



## **PROVIDER/VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Provider Vendor Advisory Committee Regional Center of the East Bay Meeting Minutes September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Members Present:** Geneva Ziaoure, Manos; Sister Marygrace, East Bay Services; Mike Pereira, Ala Costa Centers; Will Sanford, Community Consultant; Donna Feingold, Adaptive Learning Center; Craig Rose, VistAbility; Center; Leslie Visbal, Strategic Planning Consultant; Amanda Eicher, NIAD Art Center; Ramsay Mashy California Autism Foundation; Jennifer Carper, Arcadia Home Care & Staffing

**Guests Present:** Steve Robinson, RCEB; Mike Minton, RCEB; Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Fruc Menchavez, RCEB; Sheraden Nicholau, State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Wendell James, Adult Education Technology; Dan Hogue, Las Trampas; Vi Ibarra, DD Council Contra Costa County; Ben Chen, Alameda County DD Council; Scott Brooks, Futures Explored; Greg Simons, Las Trampas; Claire Palmer, Maxim Healthcare; Presha Ponnell, Futures Explored - ALIVE Central; Emily Correia, Enjoy Life More; Jan Bauchou, Noll Center; Carlos Cienfuegos, Sentry Living Solutions; Kim Coenen, RES Success; Jennifer Zadrán, Sonia Inc.; Jenn Mazzotti, Compass SLS; Rhonda McGlashan, Compass SLS & ILS; Arlene Ruiz - Malama Home; Becky Wieringa adaptive learning center; Jackie Santos - Parkway Village Carehome, Inc.; Jaynette Underhill, Clausen House; Bill Pelter, Ability Now Bay Area; Liz Haake, PFI Residential Services; Isabel Lee, Center for Early Intervention on Deafness; Shelley Crayton, Family Support Services; Angelique Goldberg Futures Explored; Megan Benando ~ Trilogy Adult Services; Juan Velasquez Jr, Pathway to Choices; Jackie Bailey, Futures Explored; Lupe Garcia, Sonia Inc.; Tiffany Denny, Compass SLS; Christina Trucks, Aim High; Edgar Martinez Compass SLS & ILS; Bianca Arellano Sonia Inc; Denise Bradley; Murri Banis, VistAbility; James Mercado, Open House Center; Tracy Butler, CSS-A VistAbility; Henry Long from Asian Resource Networks; Kelly Kramer, Toolworks; Dickson Poku, Compass SLS & ILS; Annette Rankin, Futures Explored; Elicia Denmond Elicia's SLS program; Matt Omelagah, Omelagah, Inc.; Dominique Mellion (Social Day Services Program & Broadoor Community Services ILS); Carolyn Murphy Pleasanton Adult Ed; Maria Ramirez , parent of Afro-Latina client; Kelly Nguyen from Asian Resource Networks; Linh Ngo from Asian Resource Network - Diversity in Health Training Institute; Stacia Olivier, Belmont with Clausen House; Urvashi Patel , physical therapy provider; Jane Sliheet, DD Council, Family; Heather Hackett, Futures Explored; Carin Hewitt, alift llc; Lisa Gonzales Deaf Plus Adult Community

#### **Call to Order:**

Meeting called to order at 11:05 a.m. Introductions. Approval of August 14<sup>th</sup> minutes. M/ Amanda Eicher; S/Leslie Visbal.

#### **Listening Session – Racial Discrimination Concerns of Black Consumers and Service Providers – Wendell James, Executive Director, Adult Education Technology**

- Wendell started the presentation by asking African-American attendees to speak up and make their voices be heard. He encouraged them to show their faces, show their names, and send their emails of discriminatory issues without fear of retaliation. Wendell started the discussion with the following points:
  - That not every white person discriminates, but the purpose of the listening session was to discuss how discrimination pertains to the regional center and black providers and black consumers.
  - That there is no expectation for RCEB to have all the answers within two hours, and results don't happen immediately.
  - That black providers and consumers are not asking for special treatment; that they are treated fairly as everybody else is treated.
- A point was made that black service providers take many consumers that white providers turn down.

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- Wendell gave an example of doing intakes with forensic consumers in jail. He added a follow up question asking why black providers have to go all of that to get consumers, but are not getting referrals that haven't been rejected by white service providers.
- Wendell brought up the question of how grants were handled. From his experience, big white run agencies, often out of state, come in and get the grant funding, their programs fail so they close up shop, and then those consumers are referred out to existing agencies.
- Another point brought up was that these grants go out to large white agencies, yet there are black service providers who have vacancies who are never given referrals or even made aware of the need.
- Lisa Kleinbub did explain that any grant money that RCEB receives, comes from the Department of Disabled Services and it is tied to specific projects, but not specific providers. Additionally, there is the requirement that request for proposals be made for any of those funds and anyone who is interested is eligible to apply. That leads to a submission, review, and interview process for approval. Lisa concluded that there is a need to look at who has applied for and received grants, and how the regional center can be sure that a broad range of providers is represented.
- A question was raised on how rates are determined and the disparity between white and black providers, and why the money does not follow the consumers.
  - Wendell gave an example of a consumer who is attending a white run agency at higher rate, but then is switched to a black run agency at a lower rate.
  - Lisa explained that rates are tied to the program or service , and are not set up to follow the person. Additionally, she explained that older rates are based on one set of rules, while newer programs are based on another. She was hopeful that self determination would help to create balance because the budget is based on the individual. Lisa stated that it would be impossible to go into a full discussion about rates, but that PVAC could host a presentation on advocating for a more equitable rate structure.
- Wendell made a point that the regional center has a history of systematic racism when it comes to referrals.
  - Specifically, case managers refusing to refer consumers to black service providers.
  - When it comes to spending tax dollars, referrals should not be based on someone's comfort level, but rather the services that are being provided.
  - Attendees gave examples of potentially racially motivated discrimination with regards to referrals.
    - An example was given where a service provider had vacancies in his group home, but was only getting referrals for individuals whose needs were higher than the support level of his home.
    - Another provider gave an example where he was referred individuals who had higher support needs than the level of his home, and was told that if he did not accept the person, he would not receive any additional referrals for the next year.
    - Another example was a case manager moved a white consumer from his home because the case manager felt the client would feel more comfortable in a white run home, and when he complained that this is never a consideration when a black consumers is in a white run facility, nothing was ever done to address it.
    - Additional comments included:
      - A care provider was told that there are no 4i clients, so referrals were going to other homes due to the lower rate, despite requiring the support of a level 4i facility. She asked for data that reflects how many referrals have been made to providers based on ethnicity.

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- A provider stated that he felt that many case managers were not equipped to deal with the forensic population.
- A provider mentioned that she has been talking about the exact same issues for 20 years.
- A provider asked how decisions are made as to which agencies are chosen to provide services or even recommended for services.
- A request was made with regards to black consumer IPP meetings to document what they want before the meeting and compare that with what they receive after the meeting.
- A provider/behavioral consultant asked if referrals go out to all providers simultaneously. Or do they go to black service providers only after they have been rejected by a white provider or failed in a program run by a white service provider.
- A comment was made where a provider reported corruption at the regional center, and was retaliated against by the regional center and DDS.
- It was asked that the demographic makeup of providers who get called in by case managers to respond to complaints, who get called in to be questioned about their services. Additionally, that it is important that there is understanding who is referring to who and what is happening in the case management.
- There is a lack of follow up with the case managers and their supervisors. When IPPs are not provided on time, then QA comes in tells providers they have a responsibility for pushing the work product of the case managers, and if these issues are related to the ethnicity of the providers, so there needs to be accountability with regards to the training of case managers, specifically with diversity training, and do they understand their inherent biases. Do they realize how people feel coming to the regional centers, and how are African-America families being treated.
- Taking a look at how QA and case management intersects because QA should be neutral and not acting as the enforcer.
- Wendell concluded by stating Lisa Kleinbub being at the head of the organization, that she is responsible for the tone for everyone, and if the head does acknowledge that there is a racial discriminatory practice at the regional center towards black vendors and service providers, the people that are under her will not acknowledge it. Black providers need to be respected and they need to be treated fair.

**Comments**

- Geneva Ziaoure thanked everyone for their participation, and to those made statements on such a personal issue. She added that this discussion is ongoing.
- Lisa Kleinbub stated that she is committed to ending racism in any practice at RCEB. She restated her commitment, and added that she may not always get it right, but that she wants to hear from people, and will not retaliate against anyone.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:05 PM

Respectfully submitted for review by Craig Rose, Secretary