



Minutes for VMRC Consumer Services Committee Meeting

July 23, 2025 | 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

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

Committee Members Present: Crystal Enyeart, Kenneth Huntley, Lisa Utsey, Gabriella Castillo, Marisela Cruz, Sarah Howard, Liz Herrera-Knapp, Dominique Mellion, Jessica Quesada, Megan Ybarra

Committee Members Not Present: N/A

Public Present: Irene Hernandez, Isela Bingham, Anel Renteria, Rachelle Munoz, Dena Hernandez, Angelina Sulamo, Elizabeth Kenyon, Sarah's Notetaker (Otter.ai)

VMRC Staff Present: Brian Bennett, Evelyn Ledesma-Solis, Athena Jurado, Aaron McDonald, Christine Couch, Lizzie Valerio, Claire Lazaro, Robert Fernandez, Libby Contreras, Tara Sisemore-Hester, Libby Contreras

A. Call to Order, Roll Call, Review of Meeting Agenda

Crystall Enyeart called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM. Lizzie took roll call, a quorum was established.

B. Review and Approval of the Consumer Services Committee Meeting Minutes of 05/28/25

Crystal asked for a motion to approve the minutes of 5/28/25. Kenneth Huntley made a motion, Sarah Howard seconded the motion. Motion carried minutes were approved.

C. Public Comment

1. Dena Hernandez – California State Council on Developmental Disabilities reported she will be sharing handouts on the events she will speak on. She thanked VMRC for their support of the SCDD Tell Your Story Campaign regarding Medicaid Cuts, over 2,600 letters were sent, but the bill still passed and there will be cuts in late 2026. SCDD developed next steps guiding principles and will share the handout. They will continue to provide presentations in English and Spanish on what the Medicaid cuts will or could mean, held virtually statewide. They are also providing a virtual training, How to Engage with Decision Makers. Self-Advocacy Network (SAN) will be providing a webinar celebrating 35 years of ADA, Choices Institute conference will be on arch 27, 2026 and lastly State Council North Valley Hills Regional Advisory Committee is next Tuesday, July 29th from 6:00-8:00PM on zoom and in person at their office.

D. Intake, Early Start, and Case Management Update

1. Tara reported for Intake they are moving to a new early start calendar which will include scheduling assessment teams and intake coordinators. The team has been working with Aiko Blancaflor, CFO and a contractor to develop a new early start calendar, it is currently being launched, staff have been getting trained to be on the same page. Also shared between Early Start Managers, Autism Service Coordinator, IDEA Specialists, they have done over 100 internal trainings, basically any kind of special education services, IFSP training, working collaboratively with families, and system of care training. Intake numbers are up, anticipating a drop during summer. Intake department has put together a resource page that will go on the website in the next couple of weeks, there will be QR codes that can be scanned and directed to the resource.
2. Christine reported on Special Incident reports that came in May and June. In May, top two incidents' reports were hospital for respiratory illness and internal infection. They were followed up by Katina's team and as well as the service coordinators. In June, reports were hospitalized for internal infection and alleged physical abuse, those are being followed up by Quality Assurance Team, Services, potentially Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services and Law Enforcement. The Purchase of Service exceptions for the month of May and June are for personal assistance, and Patch comes in as second – Patch is additional staff person to support you in vendor services.

Kenneth asked if for personal assistance, does it include self-determination or traditional services. Christine reported that when it's an exceptional amount, the report includes both.

E. Self-Advocacy Council Area 6 (SAC6) Update

June & July 2025 Contract Goal Activities

Tell People About Self-Advocacy

- June 7th- SAC6 members had their quarterly business meeting.
- June 20th- Lisa Utsey also attended the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on zoom.

Stand for Self-Advocates

- June 10th- Catrina attended the LEAG DDS meeting. She also shared information with other advocates to apply as the group is going to have lots of different committees working on different topics.
- June 18th- Catrina C. attended the VMRC Nominating Committee. Where they interviewed individuals to sit on the VMRC Board.
- July 22nd- SAC6 members attended the VMRC Legislative meeting.
- June 25th SAC6 consultant Lisa Utsey and Jessica Quesada attended the VMRC Board Training and meeting in person.
- June 27th Lisa Utsey, Crystal Enyeart and Catrina Castro and many other Sac6 members wrote letters telling their story on how the cuts would affect their services and how it impacts their lives.

- June Crystal was officially appointed the New SSAN representative, her first meeting was a hybrid meeting in June.
- July 9th Lisa Utsey attended the VMRC Finance Committee and VMRC Executive Committee in person.

Help People Solve Problems

Also, in June -SAC6 members joined the SCDD North Valley Hills “Medicaid Tell our Story” With Aaron Carruthers- Executive Director of SCDD on zoom.

- June 7th Sac6 members had training on how to fill out the unmet needs form and all Sac6 members were given copies to take back to their local chapters and do a training with their chapter groups.

Stay Organized

- June 7th- SAC6 had their Board meeting where they had a special guest speaker- Gaby Lopez from VMRC. She shared information on the importance of the VMRC Performance contract. Some topics were How to increase living on their own, what services are working, services that help people live independently, transportation, and what recreational services are covered by VMRC. We also had guest members in the audience from Person Centered Services (PCS) in Stockton. Also, all sac6 members and support staff wrote letter about ‘Medicaid funding Might be cute- Share your Story and was given to SCDD to be submitted to the legislative.

And just for FUN...

- On June 8th SAC6 members Lisa, Jessica, Kenneth and Crystal attended the VMRC Board Dinner. They enjoyed a night of socializing and networking and some great food.

F. Resource Development Update

Brian reported the Community Services has received directors from DDS, they are rules or how things should operate. He shared two that are relevant. First, on Monday, they will share CLASP on Monday about health and safety waivers, how to organize and complete. During COVID this was allowed when there was a risk to the provider losing their direct staff due to wages. The department has pulled back on that allowance and the waivers are strict for health and safety concerns. Internally the team will work on a clear process for case management, fiscal team and resources team who work with coordinator and planning team. Brian shared the second news is there is a new service code. The new code is for American Sign Language training and support service, service code 644. Regional Centers have to have this available by September 1, it doesn't give us a lot of time to put out a Request for Proposals to find qualified vendors, all 21 regional centers are working on one unified an RFP which isn't common. There will be an application period, and each regional center will have their own interviews.

Kenneth shared he took a class Charlene Nunez ASL class at Delta College and might be able to support in looking for individuals in the area. Brian thanked him and mentioned sharing the information with Midori Perez, VMRC's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist. Sarah Howard also shared that she knows a retired ASL teacher, Kay Osborne she can help point the way as well. Brian thanked them home.

Brian also shared there are two community-based services grants, what it means is for service providers to meet federal guidelines access rules, some had to make modifications. For example, a bathroom was built in 1985, the bathroom is small and an individual in a wheelchair needs more space, or men's bathroom using stand up urinals and it doesn't afford privacy, they can submit money to modify those settings. Anna Sims has received a total of 49 proposals for HCBS Grant. Anna and her team have narrowed down proposals and will be conducting interviews.

Robert Fernandez shared updates: One of their Community Placement Plans (CPP) and Community Resource Development Plan (CRDP) Enhanced Behavioral Support home, a children's home in Modesto (The Atlantis Home) was vendored as of July 1, 2025. They already have a placement for that home, it has been a project in development for a couple of years. The other update was that twice a year Community Services holds an orientation for Residential Services Orientation (RSO), usually for providers who are in development for residential services or refresher for providers are scheduled for August 13 & 14, 2025 by invitation only.

Libby Contreras shared they have a brand new company for Early Start Autism Intervention Program under new service code 612. Our department in the last 30 days, have process over 50 different therapists, new speech therapists, occupational therapists, BCBA's RBT for our Early Starts services. Coming up in the next couple of weeks we have two (2) more Early Start Autism Intervention programs and they will be launching their first comp center-based program in San Joaquin Count that is motor-focused. There will be a physical therapist that oversees and working closely with Early Start consumers that would benefit their motor therapy in addition to their comp services, developmental services. There are also a couple dental hygienist that will be remotely, can go into individuals and care homes in the foothills, southern part of Stanislaus County and northern part of San Joaquin. She shared there are 3 new contractors starting with will support with home modifications There are a couple of psychologists coming and they will help with evaluations and eligibility determination. Lastly, she shared they are looking to get translators back in the home, supporting in IPP meetings, in-person services

G. Quality Assurance Update

Brian reported that the team is working on sharing information on the red cards to regional center providers should they encounter Immigration and Customs Enforcements. Leinani and the team have sent out information from the department as well that something should occur in their region. Leinani shared they are sharing information and resources to individuals, families and service providers as it affects everyone and sought legal counsel and developed some resources.

Dena also shared that the State Council is working with Disability Rights of California to put together a document from families concerned about separation due to ICE activities so they can plan ahead if the parent is there one day and then not the next day the supported individual will still get services. She will share the handout once it's completed.

H. Transportation Update

Anel shared transportation stats for individuals currently using contracted transportation service. Currently a total of 2,151 riders and 85,860 trips were performed for month of June. Shared anyone currently receiving transportation to and from day program, if you have any concerns please contact our office, this includes change in schedule, address, etc. Contact information:

I. Fair Hearing Update

Leinani shared that Jason does not have a report. They are working together on developing a way to share fair hearing information, whistleblower in a format that doesn't disclose any confidential information.

J. Coalition of Local Agency Service Providers (CLASP) Update

CLASP last meetings were held 5/19/25 and 6/23/25

- We have \$24770.94 in our account.
- 24 paid members- New membership year started July 1st \$35 per person or organization
- CLASP has a public page in FB & IG, if you want to post something there, send to Kirsten via email: ksea9@aol.com
 - Instagram: CLASP.VMRC
 - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CLASP.VMRC> and
 - 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.

New Officers:

President- Melanie Gonzales, Merakey Allos
Vice President- KC Shadman, Shadman House & Campbell Solutions
Treasurer- Tamra Hernandez, Valley CAPS
Secretary- Chris Martin, UCP Stanislaus
Membership Coordinator- Karyn Gregorius The Arc Amador
CLASP Elected VMRC Board Rep- Candice Bright, Bright Futures & Valley Behavior

Appointed Positions-

CLASP Reps to VMRC Committees:

VMRC Consumer Services- Liz Herrera Knapp, KBCS Behavior Services
Nominating Committees- Daime Hoonert, PCS
VMRC Finance Committee- Connie Uychutin, The Arc San Joaquin
VMRC Legislative Committee- Candice Bright, Bright Futures & Valley Behavior

Residential Home Workgroup

No Update

Day Program Workgroup-

- Day Program Work Group is met hybrid on Wednesday, June 25th at 9am at Valley CAPS
- Discussed rate reform updates specific to BCBA and RBT requirements
- Discussed impact of ICE on Day Program and Places of Employment
- Discussed when new rates would go into effect

Next CLASP Meeting: July 28th 10am Via Zoom

K. Clinical Update

Claire shared most Special Incident Reports related to infection, they have partnered with UOP to create a lecture series regarding infection (how to prevent, diabetes, caring for something like asthma) it will be posted on the website.

L. Next Meeting - Wednesday, July 4:00 PM, Hybrid (In-Person and via Zoom Video Conference)

Leinani shared an update on the Strategic Planning survey which is underway. She, along with Catherine Blakemore continues to work together and should be finalizing soon. It will be sent to community partners, individuals, families, CLASP Providers, and other CBOs. It will be translated in multiple languages and hope to gather feedback and input from the community on our strategic plan.

M. Adjournment at 4:52 pm