

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee
Regional Center of the East Bay
Meeting Minutes Friday, December 13, 2024**

Call to Order:

At 9:35 AM, Geneva Carlos-Valentino welcomed attendees.

Minutes Approval and Discussion:

Geneva mentioned the challenge of reaching quorum due to busy schedules in December. She mentioned they were short one person to reach quorum, so they would need to push the approval of the new members to the next meeting if they could not get the required attendance. The vote for the approval of the November 8, 2024, meeting minutes was held for the next meeting, scheduled for January 10, 2025.

Regional Center Update

RCEB Staff shared the following with attendees:

Lynn Nguyen:

- Provided an update on the July 1 retroactive rate increase, including the challenges of processing manual payments for some vendors.
- Addressed questions from Michael Pereira about how providers can support the retroactive billing process, and explained the need for accurate authorizations.
- Emphasized the importance of vendors informing the regional center about new authorizations to ensure accurate retroactive payments.

Syed Shuttari:

- Presented the new CSV invoice upload feature developed by DDS.
- Explained the purpose, eligibility, submission timeline, and support available for using the CSV invoice upload.
- Emphasized the importance of submitting invoices by the fourth business day of the month for smooth processing.
- Addressed questions from participants about the CSV upload and billing deadlines.

Steve Robinson:

- Provided an overview of the July 1 rate increase and the challenges providers are facing due to late information from DDS.
- Discussed the need for at least 6 months' notice for directives to manage provider interactions effectively.
- Went over the new day services directive, including the requirements for different service codes, staffing and training requirements, and the transition process for providers.
- Addressed questions about daily versus hourly billing, the inclusion of remote services, and the process for providers who may not fit into the new service code categories.
- Discussed the challenges with processing new vendor applications due to the provider directory issues.

Priscilla Gomez:

- Presented an update on the provider directory, including the timeline, steps for providers to complete, and the eligibility for Quality Incentive Payments based on different provider groups.
- Addressed questions from participants about missing information on the provider directory lists and the process for new vendors.

Action Item I: Membership Vote

Geneva Carlos-Valentino introduced three potential new who were waiting to be voted in as new committee members. She mentioned they were short one person to reach quorum, so they would need to push the approval of the new members to the next meeting if they could not get the required attendance. The vote will be held at the January 10, 2025, quorum permitting.

Regional Center Board Report—Geneva Carlos-Valentino

Geneva reported that the RCEB Board met on November 25, 2024, and discussed:

- **Audit Report:** The draft audit report for fiscal year 2023-2024 had an unmodified opinion, indicating no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. - Minor changes were made to the report, including corrections to funding limits and cash flow statement disclosures. - The board approved the audit report.
- **Conservatorship Policy:** The board discussed the conservatorship policy required by DDS, including the potential for conflict of interest and the need for independent review. - The board initially approved the conservatorship policy, but Lisa Kleinbub later clarified that it did not actually pass, and they are going back to DDS for further clarification.
- **Budget and Finance:** The board reviewed purchase, service, expenditure, and caseload ratio reports. - They discussed the impact of new hires on caseload ratios and the onboarding timeline. - A contract extension for La Familia Counseling Services, a delegate case management agency, was approved with two abstentions.
- **Strategic Plan Update:** The board discussed scheduling a more thorough review of the strategic plan in the near future during a closed session.
- **Executive Director Search:** The board president, Frank Pare, provided an update on the executive director search, including the progress made so far and the goal of selecting a final candidate by the end of the year.
- **Board Member Appreciation:** The board acknowledged the contributions of outgoing members Linda Stevens and Dr. Steve Whitcomb.
- **Supports and Services Committee Update:** The committee updated the board on the standardized IPP process and the grand opening of a housing project. - They also discussed the importance of timely payments to service providers.
- **Public Comments:**
 - FUFU New Service Center in Stockton: concerns about the lack of similar services in the East Bay.
 - Mason Tillman Report and Evaluation Process: Concerns were expressed about potential interference in the evaluation process.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities Report—Sheraden Nicholau

Sheraden reported on several items for the State Council RAC:

- **Sponsorships:** The State Council continues to offer sponsorships up to \$2,500 for events, conferences, or classes. The application process requires 90 days' advance notice. - These sponsorships are separate from the annual grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000.
- **Self-Determination Orientations:** The State Council is offering self-determination statewide orientations in English, Spanish, and Armenian this month and in January.
- **Storytellers Blog:** The State Council's storytellers blog is accepting new submissions from people served. - The State Council team is available to help individuals without staff support to submit their stories.
- **"There Should Be a Law" Contest:** The winning bill idea from the contest is to designate people with IDD in California as an exceptional, medically underserved population. - This designation could expand physician and dental training, funding for screenings, scholarship/loan repayment incentives, and prioritize research and Community Health Center grants.
- **Bay Area People First Chapter:** The Bay Area People First Chapter is holding an annual planning meeting on December 18th, welcoming input from self-advocates across the Bay Area.
- **Medically Underserved Population Designation:** The recent NIH classification of people with disabilities as a medically underserved population was an important step, enabling more potential funding sources and research.

Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Council – Siobhan Burgess

- **Coordinator Search:** The council is looking for its next Developmental Disabilities Council Coordinator and shared the job description.
- **Upcoming Meetings:**
 - The council had a meeting on Wednesday with a presentation on workplace violence prevention.
 - The next meeting will be on January 8th, featuring a panel presentation on grief and loss in the IDD community. The county will be providing food for in-person attendees.
- **Community Events and Resources:**
 - The Friends of Children with Special Needs will be hosting their 11th annual Special Needs Talent Showcase.
 - The Mental Health Services Act in Alameda County will be hosting a community input survey.

- The Southern Alameda County Dental Society will be hosting a "Give Special Kids a Smile" event, providing free dental and optometry services.
- Cal State East Bay and CDRR are hosting an online course on supported decision-making for professionals.
- La Familia will be hosting a virtual orientation, a support group, and an end-of-year celebration.

Contra Costa County Developmental Disabilities Council – Vi Ibarra

- Upcoming Meeting: The council's next meeting will be on January 22nd at the Las Trampas campus in Lafayette. The meetings have been shifting towards more in-person attendance.
- Priorities for the Year:
 - The council has identified transportation and health equity as its two priorities for the current year.
 - The transportation work group is focusing on public transportation resources and making public comments at relevant meetings.
 - The health equity work group is in the process of shaping their work for the coming year.
- Transition Conference:
 - The council is currently working on a by-county effort for a transition conference to be held in Contra Costa in the spring, with DVC as the potential site.
 - This is an expansion of the former Alameda County transition fair.

East Bay Legislative Coalition Report – Will Sanford

Will Sanford provided the legislative update, covering the following key legislative activities and opportunities for provider engagement in the coming months:

- Challenges with DDS Directives: He noted that the department is struggling to understand that their directives cannot supersede existing laws, using the employment directive as an example where DDS tried to make changes that would require legislative action.
- Upcoming Legislative Calendar:
 - January 2 – EBLC's typical first Wednesday meeting will be moved to January 2 due to the New Year's holiday.
 - January 10 - Release of the governor's budget projection for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.
 - January 15 – EBLC will hold a quick review of the budget will be held at 10am.
 - January 31 – The EBLC legislative town hall meeting will be held in-person from 10-11:30am at the RCEB San Leandro office.
- Legislative Town Hall Focus: The town hall will focus on educating the next round of local legislators and their staff on the impact of services, particularly early intervention and employment supports. They are looking for participant and family testimonials to share.
- Upcoming Budget Process: There will be a series of budget hearings in February, March, and April as part of the broader budget process. Will encouraged providers to participate and share the impact of rate reform and other issues.

Service Provider Equity Subcommittee Report – Marcie Hodge

No report.

Day Providers Subcommittee Report – Mike Pereira

Mike mentioned the day services provider Zoom meetings every Friday at 11am and the troubleshooting sessions on Wednesdays at 2 PM. He noted a growing sentiment among some day program providers that the new service codes (531, 532, 533) may not align well with their current service codes.

- Mike asked about the process for the special circumstances directive and the waiver process for providers who may not fit the new service code categories.
- Steve Robinson acknowledged that most providers should be able to find a match with the new service codes, but some may need to submit exemption forms. He mentioned that the deadline for submitting exemption forms has been extended to the end of March, providing more time for discussions and adjustments.
- Steve stated that the regional center will be reaching out to each day program provider to confirm the appropriate service code they should transition to.

HireAble Subcommittee Report – Donna Feingold

Donna reported to attendees:

- HireAble Training: HireAble will be offering a free training for the community, including providers, family members, and rep payees, on benefits adjustments at the beginning of the year.
 - Donna provided the registration details for this training in the chat.
- HireAble Subscription Services: Donna mentioned the HireAble subscription services for members are doing really well.
 - They had their first job developers forum yesterday, which was great for bringing together individuals in these unique and challenging jobs to develop a network.
 - Donna also mentioned they had a job club for job seekers and will continue to offer trainings.
 - Donna stated she will do outreach to the general community about the HireAble subscription services after the holidays.
- Toolworks HCBS Team:
 - Wearing her "other hat" with the Toolworks HCBS team, Donna thanked the day program providers who allowed them to come in and do trainings for their participants.
 - Donna said the support specialists and self-advocates are gaining a lot from this work experience, and they will be able to continue the trainings through March 31, 2025.
 - Donna also mentioned they are in the process of developing new HCBS-specific trainings for providers, as well as continuing trainings for family members.

PVAC Membership Report – Geneva Carlos-Valentino

- Geneva stated PVAC currently has open positions in the categories of transportation, children/infant services, and support services that need to be filled.
- As stated earlier, three new members will be voted on in the next meeting scheduled for January 10th, quorum permitting.

Public Comment

None made.

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 am.

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