



Minutes for VMRC Consumer Services Committee Meeting

May 28, 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, Daime Hoornaert, Lisa Utsey

Committee Members Not Present: Gabriela Castilo (informed absence), Marisela Cruz, Sarah Howard, Liz Herrera-Knapp

Public Present: Irene Hernandez, Isela Bingham, Anel Renteria, Delia Sanders, Dena Hernandez,

VMRC Staff Present: Brian Bennett, Mayra Ochoa, Gabriela Lopez, Midori Perez, Donna Sioson, Nathan Sioson, Aaron McDonald, Christine Couch, Lizzie Valerio, Claire Lazaro, Robert Fernandez, Libby Contreras

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

Crystall Enyeart called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Lizzie took roll call, a quorum was established.

B. Review and Approval of the Consumer Services Committee Meeting Minutes of 3/26/25

Crystal asked for a motion to approve the minutes of 3/26/25. Kenneth made a motion, Daime seconded the motion. Motion carried minutes were approved.

C. Public Comment

1. Dena Hernandez reported that Aaron Carruthers, Executive Director (State Council of Developmental Disabilities) emailed Leinani Walter regarding Tell Our Story campaign, which is to get folks to share their story regarding possible Medicaid Cuts. SCDD is working with Tony Anderson (ARCA) to provide trainings and has reached out to regional centers Executive Directors for help to publicize. One will be May 30th from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM and the second will be June 3 from 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM on zoom. She also shared an

update on the Quality Assessment project, George Lewis does with their office, Christine is the VMRC liaison, 400 surveys must be met in a cycle, they are currently at 352 and are scheduled to finish the final surveys by June 2025. They celebrated at a regional advisory meeting the previous night. Choice's reel was done by Futures Explored., Dena will share link with Lizzie to share. Denas asked for dates of when VMRC newsletter is scheduled to go out, would like to include information. On June 26 in VMRC Stockton Cohen Room Self-Determination Advisory Committee is hosting their annual meeting from 5:00 pm – 7:00pm (hybrid), dinner will be provided for those in person and a flyer is being worked to share.

D. Intake, Early Start, and Case Management Update

1. Christine Couch reported on Case Management Update

- POS Exceptions: March continues to see personal assistant and Patch as a high number that the exceptions committee is approving. The box shows the number of POS (approved, deferred, denied). The bottom of the page shows reasons why some were denied, the challenge is the Expanded ID Team doesn't always get the full information, sometimes it's snippets of a case. Christine will prepare a summary moving forward to be able to provide more information. For April, personal assistant and Patch are the highest two requests, only 1 denial and it was partial as the request was to fund 84 hours of personal assistant and 40 was given.
- Special Incident Reporting: high number of folks experiencing infection and respiratory illness. Respiratory illness numbers go up when seasons changes. Christine followed up with Katina for internal infections, UTI are the highest cause.
- Consumer File Transfer report shows folks who left VMRC, in April, 49 people moved away.

Christine asked if there were any questions. Kenneth asked what the difference in colors is in the report. Christine shared Cindy Strawderman uses different colors to see what high months are. Daime asked about personal assistant denials, she asked if they have a set number of hours agreed upon, but if they go over with pre-approval is that why they are denied. Christine reported you have to get approval before use of hours. She prefers not to have denials written on report the way they are, she does not know they are denied, some were partially approved but the way it's written in report is unclear.

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

- 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.

F. Resource Development Update

Brian reported VMRC is in the middle of the rate form that began in October 2024. They are in the final stages. All regional centers vendors (day program, interpreter, personal assistant, etc.), all services that are being provided, everyone is required to verify their information in DDS portal. If they don't do that by May 30 (two days from today), their final rate will be minus 10% than full rate increase – they will not get the full rate increase if not in the portal. If the provider does not comply by July 1, they run the risk of their vendorization being suspended. The resource team has been busy contacting providers directly, encouraging them to enter in the directory. In the last two weeks, the department has been contacting them to register, as of yesterday's list, they are down to under 200 providers.

Daime reported it's important to share with the committee that when CLASP met on May 19th, there were still about 900 vendors that hadn't completed it and she thinks important to know how hard they are working to get the numbers down. Brian thanked Daime and shared there were about 900, there were some nuances worked with, he spoke with Aiko (VMRC CFO) who's amazing and worked with contact at the department, certain service categories - vendors excluded (parents who provide personal assistant, daycare, etc.) that significantly dropped our numbers.

Brian also shares on the announcements pages there are non-grant RFP sections, we've sent out to class memberships and various CBO's. There are funds available for site modifications, if someone has a service – modify bathroom to support folks that are non-ambulatory or need more privacy, purchase for small passenger vans to

increase community integration opportunities. Promoting vendor training related to home and community-based services.

Open house for Sisk Road Apartments is scheduled for June 25th, please contact him to forward the invite, they are asking people to RSVP.

Robert Fernandez reported they have identified 3 of our day programs providers in Foothill counties being developed. Libby Conreras reported that last week they hosted an Unmet Needs public session, it was very well received. In regard to clinical and children services, the highest response they've ever received. Dozen to 15 new inquiries have been received, perfect time as they are in the middle of rate reform deadline. This will allow them to review new service providers and be able to provide services to families. They are still in need for in-person translator services, lots of babies getting services with no translator support.

G. Quality Assurance Update

Brian shared they continue to receive complaints, we are responding to special incidents and alerts. Special incident report training sessions information can be found on the website.

H. Transportation Update

Anel shared that in the month of April, there were a total of 50 transportation service providers, 239 routes operation, 2,154 individuals served. There was an increase from March to April, due to individuals attending the day program, for example 2 days to 5 days a week. Increase in new program locations, anticipate new routes to accommodation. Working to ensure there are vehicles and drives to accommodate the needs in the community.

Daimie asked, when a vendor doesn't have a driver to transport to go to day program, and there is no back up driver, how often is that happening? We've had times when a student calls to say they don't have transportation, and they can't attend. Anel mentioned she is aware of issues when there is no back up driver and services are cancelled. They have been working on looking at routes and rearranging so they can cover the service. It is a temporary solution, they are discussing the importance of service providers for continuing recruitment. Their Quality Assurance department also monitors, auditing conversations, more intentional for recruitment. Daimie asked who is doing QA, as there is the issue of vendors coming early or late. Things would change for awhile and then go back to vans are arriving early with clients waiting 20-30 minutes before the program even opens. Anel will take note, we support site visits at day program while recruiting. They encourage service providers to do more of their QA checks, random site visits to ensure drivers are following policy and procedures.

Kenneth asked about the average life expectancy of the buses served. He has seen older buses still on the road, he remembers a bus he was on in 2004 and it's still driving people around. What is the standard compared to transit agencies. Issue ramps failing, it gets hot here and HVAC system doesn't work. Anel reported that 7-10 years is standard for age requirements, if there are vehicles outside of that, process in place, we need understanding from service providers to ensure vehicles are kept up to date and maintained. They are reminding service providers to ensure air conditioners are working as it is going to start getting hot.

I. Fair Hearing Update – Lizzie Valerio

Lizzie reported there is no report, Jason will provide a report on the next meeting.

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

VMRC Consumer Services Committee Meeting

May 28, 2025

CLASP Report

- 1) CLASP slate of officers was announced at the meeting on May 19, 2025. Members were able to vote via an email link after the meeting. Results will be announced at the June CLASP meeting.
- 2) CLASP Annual Membership: Vendors were reminded to renew their membership for the upcoming year beginning July 01. CLASP and VMRC continue to inform vendors of the benefits of CLASP and hopefully increase membership.

- 3) Vendor Holiday schedule was approved. It was converted back from an annual year to a fiscal year (July 01, 2025, through June 30, 2026). Each vendor will send their Holiday schedule to Robert Fernandez and R&D Transportation by June 2025.

All Vendors will take the following 10 Holidays:

July 04, 2025

September 01, 2025

November 27 and 28, 2025

December 24 and 25, 2025

January 01, 2026

January 19, 2026

February 16, 2026

May 25, 2026

Vendors also have the option to take any of the below.

5 Optional Holidays:

October 13, 2025

November 11, 2025

December 26, 2025

March 31, 2026

June 19, 2026

- 4) VMRC Executive Director, Leinani Walter, presented CA's State budget and the \$billion+ cuts.
Leinani encouraged all (vendors, families and people receiving services) to reach out to their representatives and tell their story. In California, Medicaid helps pay for important programs like regional center services, Medi-Cal, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), and more. Your story can help leaders understand how these services affect real people.
- 5) VMRC staff continue to inform vendors on:
 - a. HCBS News
 - b. Resource Development Projects-Community Service Team has been working with Vendors to complete their Attachment A's and Provider Vendor Information for the DDS Portal in order to receive their new rates. This has been a priority. There was also discussion on service code 113.
 - c. Quality Assurance Updates and Trainings
 - d. Early Start
 - e. Employment

- f. Case Management Services
- g. Clinical

- 6) The Day Program Sharing Next Meeting is scheduled in person at Valley CAPS in Modesto on June 25, 2025. It will be hybrid for those who can't attend in person.
- 7) Residential Home Workgroup are meeting monthly.
- 8) CLASP continues to appreciate the State Council on Developmental Disabilities/North Valley Hills Office reports and information on SAC 6, CHOICES, Self Determination, and their Regional Advisory Committee.
- 9) Please visit CLASP on Facebook (<https://facebook.com/CLASP.VMRC>) & Instagram (@CLASP.VMRC)

Next CLASP meeting will be held via Zoom: June 23, 2025 @ 10AM.

K. Clinical Update

Claire reported on updates, the health fair was held with University of the Pacific School of Pharmacy on May 17. Free diabetes screening, cholesterol screening and bone density scans were done. They provided attendees with blood pressure monitors, blood sugar monitors, pill containers and sharps containers. This event was a collaboration with UOP because they received a grant from the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundations to help their students learn more about the people we serve and VMRC. Claire also shared there is a series of virtual talks being held, involving VMRC, UOP students, self-advocates, families and community members topics include diabetes care, respiratory illness (preventions, signs and symptoms). Events will be posted on VMRC website and social media.

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

M. Adjournment