webex/teleconference to discuss: 1) Board Update; 2) Executive Director's Report; 3) COVID-19 Impact and Vaccine Mandate Discussion; 4) Housing Presentation; 5) CA Budget and Legislative Update; 6) PAC Committees & 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 October 14, 2021 as submitted.

1. Board Update

- Ms. Ramirez shared that Board does not hold a Board meeting in October.
- The Board's Strategic Planning Committee will be meeting soon. Hopefully there will be information to share with this committee soon.

2. Executive Director's Report

- Ms. Banales shared that the Board has had opportunities to engage with a consultant regarding the strategic planning process. The Board's Strategic Planning Committee will be reviewing the proposal and moving it to the full Board for approval at the November 18th Board meeting.
- Cal OSHA just released an Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), which coincides with the Public Health Order (PHO) and the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS') Directive related to the vaccination mandate. Ms. Banales noted that ACRC currently has 511 employees and we have received 30+ exemption requests. She consulted with our agency's attorney and we have accommodations in place for the approved exemptions, which includes testing twice a week (Monday & Wednesday). We have to balance the PHO with the safety of our staff and clients/families. She remains hopeful that people understand.
- ACRC already has two clients between the ages of five and eleven that have received their first Pfizer dose. Ms. Banales does not believe that we will have as high a percentage of vaccinated children as we have adult clients.
 - Next week, ACRC is holding a booster clinic for staff.
- Today, ACRC is releasing a survey asking service providers who might be able to take on new clients beginning December 1st for in-person and remote services.
 - Last week's "Coffee with Community Services" discussion prompted Mr. Decker to keep the survey open longer so that service providers will be able to provide up-to-date information.
 - ACRC staff are updating our residential provider's vacancy list, knowing that we may have a surge of requests on December 1st.
 - We all remain concerned with the already existing work shortage paired with the vaccine mandate.

- ACRC is currently gathering the vaccination status of Supported Living Services (SLS) providers' employees so that we can plan for December 1st.
- Ms. Brandon expressed concern regarding the additional amount of paperwork that is required if an agency was to take on additional clients. She also has received requests from Service Coordinators (SCs) to take on new clients because their current day program is refusing to serve them in-person due to the client declining vaccination. Ms. Brandon believes this is a violation of the client's rights.
 - Mr. Decker noted that Ms. Precida should be made aware of these instances.
- Ms. Banales expressed appreciation for the continued collaboration with our community partners on the many initiatives that ACRC is working on.
 - The Self-Determination Advisory Committee's (SDAC's) Ad-Hoc Committee held two trainings yesterday, both with a high level of engagement from service providers. There will be a lot of different, next-steps from what we learned from that collaboration.
- ACRC staff are in the process of collecting input on the 2022 Performance Contract. Ms. Banales noted that staff will not be responding to each and every suggestion, but will embed the input into the Performance Contract's planned activities or braid it into other efforts that may not be measured by this contract.
 - Mr. Decker shared that the draft contract is posted on our agency's website. He reviewed the feedback that has been received so far from the PAC's Standing Committees.

3. **COVID-19 Impact and Vaccine Mandate Discussion**

- President Biden's administration is implementing a new emergency standard for businesses with at least 100 employees to either mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for their workers or require weekly testing.
- Yesterday, Ms. Dillard-Foss did a demo with ReturnSafe (<https://returnsafe.com>). This is an app that helps companies track vaccine status of their employees, as well as testing results. She will be offering a training to all service providers through California Community Living Network (CCLN).
 - On November 16th, STEP will be hosting a booster clinic.
- It's important to note that vaccination status of clients vary by program/home setting.
- STEP is waiting for guidance from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) when reviewing their employees' exemption requests. Just because someone asks for an exemption, doesn't mean it will be approved. We need to make sure that we have

a reasonable accommodation in place and then make decisions based upon clients' health and safety.

- Mr. Ciampa noted that service providers implement things differently.
 - Some are approving exemptions if you meet the requirements of that particular mandate. They may re-evaluate it and deny based upon reasonableness after considering the clients that are being served.
 - Some are gauging which unvaccinated direct support professionals (DSPs) can work with which clients, based on their individual health issues.
 - Smaller providers may have issues with testing options for their employees.
- Mr. Decker clarified that vaccination status will not be kept confidential. We must honor the wishes of the clients/families that we serve.
- Breakthrough cases may put service providers at risk for lawsuits, both from their own employees, as well as clients/families.
- When California moved out of the tier system, some service providers have attempted to rely on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data when considering their re-opening strategies; data-based decision making.

4. **Housing Presentation**

- At the September Board meeting, Mr. Decker shared an "Affordable Housing Development" presentation. PAC members requested that it be shared with this committee.
 - The hope is that these housing options will provide relief for some of the Independent Living Services (ILS) and SLS service providers.
 - Ms. Dillard-Foss shared that Patti Uplinger, with STEP's Housing Access Services, has just hired her first housing specialist.

5. **CA Budget and Legislative Update (ARCA, CDSA, CCLN, DS Taskforce, Lanterman Coalition)**

- DDS is convening the Rate Study Workgroup.
 - A small group of providers will be working on the implementation of the rate study in April 2022.
 - Concern continues for the ILS and 055 rates.
 - Mr. Ciampa encouraged providers to register for these meetings.
- CCLN
 - The Quality Incentives Workgroup is meeting next week.
 - Please make sure to register for these webinars. If you want to know how our system is moving forward, this is the time to start listening in.
 - The adjustments for minimum wage continue to be reviewed.

- Several workgroups are starting up – DSP Development, Employment and the Disparity/Equity.
 - A request was made to make sure that ACRC is represented at these meetings.

6. **PAC Committees & Reports**

- Revised Committee List
 - Mr. Ciampa emailed the revised PAC Standing Committee list to the team. It is the PAC's expectation that all voting members participate in at least one Standing Committee.
 - Any requested changes to this listing should be sent to Mr. Ciampa, Ms. Ramirez, Ms. West and the Chair of the Standing Committee.
- Communication & Outreach
 - Garrett Broadbent is now with Creative Living Options. He has submitted his PAC application.

Without objection, Mr. Ciampa made the motion to approve Garrett Broadbent's application for PAC membership.

- Ms. Ramirez noted that this committee will need to revise the PAC PowerPoint that is shared with new service providers at ACRC's Vendor Orientations.
- Diversity & Equity
 - Ms. Dillard-Foss noted that 35 responses have been received from the recent survey. The deadline has been extended to December 1st.
 - All PAC members were encouraged to complete the survey.
- Vendor Relations
 - The group met to discuss ACRC's Performance Contract.
 - ACRC's Community Services Department is finalizing the frequently asked question (FAQ) document regarding the role of the Community Services Specialist.

7. **Announcements/Comments**

- Committee members expressed appreciation for Robin Rhoades, who is retiring this month.
 - Ms. Dillard-Foss shared that Ms. Rhoades encouraged her to speak up in her early years on the PAC.
 - Ms. Rhoades always spoke about how your voice matters, but the voices of our clients matter the most!
 - Ms. Rhoades is thankful for all of the hard work that this committee has done over the years. She will be continuing her work with People First.

- At the January PAC meeting, we will shift the "Budget Update" to "System Reform" and include workgroup reports.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, January 13, 2022**, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: ACRC Board of Directors
Lori Banales