

Alta California Regional Center
Provider Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, June 10, 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
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.
Monique Migdol*, Tahoe
Community Integrations
Antonio Ranit, Antelope Hills
Manor

Visitors:

Nick Abela
Vanessa Aguilera
Gregg Brandon
Vikie Cole
Susie Davies
Maureen Fitzgerald
Sonya Fox-Watson
Kate Halecky
Priscilla Holmes
Braydon Holtzinger
Asia Humphries
Christa McClure
John O'Brien
Nicky Schluep
Stan Schmidt
Kathleen Short
Hannah Thompson
Jasmine Vollenweider
Katherine Wallen

Staff:

Phil Bonnet, Executive Director
Iqbal Ahmad, Chief Financial Officer
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 9:35 a.m. on Thursday, June 10, 2021, by Webex/teleconference to discuss: 1) Board Update/ED Search Update; 2) Executive Director's Report; 3) CA Budget and Legislative Update; 4) COVID-19 Impact Discussion & Vaccinations & Re-Openings; 5) Subcommittee Reports; and 6) Announcements/Comments. All present provided self-introductions.

Without objection, Sergio Pinto made the motion to approve the Provider Advisory Committee meeting minutes of May 13, 2021 as submitted.

1. **Board Update**

- Ms. Ramirez shared that the Board meeting was held on May 27th.
 - It was Mr. Bonnet's last Board meeting. Ms. Walker read aloud a tribute and the Board thanked him for all his years of service.
 - Prior to the Board meeting, the Board held a training where Mary Beth Lepkowsky provided an overview of the Strategic Planning process. If the PAC chooses to go down this path, we could be parallel with the Board.
 - Mr. Bonnet reported on newly opened service provider options, as well as closures, some due to staffing issues.
 - You can reference these bimonthly updates by reviewing the Board minutes that are posted on ACRC's website. Ms. Ramirez has added this information to her monthly report, as well.
 - It was suggested that the PAC may want to know why the closure took place – workforce issues, rates, etc. Some long-standing providers may have to close due to rates, while a new program could open making more money with no experience. This is a problem with the statewide service system; there is no existing mechanism to correct this.
 - Yesterday, ACRC hosted a "Coordinated Future Planning – Community Information Session". Also, the Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) Roadmap is now posted on ACRC's website.
- ED Search Update
 - The search is underway.

2. **Executive Director's Report**

- Mr. Bonnet was trying to think back to his first meeting with this group. There are a few members that still remain today. Coming from a smaller regional center, this group was scary. Within a year of his arrival, there was a complete collapse of our statewide budget. This has been a long, strange and wonderful trip. He has really enjoyed his time with this group. Mr. Bonnet is thankful that this group has challenged him and not been afraid to ask questions. We closed institutions, faced the potential collapse of the Oroville dam and the

never-ending fires, dealt with COVID-19, and worked collaboratively to hold vaccine clinics. He is retiring, but will never be too far away. ACRC's commitment is not just him, but his entire senior management team. We are here to support our service provider community. The future of ACRC will not forget this. Our relationship with our service providers is almost as important as our relationships with our clients.

- The first time he saw great collaboration between regional centers and service providers was at the "New Day" Conference in San Francisco. Service providers are activists and have made some positive movement on behalf of the individuals that we serve.
- People seeking regional center eligibility are starting to come back. This will be harder moving forward, since not everyone is vaccinated. A few regional centers have mandated vaccinations for their staff in order to remain employed.
- Mr. Bonnet promised our Board of Directors that he would get our center through this pandemic before he retired. Management has finalized our contract with our employees for the next three years and have agreed to a slow return to the office work schedule. He is sure that ACRC is not the only agency that this has been difficult for, since everyone had to go to remote and virtual services.
- Mr. Bonnet has never seen the opportunities that await our statewide service system with funding that is coming into it. Even with more money, there are different priorities between groups (Disability Rights California [DRC], regional centers, advocacy groups, etc.).
 - The legislature is finalizing their version of the budget to send to the Governor's desk. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act will provide billions of dollars to our statewide service system. Some of that funding will assist regional centers with bringing our caseload ratios down to 62:1. ACRC has plans for new housing projects once we know how much funding is coming to our center.
- Service Coordinators (SCs) are starting to meet with our clients in-person. This will be complicated; we must remain safe while working with those that have not been vaccinated.

*Mr. Ciampa shared that because this is Mr. Bonnet's last PAC meeting, he asked if a small group could come in to present him with a gift. Mr. Bonnet has changed what good leadership looks like – responding in the moment when needed. This committee will miss his leadership but they are happy for him as he enters retirement.

- Ms. Dillard-Foss presented him with a trophy and shared that members made a donation to *Achieve Tahoe* in his name.

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

- CA Budget
 - The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will submit their plan for the ARP funding to the state by June 12th.
 - Questions remain – if the legislature fully funds the rate study, what do service providers get from it? Do clients get better outcomes? Will we get 100% utilization?
 - With the ARP, provider rates will not be changed until 2023.
 - There is funding designated for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Transition Trainings, as well as bilingual pay for direct support professionals (DSPs) in the budget.
 - Alternative rate models are a managed care item.
 - Housing for our clients may be stripped, which is disheartening.
 - We should know more by Friday night/Saturday. The legislature needs to vote on the budget, which will be a compromise between the Senate, Assembly and the Governor, by June 15th. A rally is planned at the State Capitol on June 22nd.
 - At ACRC's June 18th "Coffee with Community Services", the group will discuss the budget in more detail.
- Legislative Update
 - CCLN
 - This group supports AB 813 (Mullin) Developmental services: service outcome pilot project. This bill would require DDS to select three regional centers to participate in a pilot project to develop metrics and methods of data collections for up to four types of services, and evaluate the outcomes of those services.

4. **COVID-19 Impact Discussion, Vaccinations & Re-Openings**

- Some service providers have gone several weeks without a positive case.
- Mr. Bonnet shared that ACRC has had two more positive client cases this week, but the death that he spoke about at last month's meeting was actually not related to COVID-19.
- Many still refuse to be vaccinated and service providers may need to adopt vaccination policies as we move out of the pandemic.
- Mr. Decker understands that service providers are seeking guidance, which is always changing. This makes it challenging. Communication between providers is crucial.
- The staffing crisis has hit providers hard and it takes time to rebuild. The COVID-19 variants remain an issue too. We need to be cautious with our reopening plans.

- Mr. Ciampa will email the group asking for shared resources.
- With 17,000 eligible ACRC clients, 7,250 have been documented as vaccinated (42%). Ms. Banales believes these numbers are under-reported and this information is also being broken down by ethnicity. SCs are continually updating the vaccination information in SANDIS. If a client has declined the vaccine, the SC places that information into SANDIS, as well.
 - The Russian community states that the vaccine is against their culture. There is a Russian vaccine, but it is not available in the U.S.
 - ACRC is utilizing our Community Service Navigator, which is grant funded, to assist with contacting families. We are hopeful that they might assist with vaccine hesitancy.
 - 70% of ACRC staff have been vaccinated, including 92% of ACRC's Leadership Team.

5. **Subcommittee Reports**

- Ms. Rhoades noted that the Vendor Relations workgroup is meeting tomorrow. The group has completed the goals and objectives that they set for the past year. Something that the PAC may want to start discussing is reinventing our services. We have an important mission and vision and we need to work with ACRC to assist our clients.
 - Suggestion to invite Katherine Westin to an upcoming PAC meeting.
 - With Ms. Rhoades upcoming retirement, this workgroup will need a new Chair.
- Mr. Ciampa will convene the Outreach Committee prior to the July PAC meeting.
- The Committee Chair group is meeting next week to review our committee structure and start discussing Strategic Planning.
 - Any recommendations will be brought forward to the PAC next month.

6. **Announcements/Comments**

- The next Transportation Vendor Forum is scheduled for June 30th, from 10 a.m. to noon. The group will be discussing when to transition from alternative to traditional services. Attendees will be able to ask questions.
 - When looking at alternative services coming out of the pandemic, has ACRC thought about opportunities for clients to use Uber, Lyft, etc?
 - Mr. Decker noted that this group can discuss these options. The statewide discussion has waned over the last year.
- Everyone is welcome to stop by STEP on Thursday, June 17th. They will be holding a socially safe gathering to celebrate Juneteenth.

- STEP was awarded \$120,000 for "Housing Access Services". Patti Uplinger will be assisting clients with housing opportunities throughout ACRC's catchment area.
- As Ms. Ramirez mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, ACRC hosted a "Coordinated Future Planning – Community Information Session" yesterday. Ms. Banales shared that this involved a blend of ACRC staff, parents, service providers, and community partners. The group will be looking at applications for housing access. The session was recorded and it will be posted on our agency's website.
 - Stakeholder input is vital to the success of this project.
 - Mr. Ciampa expressed appreciation to ACRC for starting collaborative efforts at the ground level.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled on **Thursday, July 8, 2021**, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Lisa West
Executive Secretary

cc: ACRC Board of Directors
Phil Bonnet