

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee  
Regional Center of the East Bay  
Meeting Minutes Friday, June 14, 2024**

**Members Present:** Dan Hogue, Las Trampas; Geneva Carlos-Valentino, Toolworks; Anthony Rowe, Adaptive Learning Center; Lindsey Dyba, Futures Explored; Eddie Esquivel, Manos; Marcie Hodge, St John Boys Home; Ann Pringle; Carlos Cienfuegos, Sentry Living Solutions; Jamie Renton, Pleasanton Adult and Career Education

**Guests Present:** Karen Toto; Debbie G, Clausen House; Craig Rose, Vistability; Will Sanford, SC&CS; Pam Temple, One Step Closer; Jan Cohen, ANBA; Cecilia Gutierrez, ACBHD; Ben Chen, Alameda County DDC; Amy Simons, A Brighter View; Yahna Dick, Spread Your Wings; Reginald Ponio, Reframing Behavior; Adriana Cazares, Family Works; Christina Bolanos IHSS care provider; Michael Minton, RCEB; Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Steve Robinson, RCEB; Nicole Doubly, RES; Darice Tillery, Harambee Community Services; Donna Feingold from HireAble and Finding Golden Solutions; Teresa Nold, Deaf Plus Adult Community; Christine Grabowski, East Bay Innovations; Jenica Hadley - 24 Hour Home Care; Aimee Vitug-Hom, VistAbility; Kipi Iscandari A and K Residential homes; Sylvia Yeh, FCSN; Maria, Royal Palm Residential Home and M & M Residential Care Home Inc; Ashanti Moore, Spread Your Wings; Ember Avalos, NIAD Art Center; Sheraden Nicholau, State Council; Robert Jo, Agape Care Home; Kulwinder Kaur, A Brighter View Day Program; Patricia Harris - One Step Closer; Karen Lingenfelter, Mt. Diablo Adult Education; Candice Elton - Thrive Support Services; Krishav, Wheelcare Express Inc.; Dr. Gregory Holler, UCS; Anna Willis, Emerging Horizons; Armando Valadez, Lucchesi Group Adult Residential; Maureen Wright, The Respite Inn; Jan Behr, Toolworks; Rafael Parada, RCEB; Jaynette Underhill-Levingston, Clausen House; Jessica Woods-Torlowei, Family Support Services; Madison Mercado, Open House Center; Rafael, 1 Step Forward; Ramsay Mashy California Autism Foundation; Allison Fitzmaurice, Registered Nurse, prospective vendor; Priscilla Gomez, RCEB; Christina Bolanos Licensed Psychiatric Technician, prospective vendor; Denise Bradley, Harambee Consulting Group; Karen Birks, Monarchy Consulting Group; Wendell James; Dominique Mellion; FUFU; Jessica Micheau, RCEB; Jason Parks, Las Trampas; Annette O., North Star Residential; Sara Trail; Brian Saunders; Shawndrell Wheeler; Alfred; Anna Willis; James Mercado; Giovany Sarabia; Chad Montgomery; Monica Montgomery (Chad Montgomery); Caroline; Analyn Custodio; Antonio Navarro; Juanita Hightower; Gail Cho, REACH West; ELM - Emily Correia; Chandra Jackson; Brandi; Adaure Home Care; Adam McClure; D. Bauchou, Noll Center

**86 total attendees**

**Call to Order:**

At 9:37 AM, Geneva Carlos-Valentino welcomed attendees.

**Minutes Approval and Discussion:**

A quorum was confirmed, and the May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, meeting minutes were reviewed. Corrections or additions were solicited, and with none provided, Jamie Renton motioned to approve the minutes, and Dan Hogue seconded, leading to their approval.

**Reports:**

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

Lisa Kleinbub reported that the state update is uncertain due to ongoing negotiations between the governor and the legislature, despite the budget bill passing the Assembly and Senate, which includes a planned rate increase on July 1. There is cautious optimism about the legislature's support for this implementation. The impact of the trailer bill on service provision is awaited, with an expectation that families with children under 18 will no longer face family fees. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is working on a provider database for the Quality Incentive Program and preparing the new Individual Program Plan (IPP) document for statewide use by January 1. Additionally, the Developmental

Services Master Plan Committee seeks diverse participants for its work groups, with applications due next Friday. The Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) sent a survey to In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) providers to inform a referral system and plans to send another to supported living providers. Feedback is requested to aid in developing referral software for matching service needs with available providers.

A question was raised about the timeline for the provider portal, which has seen no updates since registration months ago. There is no specific timeline, but work is ongoing to integrate information from various systems, requiring significant manual effort. Answers might be available by September, and additional staff has been hired to assist regional centers with this work.

The provider portal is part of the quality incentive program, affecting rate implementations. Providers need to register to ensure they receive the final 10% of their rate. The process, currently piecemeal, will become critical for receiving full payment upon full rate implementation.

Additionally, the service provider directory will track updated DS 1891 forms every two years and handle background checks, reducing the administrative burden on regional centers and improving efficiency for service providers.

**PRESENTATION: *Monarchy Subscription Service*, Karen Birks of Monarchy Consulting Group and Denise Bradley**

The presentation discussed a subscription service piloted two years ago to support regional center providers. Key features include:

- Monitored Facebook Group: Offering didactic trainings and HR support.
- Business Development Meetings: Monthly three-hour sessions with 10 organizations and a facilitator with extensive experience in the regional center system. These meetings address business challenges and topics like access to capital and HCBS compliance.
- Employee Handbook and Executive Coaching: Provided and updated as needed.
- Trainings and Compliance Support: Covering areas like regional center funding, Cal OSHA compliance, risk management, HR best practices, budget development, and outreach plans.
- Quality Assurance (QA) and Programming Support: Helping with program designs, licensing, HCBS compliance, and preparing ISPs.

The service includes a work-life balance component facilitated by a life coach. The program offers four customizable plans to fit different budgets, and participants benefit from peer support, fostering relationships and shared experiences. Facilitators and consultants with over 20 years of experience guide the process.

Denise, who is retiring, will be succeeded by Karen Birks, ensuring continuity of service. Current groups meet in Antioch, San Leandro, and remotely. Participants praised the program's value, particularly for compliance and peer support. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Karen for details on the cost and customization options.

**Regional Center Staff Reports – Steve Robinson**

Steve gave attendees updates on the following:

- **DSP Stipend for Online Courses:** The stipend for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) taking online courses through ARCA expires on June 30. Service providers must submit the DSP training agreement form by this date if their employees are taking these courses.
- **Quality Incentive Programs:** Incentives for employment, capacity, and access also end on June 30. This includes:
  - **ACRE Certifications:** Providers whose staff have completed ACRE certifications.
  - **CIE Placement Incentives:** Providers serving over four clients can receive incentives for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) placements at 30-day and six-month intervals.
- **CPP and CRDP Projects:** Completed interviews and work for Community Placement Plan (CPP) and Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP) projects. Multiple Requests for Proposals (RFPs) were issued, with many applicants, but only one service provider could be awarded each project. Information about awarded projects and proposal scores will be posted on the website in July, keeping applicants confidential.
- **Resource Needs Posting:** Regional center resource needs will be posted on the website, hopefully by July.

### **Community Care Facilities and Supported Living Services (SLS):**

- **Vacancies:** Over 100 homes with vacancies, including 65 level four homes.
- **SLS Providers:** Nearly 80 providers exist, with around 70 to 80 new clients seeking SLS annually. This means each agency will receive few new clients, indicating limited need for new SLS providers.
- **Transparency:** The regional center aims to be transparent about the current vacancies and resource needs, discouraging unnecessary expansion of community care facilities and SLS providers.

Steve also clarified the limited need for additional community care facilities and SLS providers due to current vacancies and existing provider numbers.

### **Regional Center Transportation Report – Priscilla Gomez**

Priscilla informed attendees that RCEB vendor transportation providers will offer service on Juneteenth if the day program provides in-person services on that day. Providers were reminded to respond to the survey by the following Wednesday. AC Transit's complementary paratransit (East Bay Paratransit) will operate on a holiday schedule on June 19, pausing standing orders. Individuals wanting in-person services must call the reservation line to schedule a trip, with limited availability due to the holiday schedule.

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

Mike Minton updated attendees on the HCBS Program Evaluation project

#### **HCBS Statistics:**

- Current evaluations show that 73% of providers reviewed, with a target of 75% by the end of the month.
- Statewide, 68% of providers have been reviewed.
- Compliance rates are 92% for RCB and 84% statewide.
- Overall compliance is 67% for RCB and 58% statewide.
- The Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule applies primarily to day programs and licensed residential homes.

#### **Future Evaluation Processes:**

- Plans to integrate HCBS evaluations into the regular Quality Assurance (QA) tool to avoid multiple reviews.
- Day program evaluations to resume annually starting next year.
- A new QA position is being posted to assist with evaluations.

#### **RFPs and Training:**

- Recent RFPs posted with short turnaround times, due the day of the meeting.
- RFPs include DSP HCBS certification training for online courses with testing and a training program related to employment under the HCBS Final Rule.

### **Questions answered by RCEB Staff**

#### **Payment Issues:**

- Providers facing delays in receiving payments for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) incentives should email a list of clients to address issues.
- Case managers need to submit forms for CIE to the employment specialist for approval.
- Missing authorizations should be tracked in a Google Doc for better follow-up.

#### **SLS Providers and Waiting Lists:**

- Discussion on the challenge of tracking clients on waiting lists for Supported Living Services (SLS).
- Some SLS providers have waiting lists, and the need for a system to track and reallocate clients to other providers was mentioned.
- Plans to create a new system to track SLS referrals to improve transparency and efficiency.

#### **Other Points:**

- Acknowledgment of the need for tracking systems to improve service allocation and compliance.
- The DSP stipend also expires at the end of the month.
- Communication issues with the state department about additional incentive payments and how they are processed were noted, with steps to follow up for clarity.

### **Regional Center Board Report**

Dan Hogue provided an update on the activities and decisions made during the RCEB Board meeting held on May 20 to review and approve multiple contracts and discuss various operational updates.

#### **Provider Referral System:**

- Lisa mentioned that the provider referral system for Supported Living Services (SLS) and Independent Living Services (ILS) is under development.
- Expected to be operational by the end of June or the end of the fiscal year, though exact timing is uncertain.

#### **Budget and Financials:**

- The budget discussion focused on approving a line of credit.
- While not anticipated to be used, the line of credit provides financial security depending on the timing of DDS reimbursements.

#### **Contract Approvals:**

- **State Staff Funding:** Approval for funds from DDS to cover state staff expenses taken on by the Regional Center post-developmental center closures.
- **E2 Contract Amendment:** Approved.
- **Transportation Renewals:** Extensive discussion on the difference between vendor transportation and additional program add-ons. Concerns were raised about oversight and potential abuse in vendor transportation, emphasizing the need for proper reporting channels to Priscilla.
- **SLS Contract Renewals:** Renewed, with a request for clarification on providers serving few or no participants and the number of referrals sent to them.

#### **Strategic Plan Update:**

- The strategic plan is progressing well, particularly on vision and values statements, which are still being refined.

#### **Equity Committee Request:**

- The committee requested a neutral third-party reporter for providers to anonymously report issues.
- The board is considering this and has tasked the speaker with identifying potential candidates. Names will be submitted to the board for consideration.

#### **Additional Notes:**

- The meeting was long but lacked significant controversy.
- The speaker invited questions and provided contact information for follow-ups.

### **State Council on Developmental Disabilities Report—Sheriden Nicholau**

Sheridan from the State Council provided an update to the Regional Center Advisory Committee.

- Nicole Adler, a state council member representing the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) community, was appointed as a Grand Marshal for San Francisco Pride. Nicole, a Bay Area native, is a public speaker and human rights advocate for disability and LGBTQIA+ communities. She hosts a podcast called "The No No Show" and aims to create a "new love revolution," connecting disabled and LGBTQ communities. Links to her Grand Marshal page and an interview were shared in the chat.

#### **Upcoming Events and Trainings:**

- **Tiger Talk on June 26:** A training on how to be an effective board member, available in English and Spanish.
- **Bay Area Regional Advisory Committee Meeting on June 26:** A hybrid meeting focused on health equity and the idea of a statewide abuse registry for IDD individuals and their families.
- **Self-Advocates Advisory Committee Meeting on July 15:** No details provided.
- **State Council Meeting on July 16:** This will be held over Zoom.

#### **Recent Conference and Initiatives:**

- At the RE Inspire conference, Ronke Sodipo, Steve Robinson, and Rebecca Churchill Sterling participated in a multi-regional center listening session panel.
- The conference focused on transition-age youth and young adults who are non-speakers, discussing community services and communication support.
- The Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) is conducting an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) needs assessment, relevant to the Bay Area.

#### **Sponsorship Opportunities:**

- Year-round sponsorships of up to \$2,500 are available for events focused on IDD individuals and their families, particularly those offering free or discounted services.
- Applications must be submitted 90 days in advance.

Sheridan encouraged attendees to consider the sponsorship opportunities and provided additional information and links in the chat.

### **Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Council – Ben Chen**

#### **Council Leadership and Meetings:**

- The Alameda County Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council is concluding its program year. Annual board meetings are held to complete year-end procedures.
- Geneva was welcomed as the new Council President, with Rachel Long as Vice President.
- The next board meeting for strategic planning is on July 10 from 9:30 am to 12 pm. It will be a hybrid meeting, and participation is encouraged to include diverse perspectives in the upcoming year's goals. Zoom link and in-person location will be shared.

#### **Annual Awards Event:**

- Joint annual awards event with Contra Costa County DD Council held on June 6 at the Pleasant Hill Community Center, with about 150 registrants.
- Award winners recognized for their contributions:
  - **Contra Costa County:** Wendy Greenberg, Sarah Trail, Linda Green Officer, Mitch Brulee, Unified Prom Committee, and Las Trapas.
  - **Alameda County:** Denise Bradley, Tom Hines (Lifetime Achievement), Rochelle Hutchins, Renee Ryan (Service Awards), and Guide 3 Kidney (Innovation Award).

#### **Council Membership and Vacancies:**

- The council is seeking new board members. Eligibility includes self-advocates, family members, providers, and anyone supporting or part of the IDD community in Alameda County. Interested individuals are encouraged to reach out.

#### **Upcoming Events and Opportunities:**

- **Autism Star Committee:** Previously held conferences for parents of newly diagnosed children with autism, now seeking community feedback through an online and phone survey by Eddie Esquiviz of Manos. Contact information will be shared in the chat.
- **La Familia Events (in Spanish):**
  - Regional Center services and generic resources orientation on June 18 from 10 am to 12 pm via Zoom.
  - IHSS session on June 20 from 10 am to 12 pm.
  - Tour of the respite on June 25 from 10 am to 12 pm.
  - Links for these events will be provided in the chat.

PVAC attendees expressed positive remarks about the awards event, highlighting the recognition of smaller and more diverse providers. Ben expressed gratitude for participating in and supporting the council's initiatives and events.

### **Contra Costa County Developmental Disabilities Council – Vi Ibarra**

- Will Sanford gave a brief report, as Vi was on a well-deserved vacation. Will also reflected on the Joint DD Council's recent event, praising the emcee, Sheridan, and the opportunity to meet people in person.
- The council is on a summer break and will have its planning meeting on August 28 at Las Trampas, primarily for board members and in-person.

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

- **State Budget:** The legislature passed a balanced budget (AB 107) and sent it to the governor. The budget is extensive, with relevant sections for the council starting around page 497.
- **Rate Model Funding:** The legislature rejected the governor's initial proposal and supported fully funding the rate model implementation. Senator Skinner spoke strongly in favor of this on the Senate floor.
- **Next Steps:** The governor has until June 27 to sign the budget. A "baby budget bill" is expected soon, resulting from negotiations between Senate and Assembly leadership and the governor.

- **Advocacy:** Community members are encouraged to continue sending emails and letters to the governor to emphasize the importance of fully funding the rate model implementation.

**AB 2423 Bill:**

- This bill, introduced by Assemblymember Mathis, requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to update the rate model every two years based on inputs like wages, local facility costs, and transportation costs.
- The bill will be heard in the Senate on July 1, having already passed the Assembly. It aims to provide updated information but does not guarantee funding.

**Governor's Role and Legislative Support:**

- The legislature has been pivotal in securing funding increases over the past four years. The governor's support is crucial for final approval.
- Implementation details will follow in trailer bills, which outline how the budget's numbers will be put into practice.

**Future Legislative Activity:**

- Anticipation of a busy summer with adjustments and trailer bills related to the budget. The legislature met its constitutional deadline by passing the budget, and further developments are expected in the coming weeks.

Will encouraged staying informed and engaged as the legislative process continues to unfold, noting the East Bay Legislative Committee will meet on July 3 at 10 am, hosted by Ben in Will's absence due to vacation in England.

**Service Provider Equity Subcommittee Report – Dan Hogue**

Dan announced that Anthony Rowe has resigned from his position as co-chair of the committee due to other commitments but will continue to be involved in the committee. Appreciation was expressed for Anthony's hard work and contributions.

- There is ongoing concern about the delay in the Tillman report. The committee is eager to receive the final report.
- A recent meeting organized by the RCEB Diversity and Equity Specialist, Armand Lee, was poorly communicated to providers. Notifications were sent out the day before the meeting, causing concerns about insufficient notice and the optics of the situation.
- Dan recommended that future meetings affecting many providers should be announced well in advance and distributed through the PVAC distribution list to ensure broader communication.
- Lisa clarified that the meeting was intended to be between the diversity and equity specialist and a couple of providers, not an all-provider meeting. She apologized for the confusion and assured that there was no intent to exclude anyone.
- Lisa mentioned that new staff might organize meetings without understanding the broader context and that their efforts should be appreciated. She stressed the importance of not canceling already scheduled meetings but acknowledged the need for better communication.
- The newly staffed RCEB Diversity and Equity Specialists will present at the next PVAC meeting. Providers are encouraged to bring questions.
- Lisa asked for grace regarding the new staff's learning curve and reiterated that there was no intent to exclude anyone.

**Day Providers Subcommittee Report – Mike Pereira**

Dan gave a brief report on Mike's behalf. The main focus of the subcommittee has been on advocating for the budget and ensuring compliance to secure full rates, particularly by completing DSP surveys. Regular attendees are reminded about the provider group meetings run by Mike on Fridays there is no PVAC at 11 AM and the weekly troubleshoot meetings on Wednesdays. Those interested in joining these calls can contact Mike Pereira to be connected to the listserv.

Mike joined the meeting later and shared information about an important survey from the California Policy Center for IDD focusing on DSP workforce challenges. The survey aims to gather a broad range of data from service providers. Links to the survey in both English and Spanish were sent via Mike's listserv and provided in the chat.

Mike emphasized the significance of completing the survey, noting that it should take around 15 minutes and is less cumbersome than the DSP staff stability survey. He highlighted that only one survey needs to be completed per organization, even if multiple representatives from the same provider are present.

Completing the survey is crucial for informing public policy and supporting advocacy efforts, especially as negotiations are currently at a critical stage. The collected data will help address DSP staff recruitment, retention, and hiring challenges. The

speaker encouraged service providers to take a few minutes to complete the survey, stressing its importance for future advocacy and policy decisions.

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

Donna announced information about the next HireAble meeting, scheduled for Monday, June 24, at 3:00 PM. This meeting will feature a Q&A session on benefits planning, addressing how working and earning wages impact public benefits like SSI and SSDI. The session is open to anyone interested, including case managers, DSPs, beneficiaries, rep payees, and family members. Donna clarified that this is the last HireAble meeting for the fiscal year, although there will be additional sessions in the last week of June. There will be no meetings in July, as many participants, especially school partners, take breaks. The program hopes to resume services and training in August.

Donna also mentioned an awards event reported by Ben, in which HireAble recognized three outstanding employers who have made significant contributions by employing people with IDD. This year's winners were the Oakland Zoo, YMCA of the East Bay, and Chili's of Fremont. The event was well-received, with a festive atmosphere.

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

Jamie discussed the eligibility and self-nominations for membership. Three individuals had self-nominated:

1. **Teresa Nold** confirmed her continued interest in proceeding with her self-nomination.
2. **Amy Simons** was not present at the meeting, but the committee emailed her to confirm her interest.
3. **Zachary** initially expressed interest but indicated he was retiring and thus no longer interested in the nomination.

The committee plans to wait until next month to vote on Teresa's nomination and hopes to hear from Amy by then.

Two other individuals have self-nominated and will become eligible for membership after attending three meetings:

- **Jessica Woods** is expected to be eligible after next month's meeting.
- **Sara Trail** has self-nominated but needs to attend a few more meetings to become eligible.

The committee emphasized the urgent need for new members, particularly from the transportation sector, infant and child services, and support services. They specifically discussed possibly including organizations with significant transportation components, like the Mission Hope Day Program, as transportation sector members.

The committee intends to contact transportation vendors to fill the required membership slots, ensuring a balance between Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

**Call for Nominations** <https://forms.gle/a11hcSXLwJBpzBZ27>

#### **Public Comment**

- Teresa Nold raised a question regarding a consumer with schizophrenia whose family refuses medication. They are looking for someone who knows ASL to provide resources. It was suggested that the Schreiber Center in Alameda County might be able to help. However, there are concerns about their current capacity due to recent flooding, limiting their ability to take new referrals or see people in person. They hope to reopen later in the summer.

Teresa was advised to put her email in the chat for further contact. The suggestion was made to reach out to the regional center case manager's supervisor for additional support and resources, especially the clinical team at the regional center.

- Geneva announced that the next PVAC meeting will be July 12 via Zoom, as August is traditionally a low-attendance month with no meetings scheduled. Meetings will resume in September.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:37 AM.

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