

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee  
Regional Center of the East Bay  
Meeting Minutes Friday, March 8, 2024**

**Attendees Present:**

Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Steve Robinson, RCEB; Michael Minton, RCEB; Priscilla Gomez, RCEB; Vi Ibarra, Contra Costa DD Council; Serom Sanftner, East Bay Innovations; Darice Tillery, Harambee Community Services; Craig Rose, VistAbility; Anna Willis, Emerging Horizons; Heather Manes, HATCH; Adriana Cazares, Family Works; Nicole Doubley, RES; Michael Pereira, Ala Costa Centers; Danon Jenkins, Futures Explored; Louise McClellan, Open House Center; Erika Gonzalez, 24 Hour Home Care; Deanna Bauchou, Noll Center; Aimee Vitug-Hom, VistAbility; Carolanne Forge, Toolworks; Marcie Hodge, St John Boys Home, Inc; Sylvia Yeh, Friends of Children with Special Needs; Megan Benando, Trilogy Adult Services; Anthony Rowe, Adaptive Learning Center; Jun Reina, Family Support Services; Juan C. Velasquez, Pathway to Choices; Jan Cohen, Ability Now Bay Area; Amy Simons, A Brighter View Day Program, Inc; Antonio Navarro, Community life skills Agency; Jennifer Rocha, Strides Program, Castro Valley Adult and Career Education; Vi Ibarra, DD Council, Contra Costa County; Nicole Rios, RES Success; Brandi Auble, CA Mentor; Karen Lingenfelter, Mt. Diablo Adult Education; Veronica Mercado-Santana, Clausen House; Ramsay Mashy, California Autism Foundation; Geneva Carlos-Valentino, Toolworks; Anastasia DiFonzo, Toolworks; Phillip Goffner, Dorothy Glaspie Foundation; Amy Schwartz, RCEB; Carlos David Cienfuegos, MBA, MLS., Sentry Living Solutions; Chandra Jackson, Clausen House Adult Ed.; Venita Parrish, Aveanna Healthcare; Teresa Nold, Deaf Plus Adult Community; Carin Hewitt, alift llc; Tiana Kirkwood, Dorothy Glaspie foundation; Juanita Hightower, Clausen House; Judy Hunter, Las Trampas; Armando Valadez, Lucchesi Group Adult R; Nancy Brum, Keystone Adult Learning Center; Gabrielle Allen, Community Program for Exceptional Children; Patricia Harris, One Step Closer, Inc.; Michael Minton, RCEB; Pamela Temple, One Step Closer, Inc.; Sophia Shen, Helping Hands East Bay; Giovanni Sarabia, Sentry living; Ashley Fuentes, Sentry Living Solutions; Analyn Custodio, 1 STEP FORWARD DAY PROGRAM & ILS; Tiana Kirkwood, Stepping stones independent living llc; Eddie Esquivez, Manos; Jason Parks, Las Trampas.

**Call to Order:**

At 10 AM, Geneva Carlos-Valentino welcomed attendees both in person and on Zoom.

**Minutes Approval:** Unable to review due to not meeting quorum.

**Reports:**

**Regional Center/State Report – Lisa Kleinbub, Executive Director**

- Budget Concerns: Lisa discussed the impact of the governor's proposed budget, highlighting the delay in rate implementation and the potential removal of participant choice specialist positions. She expressed concerns about equity within the service system and the minor technological updates proposed in the budget.
  - Will Sanford shares insights from a meeting with Jim Knight, where Jim acknowledged the complexity and time requirements of implementing the new rate changes scheduled for July 1. Jim emphasized that even if the rate implementation occurs as planned, full implementation will take time.
  - Jim indicated that the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is proceeding with preparations under current law, despite proposals that may delay these implementations. He reiterated the ongoing discussions within the department and the need for contingency planning.
- Legislative Hearing Feedback: She recounted a recent legislative hearing that was significant due to the committee chair's deep engagement with the issues affecting the developmental services community. She noted the chair's understanding and advocacy for moving rate implementation forward and discussed the need for collective action to address these challenges.
- In-Person vs. Remote Services: Lisa debated the merits of conducting Individual Program Plans (IPPs) and Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) in person versus remotely. She discussed the varied opinions on this issue, noting that while remote services increase accessibility, they might lead to decreased engagement from social workers and potentially overlook certain nuances that in-person meetings might capture.

- Navigators and System Complexity: She critiqued the system's complexity, questioning why a system designed to help people should need navigators. This comment was in line with broader discussions about making the system more accessible and easier to navigate without additional intermediaries.
- Community Engagement: Lisa emphasized the importance of community engagement in legislative processes, noting the positive impact of advocacy at a recent legislative hearing. She encouraged continued participation and vigilance to ensure that the community's needs are adequately addressed in state budget discussions and implementation processes.
- Anticipating Changes: She spoke about the ongoing challenges in the system, especially related to rate implementations and service provision. Lisa stressed the need for a unified approach to overcome these challenges, mentioning the necessity to work collaboratively to serve the community effectively.

#### **Regional Center Staff Reports – Steve Robinson**

- Webinar Notification: He informed the attendees that the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) had sent out notifications about upcoming webinars related to the DSP workforce survey. These webinars are scheduled to start from March 13 to March 18 and include an incentive of \$1,000 for service providers to participate.
- Survey Details: He emphasized that this was another opportunity for service providers who had participated in the past to benefit from the financial incentive.
- Guidance and Uncertainty: Steve discussed the ongoing uncertainty about the final phase of rate implementation scheduled for July 1. He mentioned that regional centers are being advised by DDS to proceed as if the implementation will happen, despite the lack of guidance on how to transition service codes effectively.
- Meetings with DDS: He highlighted upcoming meetings where DDS promised to provide guidance by the first week of April, expressing skepticism about whether this timeline would be met.
- Insights from Legislative Meetings: Steve shared insights from another meeting where similar topics were discussed, including the implementation timeline and the practical challenges associated with these changes.
- Community Concerns and Responses: He responded to community members' queries about ongoing projects and initiatives, particularly about the service provider portal that DDS plans to implement.
- Service Provider Portal: Steve mentioned challenges with migrating data to new systems, particularly the service provider portal that DDS is working on. He discussed the anticipated features of this portal, including more control for providers over their information and notifications to regional centers about major changes.
- Training Reimbursement Delays: He addressed a specific question about training reimbursement, noting delays and lack of communication from DDS about when these reimbursements would be processed.
- Encouragement to Attend Webinars: Steve encouraged attendance at the upcoming webinars to stay informed about the latest developments and opportunities for training and financial incentives.

#### **Regional Center HCBS Reports – Mike Minton**

- Mike Minton discussed the state's expectations for HCBS evaluations, mentioning that by the end of February, the state aimed to have 25% of evaluations completed. However, he noted that the regional centers were behind on this target, with only 10% completed, although the state itself was slightly under its own goal at 22%.

- He expressed confidence that despite the slow start, they would catch up to the 50% completion target necessary by the next deadline. The slow start was attributed to initial logistical and procedural challenges in rolling out the evaluation tools.
  - Donna Feingold provided insights into the practical aspects of conducting HCBS evaluations. She mentioned that the tours (evaluation teams) are out nearly every day, conducting evaluations and site visits. She anticipates that day programs would be evaluated by the end of the month mentioned in the transcript and that residential evaluations were scheduled for April and May.
  - She highlighted the positive aspects of having a dedicated team and the benefits of regular monthly check-ins for anyone with questions regarding the evaluation schedule. Donna mentioned that there is an open invitation for stakeholders to join these check-ins to stay informed about ongoing evaluations.
  - Donna and Mike discussed how the evaluations revealed that many providers already complied with new standards while others needed to make adjustments.
  - They shared that the feedback from these evaluations was generally positive, with a significant majority of evaluated sites meeting the required standards. This was seen as a reflection of the community's commitment to maintaining high-quality services and adapting to new regulatory requirements.
- Toolworks is also offering drop-in hours for vendors to prepare for site visits. Last Wednesday of the month, March 27, at 2PM. Very informal, reviewing process, asking/answering questions.
  - HCBS videos are now available, made by Tri-County Regional Center. All of them are about the 10 rules of HCBS compliance. They are each animated and around 5 minutes or less.
    - The first 10 are designed for the people receiving services: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2sVu\\_Vi1tqUnSW5DWrbU9O7\\_4Q8ecZ3C](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2sVu_Vi1tqUnSW5DWrbU9O7_4Q8ecZ3C)
    - The second 10 are designed for the providers: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2sVu\\_Vi1tqX4cuLZ-PBXa0vufTYDcseT](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2sVu_Vi1tqX4cuLZ-PBXa0vufTYDcseT)

### **Regional Center Board Report**

Dan Hogue was absent. Lisa Kleinbub mentioned that Mason Tillman presented at the February RCEB board meeting where issues such as quality assurance and equitable service referrals were discussed. She highlighted findings regarding the distribution of services across different demographics and provider types, suggesting that more work was needed to ensure fairness in service provision.

### **State Council on Developmental Disabilities Report**

Sheraden Nicholau absent. No report.

### **Alameda County DD Council Report – Ben Chen**

Ben Chen absent. No report.

### **Contra Costa County DD Council Report – Vi Ibarra**

- Vi Ibarra reported that the city of Brentwood Parks and Rec reached out to her about wanting to expand programs for residents with disabilities in Brentwood. Vi discussed ways to do this, including waivers for using their parks/facilities and potential grant submissions.
  - Vi offered to connect any programs currently providing services in Brentwood, or those looking to develop new programs there, with the city of Brentwood Parks and Rec department to discuss how they can help support those efforts.

- **March 23rd Transition Conference and Resource Fair, VENDOR registration:**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-transition-conference-resource-fair-vendor-registration-tickets-829549433687?aff=oddtcreator>
- **March 23rd Transition Conference and Resource Fair, ATTENDEE registration:**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-transition-conference-and-resource-fair-tickets-829452393437?aff=oddtcreator>
- **The Transition Task Force** provides introductory trainings on several of the most common aspects of transition that families ask teachers and case managers about. Please have a look and consider if any of your staff might wish to attend:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GjnCN6uUXB2LumdA17QMpj652sg683cX/view?usp=sharing>
- **The Developmental Disabilities Council** is extending an invitation to our community to attend monthly Board of Directors' meetings. Please share this invitation with the clients and families you serve, as well as any staff that may be interested. Attending the monthly meetings (either in person or via Zoom) is a great way to learn about issues, events, and opportunities of interest to the developmental disability community.  
Contra Costa DD Council invitation in English:  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P8MrGZfRCgjFR\\_dGBwDyrEWLXVgkAPnL/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P8MrGZfRCgjFR_dGBwDyrEWLXVgkAPnL/view?usp=sharing)  
Contra Costa DD Council invitation in Spanish:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/173nr6mtkJ7nwevulhiG706aseVNLvNtk/view?usp=sharing>

#### **East Bay Legislative Coalition Report – Will Sanford**

Will Sanford reported:

- **Statewide Trade Association Activity:** Will references a recent legislative day organized by a statewide trade association where significant advocacy took place. He highlighted the importance of letting legislators know about the impact of potential budgetary decisions.
- **Letter to Subcommittee Chairs:** A notable outcome was a letter drafted by a legislator from Elk Grove who has a personal connection to the developmental services community. This letter, which calls for rejecting the proposed delay in rate implementation, was circulated for additional signatories among legislators.
- **Importance of Community Involvement:** He stressed the need for widespread community engagement to ensure that the voices of those impacted by these services are heard, urging continuous advocacy efforts.
- **Acknowledgment of Implementation Delays:** He discusses the realistic challenges that agencies face in implementing new systems and rates, predicting that not everything will be ready by the proposed deadlines.
- **Future Preparations:** The necessity for ongoing planning and preparation was emphasized, suggesting that the community needs to remain proactive and involved in discussions to ensure that service providers and recipients are not adversely affected by legislative or bureaucratic delays.

#### **Service Provider Equity Subcommittee Report – Anthony Rowe**

Anthony Rowe reported:

- Anthony mentioned that he and PVAC Co-Chair Dan Hogue met with Lisa Kleinbub. During the meeting, discussions focused on collaborating with a regional center to address issues related to peripherals and different living options.
- A database is being created that will link individuals based on their needs and the services they require. It will also include providers capable of meeting these needs, facilitating referrals based on specific criteria. Providers in the database will be required to respond to any referrals within a set timeframe. The system aims to reduce opportunities for implicit bias and increase choice for community members, enhancing their access to a wide range of service providers.
- Additionally, there was a discussion about the procedure for lodging appeals or grievances against regional center employees, emphasizing the use of established escalation processes or the whistleblower process posted on the DDS website for safe and appropriate grievance resolution.

- Ideas included plans to establish forums where providers can express grievances or provide feedback in a structured environment, potentially involving a third party to ensure unbiased dialogue. This aims to create more open communication channels between providers and the regional center, outside the usual person-centered context.
- Furthermore, the meeting touched on the upcoming release of a significant report by Mason Tillman for RCEB, with assurances that the report would be released in full unless it contains confidential consumer data. The attendees were encouraged to participate in efforts to improve equity within the system, with an invitation extended for the next scheduled meeting.
- **Next Meeting 03/22 at 1PM;** all are invited to join.

#### **Day Providers Subcommittee Report – Mike Pereira**

Michael Pereira reported:

- Michael discussed the concerns surrounding the final phase of rate implementation, especially its potential delay. He mentioned considerable uncertainty while the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) instructs regional centers to prepare for the rate implementation as scheduled for July 1. This includes the lack of guidance on transitioning service codes, which is crucial for day programs.
- He brought up specific concerns about transitioning service codes, such as the 055 service code for day programs, which needs to be changed. He expressed apprehension about the lack of clear directives from DDS and the complexity involved in transitioning to new service codes.
- Michael spoke about recent advocacy efforts, emphasizing the importance of community and legislative engagement in addressing the proposed delays in rate implementation. He shared that there has been significant feedback from legislative bodies, influenced by community advocacy.
- He highlighted upcoming legislative sessions and the necessity for the community to stay engaged, noting that direct communication and advocacy are essential in shaping the outcomes of these discussions.
- Michael discussed ongoing meetings with DDS, where regional centers have voiced their concerns and sought clarity on future procedures. He stressed the need for clear guidance from DDS to effectively implement the planned changes.
- He acknowledged the importance of community feedback in these discussions, emphasizing that direct input from service providers and community members is crucial for addressing the operational challenges faced by all programs, including day programs.
- Michael encouraged continued participation in advocacy efforts, stressing that the community's voice is critical in influencing legislative decisions and ensuring that service providers can meet the new requirements without undue disruption.
- Reminder that all are welcome to join the **Friday, 11AM Provider Meeting**, and the **Wednesday 2PM Troubleshoot Meetings** (both via Zoom); all service providers are welcome.
- Recent meetings include review of **HCBS visits and process**, as well as other issues.
- **While this is a Day Provider forum, Residential Providers are also welcome** to both the Wednesday and Friday meetings to troubleshoot, share information, connect, and support one another.

#### **HireAble Subcommittee Report – Donna Feingold**

Donna Feingold reported:

- Donna discussed the ongoing training sessions being offered, mentioning that the first class began on February 20 and would conclude in March. The training aims to equip participants with skills necessary for supported and customized employment, focusing on serving those who have not traditionally been served by standard employment programs.
- Donna explained the Ticket to Work program, which offers financial incentives for employment service providers. She detailed how payments from the Social Security Administration are structured around beneficiaries achieving certain employment milestones.

- Utilization Challenges: She acknowledged the complexities involved in accessing funds through Ticket to Work, citing historical challenges with the bureaucracy and the overall low utilization rate by employment programs serving the IDD community.
- Administrative Networks: She mentioned administrative networks that handle much of the bureaucratic work involved with the Ticket to Work program, making it easier for providers to benefit from the program without navigating the complexities directly.
- Future Trainings: Donna spoke about future training opportunities, including presentations at the upcoming March 23 transition fair. These trainings are part of a broader initiative to enhance service provider capabilities and support individuals transitioning from school to adult services.
- Advocacy for Service Providers: She touched on the importance of advocacy for improved funding and support mechanisms for employment services, indicating that ongoing dialogue with state and federal agencies is crucial for the sustainability of these programs.

#### **PVAC Membership Report – Jamie Renton**

Jamie Renton not present, no report. However, here are the following reminders:

- **Still looking for a secretary!** Voting members, please nominate yourself or others!
- **Also still seeking:** Transportation, Children and Infant Services, At-large (community members or vendorized individuals).
- **Call for Nominations** <https://forms.gle/a11hcSXLwJBpzBZ27>

#### **Public Comment**

**Next meeting is scheduled for April 12 at 9:30 AM at the RCEB San Leandro Offices and on Zoom.**

Meeting Adjourned at 11:31 M.

Respectfully submitted for review by Geneva Carlos-Valentino, Co-Chair