



Minutes for VMRC Board of Directors Meeting

April 23, 2025 | 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Valley Mountain Regional Center, Stockton Office, Cohen Board Room and via Zoom Video Conference

Board Members Present: Alicia Schott, Erria Kaalund, Lisa Utsey, Dr. Steve Russell, Crystal Enyeart, Jessica Quesada, Liz Herrera-Knapp, Jody Bussis, Kenneth Huntley, Jeff Turner, Gabriela Castillo

Board Members Not Present: Jose Lara, Marisela Cruz, Kyle Cox (**informed absence**)

VMRC Staff Present: Aiko Blancaflor, Amanda Verstl, Leinani Walter, Christine Couch, Tara Sisemore-Hester, Mayra Ochoa, Claire Lazaro, Brian Bennet, Nathan Sioson, Lizzie Valerio, Jessica Stone, Donna Sioson, Victoria Moreno, Midori Perez

Public Present: Rachelle Munoz (facilitator), Irene Hernandez, Isela Bingham

A. Call to Order, Roll Call, Reading of the Mission Statement

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Alicia Schott. Lizzie took roll call, a quorum was established. The board read the Mission Statement.

B. Review of the Meeting Agenda

Alicia asked if there were any questions or comments to the agenda. Alicia moved on to the review on minutes.

C. Review and Approval of the Board of Directors Meeting minutes of 2/26/25

Alicia asked for a motion to approve the Board of Directors Meeting minutes of 2/26/25. Kenneth motioned to approve the minutes. Lisa seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The Board of Directors meeting minutes of 2/26/25 were approved.

D. Public Comment

1. Emily Orth - Intake Coordinator and San Andreas office and President of VMRC union, shared her concerns she's heard from union members about remote work policy. She shared they collected information through a survey. 42% are fully remote, 62% opposed this policy change. The biggest concerns is the loss of work like balance, loss of productivity – staff enjoy catching up with co-workers and catching up in the office, but it impacts their productivity. Loss of flexibility is a big factor, flexibility to adjust your schedule for your own appointments for your own life, your family. Flexibility to meet with consumers – start your day late and work late to meet with the family. Being tied to the office on a particular day limits that. Some offices are not large enough to accommodate everyone. She reported there are a lot of concerns from Modesto office in terms of space even with new

booking system coming out. She shares currently there is trouble finding fully functional working space. In the time for budgetary cuts – this is valuable and doesn't cost anything to last.

2. Mary Duncan – VMRC Staff and active union member wanted to speak on proposed change to remote work policy. During the bargaining management wanted staff to come into the office 2 days a week, the union said no and that they did not want this added to the contract. It was a policy. Then management said they wanted staff in one day a week, again the union said no, it's part of the policy. Management has the right to change policy – doesn't need to be in the contract. The union was told if VMRC decides that they may require one day a week, they will give six months notice, the union agreed because they would get notice. She reported the lawyer apparently thought this meant something different to what the union understood – meaning this policy would go ahead with opposition or information provided to members it would affect. She brings up history of the agency, staff being underpaid – management has to bargain for something else, this is flexibility, doesn't cost the agency anything. Ability to take care of your family, loved ones, and your child who is a regional center consumer around the towers of working for the agency. During meet and confer, management doesn't allow people to do 2 – 4 days (two half days in the office to meet the in-office requirements), people on 4 – 10 hours day cannot be remote. It costs the agency nothing but it's valuable to people. The survey shows contracts had not been ratified if there was language in the contract that staff would come in one day a week.
3. Dena Hernandez – California SCDD office shared she attended the Modesto Rally to save Medicaid, she thanked Leinani for her leadership and shared Claire Lazaro was there as well and two former board members who shared their stories how the cut could impact them. With that she presented flyers with QR codes in English and Spanish – folks can share their story and based on zip code State Council will get it to legislator that works with that person. Monday, April 28 1st VMRC/SDP resource flyer with schedule, folks can drop in whenever was shared – invited board members to see what committee has been working one whether involved in self-determination or not. Lastly, she shared the letter from the Choices Conference that she gave to Alicia. VMRC sponsors with financial support and Christine support on the planning committee representing VMRC as well as VMRC staff as volunteers. 500 self-advocates attended on April 11, there was a microbusiness fair and a free photo booth. Hired Futures Explored to put a sizzle reel together.

E. Calendar Consent Items

1. Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2025
2. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of March 12, 2025
3. Consumer Services Committee Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2025

Alicia brought as an action item and asked for a motion to approve, Erria made a motion to approve, Lisa seconded motion to approve. The consent calendars items were approved unanimously.

F. Presentation AB2083: System of Care Program

Julie De Diego reported she works as the Division Manager for children's services and oversees system of care program, AB2083 which was a law

enacted in 2018 that obligates the State to provide services to foster youth. There are two systems of care coordinators who work with 5 counties. We monitor our youth to ensure VMRC provides services and they have access to generic resources and promote team collaboration between multiple systems.

AB2083 bind our local system to coordinated system of care – services include mental health, education, child welfare, regional centers, probation, our tribal communities and families. The goal is to work together to ensure we eliminate barriers for foster youth served – create long term systemic change through the systems currently in place. We want to deliver a whole child family centered care and having agencies work together and collaborate. For example, in Calaveras County, a system developed – coordinated care when we see family at the risk of entering the system, we work together and problem solve with the family, listen to them and design services to prevent from going into the system and thrive. In Tuolumne County, universal communication system, if a family comes into any agency, they can help support a family, in San Joaquin County we have a prevention plan where there are listening systems within the community and identify what are real time needs.

MOU are required in all 5 counties, binds us to meet monthly and sometimes multiple times a month to develop these systems. 12 System of Care principles are part of the core model. They system now conforms to the families – embed cultural humility and equity into services. VMRC serves 348 foster youth, broken down by county and VMRC office – San Joaquin County largest numbers served, and broken down by ethnicity. Monthly reports are sent to Program Managers to identify what needs to be done and provide that support.

Leinani thanked Julie for her leadership in managing five counties/five leadership teams – different counties who do things slightly different, things don't look the same. Julie attends in person meetings in all counties, its important to connect with people even if it's for 1 hour, connecting with folks who you may not know.

Julie mentioned there are barriers in different counties, she is proud that they have built strong relationships and trust moving forward. It's great to see the behind the scenes work in system of care coordination and supporting complex youth that. Working together to push and pish to find the appropriate supports and collaborate with partner agencies – highly successful. She shared an email CSOC@VMRC, highly promoting as a connector for the community, two system of care coordinators and Julie are busy managing, helping and supporting. Proud of the work they are doing

G. Committee Reports

1. VMRC Professional Advisory Committee, Coalition of Local Agency Service Provider (C.L.A.S.P.) – Liz Herrera Knapp

- CLASP last meeting was 3/24/25
- Presentation: Employment Law
- We have \$23,829.30 in our account. Looking to host a 1 or 2 day training and will reach out to discuss potential Person Centered Thinking training with Christine.
- 87 paid members
- CLASP has a public page in FB & IG, if you want to post something there, send

to Kirsten via email: ksea9@aol.com

- o Instagram: @CLASP.VMRC
- o Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CLASP.VMRC> and
- o Our private member group: "CLASP - VMRC (MEMBER GROUP)" - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2310077552557091> When joining our private member group, please be sure to answer the membership questions to be approved into the group.
- **Residential Home Workgroup**
 - o Met on 4/8/25
- **Day Program Workgroup-**
 - o Day Program Work Group is met hybrid on Wednesday, March 26th at 9am at CVTC Stockton West: 7603 Murray Drive, Stockton CA 95210 and via zoom
 - o Discussed rate reform updates specific to BCBA and RBT requirements

Next CLASP Meeting: Apr 28th @ 10 am via Zoom

- Will be discussing our Holiday Schedule and presenting slate of officers.

<https://zoom.us/j/97743137353?pwd=Faa0NdcCGtfJzbkxBqd5fQggZRWO>

[bQ](#)

Meeting ID: 977 4313 7353

Passcode: 875470

2. Self-Determination Advisory Committee

Upcoming Projects/Updates:

- SDP Resource Fair-April 28th (see attached updated flyer-was also in latest VMRC newsletter)
- RFP's in process of development for IF training and coaching
- The committee voted and passed a proposal where ICC will be providing coaching support to members of the Latino community through person centered planning coaching and transition supports as part of a 2-part project-contract for such services is in process.
- VMRC is holding IF meetings every other month to discuss ways to improve and eliminate/decrease barriers to SDP and work more collaboratively with IF's and FMS's

Statewide SDAC-next statewide meeting to be held in person and in Los Angeles late June 2025.

- 2025 Priority areas for funding with workgroups will focus on on following areas:
 - o Providing more Service Coordinator Training for SDP-workgroup to discuss next steps
 - o Survey's to be sent to members outlining priorities and select top 5 by rating

LVAC Committee Membership & Leadership: Still vacancies on the committee from representation from Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne counties. We also took

nominations for Assistant Secretary vacancy and will vote in next month's (March) meeting.

3. Consumer Advisory Council, SAC6 – Crystal Enyeart

- March 25th several Sac6 members attended the RAC (Reginal Advisory Committee) on zoom.
- March 26th Sac6 members Lisa and Crystal attended the Consumer Services meeting in person. I chaired this meeting again. 😊
- March 27th Sac6 members had their Leadership meeting, where we reviewed our contract goals.
- April 2nd Catrina C. attended the DDS L.E.A.G. (The lived experience advocacy group) meeting on zoom.
- On April 5th Sac6 members attended the Supported Life Planning Team meeting in person in Sacramento. Sac6 members have a lot of roles this year at the conferences from being an Emcee, to our 4 different sessions to being moderators for different sessions.
- April 11th Several Sac6 members attended the CHOICES conference. At the conference Sa6 had a table where we handed out information on self-advocacy and asked about individuals' needs.
- April 12th Sac6 members attended the Autism Awareness fair in Manteca, where again Sa6 had a table and handed out information on self-advocacy and ask about individual's needs. We talked to 167 different people about self-advocacy and what sac6 does.
- April 14th and 16 I interviewed with SSAN Statewide Self Advocacy Network to sit on the Board as a Sac6 representative. I was offered the position and starts to serve my term beginning in June 2025.
- Earlier today Sac6 had a table at the Stockton transition Fair where we talked to individuals about Self Advocacy and handed out information and talked to people about their needs and services.

- Upcoming events:
- April 28th Sac6 will have an information table at the Self Determination Fair.
- Modesto Transition Fair May 2, where we will have a table to hand out information on self-advocacy.
- Supported Life Conference in Sacramento May 9th and 10th, Sac6 members are giving four different sessions.

4. Finance Committee –

- a. Aiko presented the Contract Status report which shared payments made through February 28, 2025. As of the eight month of the fiscal year, \$293.6 million has been spent on purchase of service, \$41.4 million in Operations. We received additional \$1.1 Million allocation received for Operations, \$53.7 million for POS for FY 24/25 in March.
 - Operation includes rent, health & safety waiver, FG and SCP and CPP funding.
 - POS includes funding for regular purchase of service anticipating expenses due to the rate reform as well as funding

for PP startup and placement and HCBS services. POS projection includes estimated \$40.6 million increase in POS expenses – this projection is based on average rate increase for service codes impacted by rate reform and based on assumption all vendors will receive the quality incentive program payment starting on January 1

We have informed DDS we anticipate receiving additional funds to cover the cost. Two additional updates to maximize LACC grant in collaboration with Mayra's Team, we were able to get into contract updated with digital deployment (Planetaria) for an update to our website to be more user friendly and organized for our diverse community we serve and get resources regardless of language. CPA Audit for FY 21/22 is almost done, it will be presented at the Finance Committee, there will be findings which are being addressed now.

Dr. Steve reports this comes as an action item and asks for motion to approve the report. Kenneth makes a motion to approve, Crystal seconded the motion, motion carries.

5. Consumer Services Committee –

Gabriela shared there is no report.

6. Legislative Committee –

Erria reported that legislative committees shared our legislation is still being tracked and moving forward. An update was emailed to share. Legislative follow up, will give update with Lynda Mendoza in May.

7. Bylaws Committee –

Jody reported a first meeting was held on March 13, a meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 25. Nothing has been determined, they will bring back information once they meet with the attorney.

8. Nominating Committee –

Erria reports she is actively recruiting, if you know anyone, please share contact information. A meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks. First organizing meeting will be held in the coming week – how interviews will be held, location for folks to come.

9. Popplewell Review Team –

Erria reports no request have been made.

H. Executive Director's Report

Leinani shared it was an amazing day as Dena noted at the Modesto Rally to save Medicaid. It's important to hear stories from people who are served by

resources by Medicaid. We were joined by SEUI IHSS Service Providers union staff. There was a sense of community, regional center staff from various teams from Modesto staff, advocates supporting that are not in the DD community. The Congressman was not in the office, important testament from all sectors speak up, this is not a political matter, it's about people. A good reminder, cuts of \$880 billion would not only be devastating for regional centers, IHSS, but also for special education. Thankful to the State Council and all across from our community. Thankful for DVU coordinating with ARCA – all together we can let legislators know people are behind Medicaid.

On the 14th she met with Lieutenant Michael Hammond – Modesto Police Department. I appreciate him reaching out to wanting to include VMRC for the difficult conversations with our paths cross. She was given a tour and met many dedicated community servants. We are more than happy to share in conversation while we do have HIPAA, we are limited in sharing information, I learned a lot about the work he's doing with our population, both with people with developmental disabilities, with mental illness and the unhoused population. She thanked Lt. Hammond and looks forward to continued partnership and rejuvenating what VMRC had in the past.

She was thankful to be invited to the Self Determination Committee - listening rather than talking, to find ways to make it better, and make people's lives easier. She is supportive of change if that is what's needed. Thanked Mayra for willingness to join every week. Choices Conference, shared plaque that was received – this is one of the few events proudly sponsoring that is led by individuals served. Encourage those who haven't gone, to go in the future and attend the Choices Conference. Thanked Dena and VMRC team for their leadership – it's a testament to support at VMRC. Highlight Aiko sharing about the website – its not just about people speaking another language, making it accessible for people with or without disabilities, contract has designed and worked with 5 other regional centers Will work with Catherine Blakemore – Budget hearing is coming May 26, encouraging to use letters Dena shared. Budget hearing can be long, letters from local constituents, people who are served carry the greatest weight.

I. President's Report

Alicia shared today was the transition fair – it was a great event. Her daughter turns 18 next year, opening a new window of opportunities. Shared additional dates – Modesto (May 2), San Andreas (May 8)

Christine commended Jessica who shared at the California Remembrance Memorial Project and registry.

Kenneth shared we have a good relationship with Modesto and Stockton is good. He asked about Lodi and San Andreas. AB work allows us to know have relationship with foothill law enforcementsment.

Alicia shared Stockton is working on getting a database with Fire Department – working on program. Brian shared Aaron McDonald Lodi PD they are ready to partner with VMRC (Blue Envelope) Anticipating creating a list of law enforcement agencies, families can go on and describe as little or a much.

J. Next Meeting – Wednesday, June 25, 2025, at 6:00pm Hybrid (In-Person and Zoom)

K. Adjournment – Alicia Schott at 7:04pm