

**VALLEY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL CENTER
MINUTES OF CONSUMER SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, June 1, 2020**

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PRESENT: **Committee Members:** Linda Collins; Daime Hoornaert; Emily Grunder; Liz Herrera Knapp; Dena Pfeifer, Lori Smith her facilitator; Margaret Heinz; Mohamed Rashid; Crystal Enyeart
 VMRC: Brian Bennett; Christine Couch; Cindy Mix; Cindy Strawderman; Claire Lazaro; Doug Bonnet; Erin Goudreau; Nicole Weiss; Robert Fernandez; Tara Sisemore-Hester; Tony Anderson
 GUESTS: Carlos Hernandez, Translator; Dena Hernandez; Lisa Culley; Rachelle Munoz; Ryan; Valerie Segura; 209-XXX-1128; 209-XXX-5904

ABSENT: Robert Baslderama; Nadia Robinson;

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Dena Pfeifer, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m..

1.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Dena Hernandez, SCDD North Valley Hills Office shared the following:

- Thank you to VMRC for collaborating with SCDD & SAC6 on the two Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) drive throughs this week.
- I wanted to say great job on the 3 VMRC Transition Fairs that occurred last week. I was proud to be on the planning team and appreciated all the VMRC staff who pulled those together quickly!
- Next SCDD North Valley Hills Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 28, 2020 and will be a zoom meeting. Details to follow. All are welcome to participate.
- Self Advocacy Council 6 will be hosting SAC6 Zoom Chats during the month of June- info is posted on the SAC6 and SCDD, and VMRC Facebook page. The SAC6 leadership has worked hard to connect with their peers during this pandemic.

2.0 REVIEW OF MINUTES

M/S/C (Rashid/Herrera Knapp): Approve the minutes of May 4, 2020 as written.

3.0 SAC6 UPDATE

Crystal Enyeart shared the following:

- We are continuing to encouraging self-advocates to be safe and stay healthy.
- On May 1st we had our 2nd Zoom CHAT call with the topic being Health and Wellness. Advocates shared helpful activities that they are doing to stay healthy at home and

answered any questions others had. There were about 37 individuals on the Zoom call. Tony Anderson gave a brief update about what VMRC is doing during this time.

- On May 8th we had our 3rd Zoom CHAT with the topic being Coronavirus update: There were about 39 individuals on the Zoom call. Clair gave a corona virus update Tony gave an update on DDS and what Day Program openings may look like.
- On May 15th we hosted our 3rd Zoom Chat there were about 48 individuals on the Zoom call. This Zoom call topic was all about the US Census. Sac 6er's and Dena Hernandez from SCDD office gave lots of great information on Census, such as, why is it important to complete a census, how to fill out a census and what if I live in a care home.
- Our next Friday Zoom Chat is on May 22nd and that topic is on Scams & fraud and how we can prevent not being a victim.
- We published our Spring Chatter Letter 2020, which is posted on the VMRC website under Self Advocacy Council 6.
- Our next board meeting is scheduled for June, which will be via zoom.

4.0 **CLASP UPDATE**

Daime Hoornaert, North Valley Hills – SCDD shared the following:

- CLASP members approved the Provider Conference Budget of \$12,000. Conference is currently scheduled for November 2020. On going discussions of possible virtual conference, if mass gatherings continue to be postponed.
- Membership: CLASP currently has 86 members. 3 new members from last month.
- PPE-Vendors are thankful to SCDD and VMRC collaboration with distribution of PPE.
- CLASP members concerns:
 - The May 7, 2020 DDS directive where there is an expectation to use PPP funds 1st. Some interpreted the directive as required.
 - “Absence funds are provided based on the expectation that other sources of funding are not currently available to providers due to the impact of COVID-19. Accordingly, absence funds are provided as a funding source of last resort. Providers are expected to first seek and apply for all available COVID-19 relief funding before receiving absence funds through regional centers. An application for available “payroll” loan forgiveness or reimbursement program, including but not limited to, the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency Advance Program or any other similar federal or state programs for which the provider qualifies should be sought first. Claims submitted to the regional center for absence funds must be reduced by the amount the provider receives from other available sources, including the programs listed. Providers may not receive funding from absence payments and other

relief sources in excess of what the provider otherwise would have received by providing services to consumers absent the State of Emergency.”

- Members are concerned if the loan isn't forgiven, the debt they will incur. Not what the monthly payment could be, on top of possibly having a %1 interest rate. Repayments could be substantial, all depending on the size of the loan, which varies with vendors.
- Also, other funding sources stated in directive had closed to vendors when Directive was given out.
- Billing guidance for April was given after most vendors billed. Billing for May is unclear for many vendors. CLASP has requested that Debbie Beyette be invited to the next CLASP meeting for clarification.
- The state budget and the impact to provider rates if the Heroes act doesn't pass. Could trigger the 14-day mandatory closure dates and decrease service code rates across most service codes from 7% up to 14%. CLASP encouraging everyone to talk with their state and federal elected officials.
- Workers Comp: Employer Liability during COVID 19 Pandemic.
 - “On May 6, 2020, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Executive Order N-62-20 (EO N-62-20), which creates a rebuttable presumption, for purposes of receiving workers' compensation benefits, that employees who test positive for or are diagnosed with COVID-19 contracted the virus while at work. With this executive order, California becomes the latest state to expand workers' compensation benefits to employees during the pandemic.”
- Residential Service Provider Group: Ongoing issues:
 - RSP's are still looking for additional staff to cover shifts. Having difficulty with staff leaving and hiring new staff. Many people are content with receiving the additional \$600 unemployment or don't want to work the shifts offered.
 - Several providers may look into Creative Day services for their residents.
- Day Program Network:
 - Programs are collaborating with each other about re opening procedures. UCP San Joaquin invited CLASP Leadership, SCDD Regional Office 6, VMRC staff and others CLASP members to view their proposals for reopening. It was a great presentation and good questions were asked and answered.
 - Transportation-this will impact programs and dates for opening. Providers are unclear of Contracted Transportation plans for starting services again. Many individuals use contracted transportation to get to and from Programs and we haven't received info on their re-starting procedures. May inquire at an upcoming CLASP Meeting.

5.0 CONSUMER SERVICES PROJECTS/PRESENTATIONS

There were no projects or presentations at this time.

6.0 CLINICAL

Claire Lazaro advised that we have been working on “End of Life” training for our Service Coordinators. This was supposed to be sometime in March or April, but because of COVID will have to be pushed out to this fall. In the meantime we are presenting to you the “Thinking Ahead” booklet in English & Spanish that was attached with the meeting packet. Also there an “End of Life” subcommittee that has been meeting to come up with a document to include in the IPP as part of the IPP objective about end of life planning and advance care directive. We are actually presenting it to Consumer Services for review and hoping to get an approval to get this included with our IPP’s so that discussion for advance care planning and supported decision making can begin. If you need further information it is on page 55 & 56 of the meeting packet.

On pages 57 & 58 of the packet, Claire wanted to make the committee aware of the letter received from California Department of Health regarding facility visitation. During COVID-19 there are many hospitals that are not allowing visitors. However, individuals with developmental disabilities who need their support person with them are being denied access. On May 2nd, the California Department of Health issued a letter indicating that individuals with developmental should be allowed their support person with them so that the support person can participate in the health care of these individuals. This can be printed and shared. Claire has e-mailed this letter out to most of the hospitals in our catchment area.

Tara Sisemore Hester went over the intake numbers. For Modesto, the numbers dropped in March & April, but are coming back up for May. For Stockton, March & April went down dramatically, in May we are looking at about 2/3 of what we are normally receive. We are anticipating an increase in intake numbers, once pediatrician offices re-open. San Andreas had a dramatic drop for May. Tara had a phone call with DDS on Friday; this is a trend that is being seen at all Regional Centers within the State. They are looking at several avenues on focusing on child fine. Tara will have more information at our next meeting.

7.0 **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Brian Bennett shared that Resource Development was able to identify a service provider for our Children's Enhanced Behavior Support Home. We held 5 separate interview cycles. But we identified this provider on Friday. Their name is Merakey. They are currently working with ALTA California & San Diego Regional Centers. Their home office is based in Philadelphia, PA, but are starting to open EBSH homes for Adults & Children in California. We are happy to be working with them. We have updated our RFP section of our website to indicate that Merakey is our new Children's EBSH Service Provider.

This home was found and acquired over a year and a half ago, and is close to being completed and licensed. This is in North Stockton which is in Lodi Unified's area, so we have been in contact with Lodi Unified.

8.0 **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

8.1 **Alerts:** **Nicole Weiss** advised that there were 16 alerts for this last month. Most revolved around delivery of care. Which we look at right away and provide assistance as quickly as possible.

We have been following up on all of the COVID SIR's that we have received. We are also following up with care homes that had consumer's returning from a potentially exposure setting such as emergency rooms, psychiatric facility, or parental homes. Anytime they leave the care home and come back, Claire or Angela speak with them to make sure they understand the isolation protocols. QA follows up about a week later to see how they are doing. If there is an issue, it is usually because some of the consumers not wanting to follow or understand the protocol. We do a lot of brainstorming and problem solving with the providers to make it work better for everyone involved.

9.0 **CASE MANAGEMENT**

9.1 **Reports:** **Cindy Mix** went over the reports for the month. The caseload ration report was not included in the packet as it was just completed today. Our numbers look a bit better than last month. We are down to 1:88 again. Last month we were at 1:92. We have hired some new staff. We have increased our consumer population by about 100 as far as transfer in's, reactivations & new cases. That is one service coordinator/caseload. We have done a change in distribution of two caseloads from children's teams in Stockton. One went to Angie Share and one to Liz Diaz.

Christine Couch gave an update regarding Fair Hearings.

- Today we started preparing for hearings to be held over Microsoft Teams. OAH does not use Zoom. We put in a ticket with our IT department to download that app.
- The OAH, Office of Administrative Hearings, has informed us that all mediation and state level hearings scheduled for June will be in person meetings. We are coordinating all mediations and hearings in either the Modesto or Stockton offices, in large conference rooms, to accommodate social distancing.
- We have 3 open Lanterman eligibility cases. Two adults and one child. Two are scheduled for state level hearings in June and the third is scheduled in September.
- We have 4 open service request cases. One is for ABA compensatory funding and is pending a state level hearing in June. Another is for ABA co-pay funding, with an informal meeting this month and a state level hearing in June. The third is for SPED attorney fees and has a state level hearing scheduled in June. The fourth is for mileage reimbursement and speech therapy funding – OAH granted our motion to consolidate both of these requests into one hearing scheduled for August.
- We were able to resolve the HCBS waiver eligibility request after our informal meeting based upon guidance provided by DDS. We are thankful for VMRC team members who worked diligently on this matter and contributed to the resolution.
- At this time we have no 4731 complaints.

9.2 Case Management Update:

- Due to COVID-19, our annual **Transition Fairs** were held remotely. Three Zoom fairs occurred this year to recognize graduates and provide helpful, well-rounded information for futures planning. The agendas consisted of presentations from Supported Living and Independent Living Service providers, as well as resources pertaining to college programs throughout the state such as Taft College, Fresno State, UCLA, and Delta College. Employment and community resources were presented to the graduates by the Family Resource Network, State Council, and Department of Rehabilitation. And, VMRC-vendored day services and supported employment programs provided various options for those choosing that avenue. In addition, there were raffle prizes donated by the presenters and virtual dance parties held to continue the celebration. Stanislaus County met by Zoom on 5/27, the foothill counties of Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne met on 5/28, and San Joaquin County on 5/29.
- Presentation Food Pantry donated **food bags** to 71 families in May who are part of our regional center. Another 55 food bags have been donated and distribution is scheduled for June 6. Thanks to our Cultural Specialist Gabriela Lopez for coordinating the effort and staff who helped with delivery.

- **PPE Distribution**--Large orders of masks, sanitizer, and other items came in from DDS and SCDD. There will be a drive-thru distribution center at our Stockton office on Thursday morning of this week and Friday morning at our Modesto office.
- Directives recently received from DDS--
 - **SEP-** Because many are seeing a reduction or loss of jobs in the Supported Employment Program (SEP) area, the SEP providers can submit a form requesting to change existing groups, change work hours or work days, stagger the work schedule, and or terminate the group and transfer of consumers to another Supported Employment Program. If a SEP group has decreased work hours or days, or has been furloughed due to COVID-19, the provider should show this on the DS 1963 form. This communication has very important directions for the SEP providers for filling out this form.
 - **SIRs** Special Incidents Related to COVID-19 in SANDIS From now on providers and regional centers must complete a special incident report, clearly show in the incident description it applied to any of the following events:
 - An individual tests positive for COVID-19;
 - An individual receives medical attention at a hospital, emergency room, or urgent care clinic due to COVID-19 symptoms; or
 - An individual's death is related to COVID-19, either by confirmed COVID-19 positive testing or by medical diagnosis unconfirmed by testing.
- **Finger Print Clearance and Exemption Transfer**--_Department of Social Services advises of a faster way to transfer their background clearance from one licensed facility to another (homes, day programs, etc.). They did this to help provider get staff during the current COVID-19 outbreak. The CDSS notice says, "If an individual has an active clearance or exemption, they should not be re-fingerprinted as this may delay the processing of the transfer. Licensees may contact their local Community Care Licensing (CCL) office to verify the individual's status." ... "Individuals seeking to transfer from one licensed facility to another licensed facility will be allowed to work at the new facility while the transfer request is pending."
- **Self-Determination Program** continues. Currently 14 people are on the program, 72 of 110 have attended the orientation, 14 people chose to not participate, 30 people need a PCP/IPP, PCP/IPP has been held for 42 people, 13

people are working on budgets and 15 have signed budgets and are developing their spending plans. PCP/IPP meetings continue to be held 4 meetings in March since Stay at home was implemented, 6 in April, 6 in May as of the writing of this report and 5 already scheduled for June. SDAC meets the third Thursday of every month via Zoom. SDP Orientation's next scheduled training is June 10th via Zoom, 9am to 12 noon. Registration is available on FB or VMRC's website. Advised during an ARCA meeting that SD is undergoing a state financial analysis as the program is reported to be about 28% higher in costs than traditional services although it was initially thought to be cost neutral.

- **Budget Concerns** --Still concerns, but it appears to be a moving target due to how things will be handled on a state and federal level. Locally, we are looking to increase our Medicaid Waiver through Institutional Deeming and reviewing our highest cost consumers for necessary expenditures and/or alternatives.
- **Return to Workplace Plan**--unveiled to managers and staff last week. Our buildings will remain closed to the public, but we are surveying managers to see how we can stagger having staff in the office (based on need)and gradually return to the workplace
- **PG&E Power Shut-offs** are expected in the near future--We will be meeting with PG&E staff this week to discuss power shut-offs they plan due to potential fires in the state. We will be working on sending out notifications and helping consumers and families prepare for any power outages, making a Resource Guide and Hotline Assistance available.
- **Asian American Survey** being completed. We have contacted about 40% of our clientele to discuss their experiences during COVID-19 and hope to have information to report within a few weeks.

10.0 **TRANSPORTATION**

Wilma was not able to attend this evening. An update was provided to Cindy Strawderman on June 2nd that Wilma wanted to be shared.

- Modesto MAX : Free rides for essential services has been extended thru June 30th.
- Turlock Transit: Resumed full normal service schedules, effective June 1st. Rides are still free
- AND, I was horrified to see that I forgot to include the Stanislaus Transit System (START) when I did that Advisory update so here you go: [Stanislaus Regional Transit Ph # 800-262-1516.](#) Resumed full normal schedules, effective June 1st. Rides are still free on regular fixed route. Shuttle service and ADA services are regular fare. Visit the website for more info: www.srt.org
- **For our contracted transit providers:** All have developed tentative plans to address COVID-19 directives for health and safe as well as inclusion of any local County

health directives and adjust those requirements as updates are given. This will allow for quicker start-up once specifics are available for re-opening of day programs.

11.0 **NEXT MEETING**

Consumer Services will not meet again until September 2020

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Recorder: Cindy Strawderman

DRAFT