

Purchase of Service Disparity Report for Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Review of Public Meetings

And Meeting Minutes

This year Valley Mountain Regional Center conducted three different public meetings specifically addressing the Purchase of Service Disparity Report for the Fiscal Year 2016-2017. The meetings were held on March 22, 2018 in Stanislaus County; March 23 in San Joaquin and Calaveras County. There were a total of 58 people who attended the meetings, 32 for San Joaquin County, 9 for Calaveras County and 17 for Stanislaus County. There were 3 people who attended all three meetings, 1 interpreter and 1 VMRC staff attended 2 of the 3 meeting. The Office of Clients Rights had 2 individuals who each attended all 3 meetings. Participants were made up of 21 VMRC staff, 9 family members, 3 State Council of Developmental Disabilities, 1 Office of Clients Rights, 1 Family Resource Network, 1 Department Developmental Services, 1 DRC, 1 Spanish Translator, 10 Individuals with developmental disabilities, and 3 staff from Person Centered Services. Specific breakdowns of attendance is indicated with the meeting minutes. There was also a diversity among the individuals who attended the meetings. There was a total of 18 people who classified themselves as Caucasian, 22 Hispanic, 3 Multi-Cultural, 3 Pacific Islander, 5 Black American, 1 Japanese, 1 Cambodian and 5 who declined to state. Specific breakdowns for each meeting is indicated within the meeting minutes. The use of a Spanish translator was offered and utilized by 1 individual at the San Joaquin County meeting. No one else indicated the desire to use a translator and all the discussion at the meeting took place in English and Spanish.

Data from Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Purchase of Services was discussed with all participants and a Power Point Presentation was distributed. The Power Point is included with the submission of this report. This data included information on purchase of services for consumers in the Early Start program (ages 0-3), Active Status (ages 3-22) and Active Status (ages 22 and over) that included different ethnicity, diagnosis, language and residential type. This data also included information regarding consumers with no purchase of services in the Early Start program (ages 0-3), Active Status (ages 3-22) and Active Status (ages 22 and over) that included different ethnicity, diagnosis, language and residential type.

At all three meetings there was some consistent discussion of the information contained in the reports. A lengthy conversation ensued about why people thought that some of these disparities may exist and what ideas people may have to reduce disparities.

Some of the ideas as to why these disparities may exist include:

- The data is not able to be sorted by region to account for more rural and urban locations
- The data on reports may not accurately reflect the correct ethnicity code of individuals
- Some families may not trust the “system” and not want to become involved
- Family’s cultural preference to not seek assistance from an outside agency
- Some families decline services
- There may be a lack of information
- Inconsistency in Regional Center Service Coordination staff
- Technology may not be user friendly for some
- Seasonal workers who come and go throughout the valley during the year

There was also discussion about what to do regarding the disparities so that they are no longer issues:

- The current training that Regional Center Board Members and Staff are receiving. Some of this such as cultural sensitivity and Person-Centered Thinking
- Training for Regional Center staff to ensure ethnicity codes are accurately documented
- Provide outreach in targeted areas that may appear to be underserved
- Provide parent training at times that works for families (in the evenings) and bring trainings to their communities for easy access.
- Provide training to community organizations regarding services
- Translation of documents for families and staff
- Translate important documents into languages of individuals who may appear to be underserved
- Review the website to ensure it is user friendly

During the conversation regarding the actual purchase of service disparity report there was further discussion about different community organizations the consumer advocates have met with and, ways that have been affecting their meeting with them. The individuals at the meeting expressed an easier method of finding out what services are being offered by the Regional Center. Families were sharing that detailed information is not being shared. Families appeared to be happy with the attempt VMRC is making to address disparities.

San Joaquin County Public Meeting

March 22, 2017 at 10:00 AM

VMRC Board Room

In attendance 10 VMRC Staff, 6 Consumer Advocacy Group Members, 10 Parent and 1 Translator, 10 Individual with Developmental Disabilities. The cultural make-up of the group was 7 Caucasian, 10 Hispanic, 3 Pacific Islander, 1 Cambodian, 1 Native American, 4 Black/African American, 2 Multi Cultural and 6 who declined to state. During this meeting the Spanish Translator was utilized for 5 individual. The discussion at the meeting took place in English.

Carlos Hernandez Jr, Cultural Specialist, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Carlos Hernandez Jr, presented the power point presentation regarding the Expenditure Data for Fiscal Year 2016-2017.

Carlos Hernandez went over the "who we are" slide and explained what VMRC is doing to address disparities. Carlos Hernandez shared about his personal family experiences in Bakersfield Ca. Ethnicity of the consumer and service Coordinators that we serve where shared with the public. It was informed that the highest Hispanic populous that VMRC serves is San Joaquin County.

There was discussion with staff and families indicating that the numbers do not explain culture or family believes. It was explained that the total annual expenditure by ethnicity is most utilized by white, then Hispanic and Asians. Families expressed that a major issue is are the following

- Lack of communication
- the ratio of service coordinator to staff ratio and not enough outreach
- Not enough information on Social Media
- Families may not really accept the services because culturally it may not be as accepted and lack of understanding

Audience discussed that Cultures other than Caucasian families appear much more family oriented and work hard to keep families at home and will not consider placing family members in out of home placement do to their Culture of Religious backgrounds. It was suggested that a lot of barriers that have been identified through studies have been addressed such as Childcare, transportation, language. In addition Audience shared that these barriers are what are still causing a lot of the issues in our community and keeping a connection within the families and case workers being made. The audience was informed that DDS is researching the barriers by sending people to homes to understand the barriers better and provide numbers to go with this Data. Barriers are important to understand and as staff we need to help build that bridge of understanding and creating a partnership with our families. Language still continues to be a barrier. It was explained that VMRC is addressing language by hiring bilingual and converting our documents in the languages appropriate for the families.

It was discussed that some SC's are very good at giving information and others may not be as thorough at providing information. It was mentioned that Respite may not be accepted by some families do their culture so VMRC would have to start looking of offering other types of services. Clients rights advocate indicated that we have increased the utilization rate of services provided. Carlos Hernandez informed the audience and informed them that VMRC has started the promotora and self-sustaining groups that will help to mentor other families. VMRC attended over 40 Community events this past year. State

council Dena Hernandez informed the audience that they are collecting the data for DDS for the national core indicators. DDS and state council is working on a list of services of RC that will be posted soon.

Group started discussion on Ethnicity of the people served by VMRC and the average cost of services. The data showed that the Hispanic group is one of the lowest cost of services but yet they are one of the highest population served. The question posed to the audience was what can we do to help bring these people in and bring them services? A few suggestions made were the following:

-Benefits of Promotoras – Karym Sanchez Organizer for Hope Esperanza introduced himself and stated that the Promotora is Creating groups of parent leaders that will have followers that will help lead their community. In addition, the group is creating space to bring workshops and training to the families and now have structured meeting to help plan trainings. Promotora has partnered with VMRC and are working on ways to deliver a united voice.

There was discussion about the promotora project that will be getting started to help bridge that gap between the family and the family/consumer. Further discussion revolved around how services are offered to families. There was thought about if the only services being offered to a family are not what they actually want then they may feel it is useful to have any VMRC services. Conversation ensued about how decisions are made about the services people are offered. It was discussed that there needs to be better communication so that the understanding of why a service is an is not offered due to regulations are more clear and not that VMRC is just saying “no” to say “no”. This may help families better understand discussions that are made. There was concern addressed that the translators may not always very accurate in how they translate and communicate to the family. There is some concern with inconsistent messages from service coordination and maybe more training can be provided to help support a more consistent message.

In addition, the group Strong Latino Voice were in attendance. Elizabeth talked about how they feel they are a strong group that truly understands the parents that are in need. Families stated that the issue is really beyond ethnicity because other ethnics groups have the same issues with lack of information. Strong Latino Voice stated that they are here to help everyone and collaborate and intergrate with the families of Valley Mountain regional Center.

Expenditure from 3-21 and 0-2 have increased in Hispanics a growth of 25% gain over the past year. The POS disparity money that has been gained is that the RC has lot more awareness of staff and it is starting to go that extra mile for families. The agency is doing a better job of presenting services that people are available to receive. Families made suggestions such as

- VMRC being more transparent
- Spending more time providing detailed resources
- More Communication with parents
- Parent suggested the do not like feeling out surveys since they don't know where the information goes

The Cultural Specialist Carlos Hernandez informed the public that VMRC is addressing disparities in several was such as:

- Providing Cultural Competency training to Staff and vendors & Families by Dr Barbara Stroud
- Person Centered Training which is currently being presented to Staff and vendors by Michael Smull.

-Promotora Project

It was explained what is special about the promotor project and how it is helping families build alliances with each other. Due to the promotora program families in the community have start helping each other with information. In addition, Parents have started building organized self-sufficient groups.

-The public was also informed that The Regional Centered has begun the Translation of Documents in several languages.

-Cultural Event –It was explained the purpose of the cultural event. Slides of the event were presented to families and staff. It was explained that for 2017-2018 the Cultural event would be in Stanislaus County.

-Community Outreach- VMRC has been to over 40 events for this reporting year. It was shared that we would like more staff and more families to participate. We want to help promote Self advocacy

Final Suggestions by the public:

-Outline of Services

-Latina Parent stated – She can see the Changes and can feel the love and she thanked VMRC for their efforts.

Cultural Specialist thanked everyone for attending.

Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties Public Meeting

March 29, 2017 1:30

San Andreas Central Library San Andreas

In attendance were 3 VMRC Staff, 2 Consumer Advocacy Group Members and 4 members of the Maximum power CBO from L.A. The cultural make-up of the group consisted of 5 hispanics, 1 Pacific Islander, 1 Hispanic, 3 Caucasians The discussion at the meeting took place in English.

Carlos Hernandez , Cultural Specialist, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introduction of all individuals present at the meeting were also made.

Presentation did not have to be given since we did not have new attendees. Instead, the group talked among each other and came up with ideas.

- It was discussed that childcare provision during public meetings would be helpful to families
- Development of a Disparity Task force including DRC, FRN, SAC-6, parents, VMRC
- In the future, it would be best to schedule San Andreas public meeting in the morning due to the foothill culture
- During the year, VMRC should attempt to take meetings/trainings to families
- Ideas re: Consumers being made eligible
 - One page handout with regional center information
 - Quarterly Orientations sessions for those new to the regional center (Services is being developed-“Welcome Clinic” Staff, Parent, SAC 6 will participate
- Discussed cultural event being planned in Modesto Ca – SCDD and OCRA want to be included in planning
- Maximum potential parents met with Catherine Blakemore (DRC), Katie Hornberger (DRC), Nancy Bargeman (DDS) to inform of their plans to work with 3 regional centers as integratoras (see flyer)
 - 25 families in foothill counties have been identified
 - Knowledge of hierarchy in order to talk to supervisors and directors
 - Interested in holding “Coffee with the Boss”
 - Group can provide the self-Determination trainings for pre-enrollment, if needed
- According to Christine Hager
 - Black, Hispanic, White – No POS’s on the rise
 - VMRC has the highest POS % for white and black

The group is Interested in planning an all-day event in our area – Fiesta Educativa

Discussed ICE raids in Stanislaus County area targeting Spanish and Southeast Asians

Discussion re: The potential for cultural – Based vendors

Cultural Specialist thanked everyone for attending meeting.

Stanislaus County Public Meeting

March 22, 2018 2:00 PM

VMRC Modesto Office

In attendance were 13 VMRC Staff, 2 Consumer Advocacy Group Members. The cultural make-up of the group consisted of 6 Caucasian, 5 Hispanic, 2 Black American, 1 Japanese, 1 Pacific Islander. During this meeting the Spanish Translator was present however no one utilized the services. The discussion at the meeting took place in English.

Carlos Hernandez, Cultural Specialist, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introduction of all individuals present at the meeting were also made.

Carlos Hernandez thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Mr. Hernandez gave a brief explanation on who we are? And an overview of the information in the slide. He then presented the power point presentation regarding the Expenditure Data for Fiscal Year 2016-2017. The slide for VMRC SC Staff has been updated in the current Power Point Presentation. Discussion were welcomed throughout the meeting.

Mr. Hernandez shared that our findings in the community show that services are being provided but it seems that do to cultural backgrounds some services are not being taken. He then asked a few of the people present what they thought might be a few things? The following suggestions were made:

- Fear (Due to some being undocumented)
- Guilt
- Information lost in translation

Then looked at the ethnicity of the people VMRC Serves. The ethnicity of Persons Served by VMRC Showed we serve 5,176 Caucasian, 4,682 Hispanics, 1,543 unknown, 1156 African American, 1077 Asians. Mr. Hernandez then provided stats on the ethnicity of the Service Coordinators that are with VMRC in 2016-2017; 47.40% Caucasian, 25.50% Hispanics, 7% African American, 14.90%. The next topic was on the Average cost of services for persons by ethnicity across all ages. The stats showed that the Average cost of services for Hispanics, Asians are among the lowest out of the rest of the ethnicities.

The next slide was on Ethnicity of Persons served by VMRC living at home with family. The statistics showed that Asian and Hispanic's are among the highest living at home with family.

A discussion opened up and a few in the public made suggestions such as some of the reasons ethnicity of persons served by VMC still living at home with family are:

- Cultural
- Families are scared to release their loved ones out in to the real world

-Lack of information regarding Independent living or care facilities

It was suggested that we at the Regional Center need to understand that Hispanics want their children to live at home until they are adults or even further. There needs to be some understanding on the state level that not everyone want to hav their children or adults to leave the home. There has be to be some understanding of that

The next topic was Persons served by primary language. Statistics show that the Language English is highest and then Spanish. A staff of VMRC brought up the topic of a stipend for those that are bilingual. Staff explained that the need for a language stipend for staff will create a better communication with consumers and families. Having people speak the same language will help the families communicate better faster and more efficiently.

ABX 2-1 Funding

Review of the money that was approved for the funding.

There was a review of how that funding and how it was spent. There was a review of the promotora project. It is a family to family peer mentoring and train them. They will teach how to navigate the RC system. There is a need to have families express what they want and need in an environment that they are comfortable. Sensitivity training for translator might help with the translator to help better develop relationships and make better translation. It is most important to help families understand that they know their children best and they are the best to help advocate for their child. Helping by giving workshops in aras that people feel comfortable. He help establish trust and be able to service them better. The idea of helping to fund for some different types of extracurricular activities like special Olympics. Look at adding the Self Determination form in Spanish as well.

There was a review of the Cultural Connections Event. This year the goal is to double the event iin Modesto. This year there are going to be some families who are going to help plan the event this year.

There has also been a lot of community outreaches over the past year. Over 40 events this past year.

Trying to address the disparity in any way that we can to help get the word out. Review of the Commitment that VMRC has to help with POS Disparity.

Are there any suggestions for getting the word out about VMRC?

Suggestions such as Service Coordinators being consistent with information

Starting an Orientation Training for people who are new to the RC and coming from EC to lanterman services.

It really comes down to SC because it is their job to educate the parents and that we need to make sure that the SC's are educated properly.

Having a toy chest in the room for toys for children to have something to do.

SCDD suggested to create a conference that is directly for people of other languages in their language for the families

Empower families to see what the VMRC board is and get involved.

There have been some family groups that have started and have fizzled out. Find out what they did and how we can help to get them going again and keep them sustained.

Learn more but putting down the pen and sitting and listening to families.

A form of the Website and social media link for SC's to give out at meetings.

It was mentioned that a monthly calendar of all events would be helpful and they could be distributed by Service Coordinators.

Possibilities of having a public computer for families to use at VMRC.

Families are provided with paper with information regarding services and we still get families that say they did not know that information (how can we fix the gap).

Parents do feel sometimes that they are not important or that it is not worth contacting the SC

Some families have a real concern about what is going to happen to them with their adult consumer and they may feel that some of the SC's don't really care about them as a family. Finding ways to get to families through person to person is a great way to help get to these families. Hold things in Modesto so that families can get to trainings locally and not have to go so far to get it.

Thank you for attending the meeting.