

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee  
Regional Center of the East Bay  
Meeting Minutes Friday, October 11, 2024**

**Call to Order:**

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

**Minutes Approval and Discussion:**

Due to the lack of quorum, the approval of September 2024 PVAC minutes was postponed until a quorum could be achieved, then was deferred to the next meeting.

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

- Lisa highlighted AB 1147, the Disability Transparency and Accountability Act, which Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed. This legislation subjects regional centers to the Public Records Act starting January 2026, introducing new transparency requirements.
  - Under AB 1147, the regional centers will be required to release more detailed data on services and demographics. This could include sensitive information, although personal identifiers must be redacted. Lisa noted that regional centers will need to collectively work on these requirements, as the rules around data privacy and what specific data is considered legal to share are complex. Redaction processes will need to protect individuals' identities, adding substantial operational and financial burdens.
  - Lisa noted that unions commonly use public records requests to obtain data on salaries, budget allocations, and fund usage, hinting that such requests might increase following AB 1147's enactment.
- DDS is developing a standardized Individual Program Plan (IPP) form that regional centers will begin implementing soon. This includes changes to the IPP signature page, with training sessions scheduled for case managers to ensure proper implementation.
- DDS is also working to roll out standardized policies for respite care and intake and assessment processes by January 2025. While the timeline is ambitious, these standardizations aim to create consistency across regional centers, addressing feedback from service providers and advocates who desire uniformity in service delivery.
- Lisa acknowledged the provider community's frustrations regarding delays in communications from DDS on the Provider Portal, specifically for providers transitioning between different phases of the portal requirements.
  - The original deadline for completing phase two of the portal was set for November 8, with an interim deadline of October 21 for phase one validations. However, due to ongoing delays and technical issues, there is a likelihood that DDS will extend these deadlines.
  - Concerns were raised about the potential for these delays to impact the timely implementation of the new rate reforms scheduled for January 2025. Lisa noted that while some rate adjustments are expected to be retroactive, particularly those related to service codes, the validation of provider portal data is crucial for providers to access full rate increases.
  - Lisa urged providers to verify their information in the DDS provider directory as soon as they receive email prompts to avoid delays or disruptions in funding and service validation.
- Lisa mentioned that DDS introduced a new "Career Pathways" program, which will initially focus on transitioning individuals from sheltered workshops or minimum wage employment to community-based employment. The program is in a pilot phase, but if successful, it could expand to a broader audience.
- There was also discussion about the need to adjust reimbursement rates to align with local minimum wage changes and federal mileage reimbursement standards. DDS has been holding webinars to update providers on these changes, but there have been inconsistencies in information, especially regarding rate adjustments retroactive to July 2024.
- Lisa informed attendees about the ongoing efforts under California's Master Plan for Aging, which is aimed at improving service coordination between DDS, regional centers, and other state agencies. This plan includes exploring how IHSS (In-Home Supportive Services) and Medi-Cal Waiver programs could better support regional centers and reduce administrative challenges for clients accessing services as generic resources.
- DDS and regional centers plan to offer community-facing trainings for families, service providers, and people served by these programs to educate them on the new IPP form, respite policies, and intake procedures. These trainings will focus on helping the community understand the new standards and processes being implemented.

### **Action Item I: Membership Vote**

Due to the absence of a quorum, the committee could not conduct the membership vote. This item was deferred.

### **PRESENTATION: HireAble Subscription Service**

- Donna Feingold presented HireAble, a service providing employment resources and training to agencies that support individuals with disabilities. The service offers various benefits, including job developer forums, job clubs, and individualized training.
- Donna explained subscription options based on organization budget, highlighting scheduled training events and job clubs featuring employer speakers. The goal is to foster community among job developers and create employment opportunities.
- Positive feedback came from providers who shared their experience and benefits of HireAble's services. Several members, including Craig Rose of Vistability, and Jamie Renton, of the Pleasanton School District, discussed the value of the service for employment-focused staff.

### **Regional Center Staff Reports – Mike Minton for Steve Robinson**

- Mike Minton highlighted a significant milestone in achieving compliance with HCBS standards across all required programs. This accomplishment reflects the center's dedication to aligning its programs with person-centered, community-integrated service models, which ensure that services support independence and inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Mike also expressed appreciation for the community's and providers' collaboration in reaching this goal, acknowledging the extensive work and dedication involved. While compliance with HCBS standards is ongoing, achieving this foundational requirement was considered a critical step forward.
- RCEB has partnered with Toolworks HCBS and Donna Feingold to initiate peer-to-peer training sessions for providers to support continued HCBS compliance and enhance service quality. These sessions provide a platform for providers to share best practices and address any challenges they encounter in maintaining compliance standards.
- Mike's update concluded with a heartfelt acknowledgment of the community's efforts, underscoring that such achievements require ongoing collaboration. Mike thanked both the service providers and the community members for their role in helping the regional center meet its compliance and service delivery goals.

### **Regional Center Board Report—Geneva Carlos-Valentino for Dan Hogue**

Geneva reported on key developments discussed during the board meeting held on September 23, 2024.

- Lisa Kleinbub introduced a new referral system for Independent Living Services (ILS) and Supported Living Services (SLS) aimed at improving provider matching for individuals based on their unique needs. A consultant is overseeing the initial setup, and RCEB staff will manage ongoing updates and compliance. This system is intended to streamline referrals and enhance service delivery quality for clients requiring specialized support.
- The Budget and Finance Committee presented a financial report outlining budget allocations for fiscal year 2024-2025. This year's budget reflects an increase in funding compared to previous years, with an analysis of year-to-date expenditures for Purchase of Services (POS) and a review of the remaining budget for the fiscal year. Additionally, there was a discussion on recent cash advances and investments in short-term treasury bills to maintain a stable cash flow, which is essential for sustaining operations and addressing budgetary demands.
- The board reviewed ongoing audit processes to ensure accurate reporting and compliance with state standards. The audit aims to identify and correct any errors, ensuring the center's operations are transparent and financially accountable. This initiative demonstrates a proactive approach to maintaining financial integrity and upholding trust with the community and state.
- The board discussed and approved multiple contracts, particularly focused on transportation services and Supported Living Services (SLS). Transportation has been a recurring issue, with some providers previously handling transportation needs internally. The newly approved contracts aim to alleviate this burden by ensuring accessible, quality transportation options for clients.
- In an effort to uphold high service standards, certain contracts include quality incentives. For example, one contract was issued with a one-year term rather than the standard three years, allowing RCEB to evaluate service

quality more frequently. If providers meet the expected standards, their contracts may be extended, thereby reinforcing accountability and quality in service delivery.

- The board continued to refine its Strategic Plan, focusing on revisiting the organization's Mission and Values. Staff input is being gathered through ongoing surveys, ensuring that the strategic direction aligns with both employee perspectives and the community's evolving needs.
- Additionally, the board discussed the creation of a new community outreach specialist role to improve partnerships and evaluate the effectiveness of RCEB's community engagement materials. This role is part of a broader initiative to increase RCEB's presence and support in the community, assessing whether outreach efforts are meeting informational and engagement goals.
- The board has hired the Lawrence Advisory Group to lead the search and aims to identify a candidate by the end of 2024. This timeline is driven by a need to ensure a seamless transition in leadership before the current director steps down. The search committee is actively seeking community feedback to inform the selection process, and the board will make the final decision based on a slate of candidates presented by the advisory group.
- The Equity Committee raised concerns regarding transparency and fairness in RCEB's complaint resolution process. Public comments emphasized the need for clearer communication and improvements in how complaints are handled. The board acknowledged these concerns, recognizing the importance of having a transparent, accessible system for addressing grievances and ensuring equitable treatment in resolving issues.

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

- **Monthly Orientation Session:** SCDD will hold a monthly orientation for new members and community attendees to provide an overview of SCDD's services, mission, and resources. This session aims to familiarize attendees with SCDD's advocacy work and service offerings.
- **Social and Recreational Services Training** (October 17): SCDD will conduct a training session to guide families and individuals on how to request social and recreational services through their regional centers. This training addresses a common area of need for those seeking community involvement and recreational activities for individuals with disabilities.
- **Lanternman Act Presentation** (October 22): This presentation will educate attendees about the Lanternman Act, a key piece of legislation guaranteeing rights and services to Californians with developmental disabilities. The session will cover the history, purpose, and application of the Act, providing valuable context for families and advocates.
- **Alternatives to Conservatorship Workshop** (October 24): In response to growing interest in self-determination and autonomy, SCDD will host a workshop exploring alternatives to conservatorship. This session is designed for families and caregivers looking to understand less restrictive options for supporting decision-making and independence for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Starting in **November**, SCDD will launch an **Inclusion Support Group** for young individuals with disabilities and their siblings. This group is intended to foster a supportive environment where youth can connect, share experiences, and engage in discussions around inclusivity and empowerment. This initiative reflects SCDD's commitment to community-building and providing resources that support young people in the developmental disabilities community.
- Sheridan provided links and contact information for SCDD's resources and upcoming events in the meeting chat, ensuring that attendees could easily access further information and participate. This approach reflects SCDD's goal of making resources readily available and ensuring accessibility for all community members.

#### **Alameda County Developmental Disabilities Council – Siobhan Burgos for Ben Chen**

- The Alameda County DD Council had recently held its October board meeting, which included a presentation by Sarah Lemon from the League of Women Voters on upcoming ballot initiatives. This presentation served as a reminder for the community to register and prepare to vote by the November 5 election.
- An important **listening session** on the **Master Plan for Developmental Disabilities** is scheduled for November 13, from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM. This session, which will be held in a hybrid format (in-person and via Zoom), offers community members an opportunity to provide feedback on the state's developmental disabilities master plan. This is expected to be a valuable forum for learning about ongoing initiatives and contributing ideas and concerns.
- Alameda County's **Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)** program is conducting a community-wide survey to gather feedback that will inform future program developments. This survey, which takes approximately 10 minutes to complete, seeks to understand the community's mental health needs and identify service improvement areas.
- The next ACDDC Board meeting is scheduled for 11/13/2024 at 9:30 AM, hybrid.

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

- Contra Costa County is offering a **flu vaccine clinic** specifically designed for individuals who need additional support. This includes provisions for clients who may require extra time or unique accommodations, such as in-car vaccinations. The clinic is part of an ongoing annual effort and has dates available through mid-December. The council provided a flyer with detailed information in the meeting chat.
- The “one-stop-shop” format of the clinic allows not only clients but also accompanying family members and staff to receive their flu vaccines, making it a convenient option for families and caregivers.
- At its last meeting, the Contra Costa County DD Council decided to form two **working groups** to address specific challenges within the community: **health equity** and **transportation**. These groups aim to explore resources and potential solutions in these critical areas, and the council anticipates sharing progress and findings over the coming months.
- The next CCCDDC meeting is scheduled for 11/20/2024 at 10 AM, hybrid.

### East Bay Legislative Coalition Report – Will Sanford

- Will Sanford discussed a recent series of reverse legislative town hall meetings, which took place in late September and early October. Eight legislative offices participated, and these sessions allowed disability advocates and regional center representatives to engage with legislative aides on various concerns directly. Key topics included employment opportunities, workforce development, housing, and service access. Feedback from legislative aides was positive, with engaging questions that the committee plans to address in future meetings.
- Two candidate forums were scheduled on the same day as the meeting, with one session in San Leandro for Senate District 9 and a second session later in Concord for Assembly District 15. These forums allowed candidates to share their perspectives on issues related to the disability community, and they included attendance from candidates like Beckles and Lido. Despite some scheduling conflicts, Sanford expressed gratitude to RCEB for offering their space for these events.
- The next EBLC meeting was set for November 6, the day after the general election. This meeting would assess post-election shifts in legislative dynamics and prepare for a larger legislative town hall planned for January 2025, which is expected to gather community feedback on legislative priorities for the new year.
- Will briefly mentioned the release of a spending plan by the Legislative Analyst’s Office, highlighting the expansion of state funding to nearly \$16 billion for disability services across California. This includes facility funds, service rate reforms, and specific workforce initiatives. A focus on core staffing formulas was emphasized to ensure that regional center budgets reflect current operational costs rather than outdated metrics from previous decades.

### Service Provider Equity Subcommittee Report – Marcie Hodge

Marcie Hodge, temporarily facilitating the **Service Provider Equity Subcommittee**, provided an update on the group’s recent initiatives. Marcie invited attendees to join monthly subcommittee meetings held on the fourth Friday of each month and provided her contact information for those interested. A primary focus of recent meetings was the **Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Ombudsman Service**, aimed at creating a dedicated role to help address unresolved client complaints and provide advocacy.

Additionally, the subcommittee discussed enhancing the **referral system** to better support clients facing service challenges, such as disputes over service codes and payment delays. Marcie emphasized the goal of moving RCEB toward a more **data-driven approach** in identifying and addressing service disparities. The subcommittee has developed a list of action items, which Marcie referred to as a “laundry list” of priorities for advancing equity and addressing community-specific challenges within RCEB.

### Day Providers Subcommittee Report – Mike Pereira

Mike Pereira provided an update from the **Day Program Subcommittee**, focusing on weekly troubleshooting sessions designed to support day program providers. The subcommittee holds two sessions each week: a Wednesday meeting at 2 PM for general troubleshooting and a Friday session to discuss ongoing issues and updates within the day program sector. These meetings create a forum for providers to share their challenges, gain peer support, and collaboratively seek solutions.

A primary concern discussed in these sessions has been **technical issues with the Provider Portal** and the implementation of rate changes. Providers have faced difficulties with portal updates and data entry requirements, which are essential for compliance and funding. Mike encouraged all providers to stay connected, attend the weekly meetings, and join the subcommittee's listserv to remain informed about regulatory changes and troubleshooting resources.

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

Donna Feingold reported an upcoming **CalABLE presentation** scheduled for October 23 at 3:00 PM. This no-cost session will inform attendees about the ABLE Act, which allows individuals on SSI to save more than the usual \$2,000 limit without impacting their benefits. Representatives from CalABLE, managed by the California Department of Treasury, will cover how to open and manage CalABLE accounts, a crucial resource for financial independence among individuals with disabilities.

Donna also recognized October as **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**, underscoring HireAble's commitment to increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Before the year's end, HireAble will host another **benefits training session** to address SSI and SSDI concerns, especially recent changes allowing individuals who live with family or receive food assistance to maintain higher SSI benefits. These efforts align with HireAble's mission to remove employment barriers and support financial stability for job seekers with disabilities.

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

Jamie highlighted a challenge with meeting the required **quorum** for membership voting during the October meeting. With six members present but needing eight, the quorum requirement was not met, postponing the voting to the next meeting. Jamie noted that achieving a quorum is essential, especially as three individuals await membership confirmation.

To prevent a similar issue, Jamie proposed sending reminder emails to encourage attendance at the next meeting, which will be held on 11/08/2024, the Friday before Veterans Day—a potential long weekend that could affect attendance. Jamie emphasized the importance of ensuring that these membership votes can proceed without further delays.

#### **Public Comment**

Attendees were encouraged to participate in **Candidate Forums** and other community events to show support and engage with policymakers. An announcement was also made for an upcoming **listening session on November 13** hosted by the DD Council. This session, part of the state's Master Plan for Aging and Disabilities initiative, will offer a platform for community feedback, though details on specific topics were not fully confirmed.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:44 AM.

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