

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee
Regional Center of the East Bay
Meeting Minutes January 14, 2021**

Members Present: Sister Marygrace, East Bay Services; Leslie Visbal, Visbal Strategic Consulting; Marcie Hodge, St. John Boy's Home; Craig Rose, VistAbility; Amanda Eicher, NIAD Art Center; Carlos Cienfuegos, Sentry Living Solutions; Esther Chow, Helping Hands East Bay; Geneva Ziaoure, Manos Home Care; Jennifer Carper, Arcadia Home Care; Mike Pereira, Ala Costa Center; Ramsay Mashy, California Autism Foundation; Shannon Beatty, George Mark Children's House; Will Sanford, SC & CS; Donna Feingold, HireAble and Finding Golden Solutions

Guests Present/by Phone:

Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Steve Robinson, RCEB; Fruc Menchavez, RCEB; Chase Kalbaugh, RCEB; Ben Chen, Alameda County DD Council; Gabby Romabiles, Alameda County DD Council; Vi Ibarra, Contra Costa County DD Council; Alicia Curran, Compass SLS & ILS; Amber Avalos, NIAD Art Center; Amy Berumen, Creative Growth; Anna Willis, Emerging Horizons; Barbara Saylor, CSS SEP; Bill Pelter, Ability Now Bay Area; Carol McCrary, VistAbility; Cecilia Connolly, the Arc of the East Bay; Chandra Jackson, Clausen House; Cheryl Hill, Mason Tillman Associates; Chris Candari, Thrive SLS; Christine Ibia, Aveanna Healthcare; Dan Hogue, Las Trampas; Eddie Olayo, A&S, Inc.; Emily Correia, Enjoy Life More; Erika Gonzalez, 24 Hour Home Care; Eva Muñoz, Good Samaritan RCF; Jaynette Underhill-Levingston, Clausen House; Joe Cashel, Las Trampas; Juan Velasquez Jr., Pathway to Choices; Judy Hunter, Las Trampas; Karen Lingenfelter, Mt. Diablo Adult Education; Kelly Nguyen, Asian Resource Network; Kulwinder Kaur, A Brighter View Day Program; Lisa Gonzales, Deaf Plus Adult Community; Lynn Galliano, DABS, Inc.; Mariah Garcia, Fremont Adult School; Maureen DeCoste, Ability Now Bay Area; Monica Cardoza, CIWP; Murri Banis, VistAbility; Nancy Brum, Keystone Adult Learning Center; Purvi Knopf, RES Success; Ramona Waldman, A Brighter View Day Program; Rhonda McGlashan, Compass SLS & ILS; Shelley Crayton, Family Support Services; Sylvia Yeh, Friends of Children with Special Needs; Un Jung, Alameda County Public Health; Veronica Santana, Clausen House.

66 participants total

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Leslie Visbal at 9:35 a.m. with changes to the agenda – the HireAble committee report given by Donna Feingold will be added to reports following membership, and the standing report added to the agenda each month. No RCEB Board report as there was not a meeting this month; Lisa Kleinbub's report will follow RCEB staff report.

Approval of December 10, 2021 minutes: M/Ramsay Mashy; S/Donna Feingold; passed unanimously.

Reports

RCEB Staff Update – Steve Robinson

- Wishing everyone a happy new year amidst the very contagious variant. Many notifications from Day Programs suspending in-person services for the next couple of weeks or until February – makes sense considering how contagious the Omicron variant is.
Appreciations for continuing Alternative Services in the meantime.
- Rate Implementation – there is still much information RCEB needs to confirm and provide to DDS and Burns and Associates.
All vendor confirmations that have been received have been passed on to DDS - but out of 150 Day Program files sent out there are ~40 not turned in yet; deadline was 1/4/22. If these haven't been returned, please do – necessary for creating new rates.
- Specialized Therapeutic Services, Early Start, Specialized Residential Facilities, Adaptive Skills Training, Parent Support Services, Respite, expect these data batches to be sent out soon for verification.

- Chase Kalbaugh is the new Community Services Rate Specialist at PVAC; usually behind the scenes as the name behind the emails and the PVAC Zoom; now coordinating rate emails – look for emails from Chase regarding new rate-setting and please do respond!
- Community Resources Plan and Community Placement Plan due from RCEB to DDS today, requesting an all-female support home for co-existing I/DD and Mental Health diagnoses. May be individuals residing at Porterville, or needing crisis stabilization who receive these placements. Requesting a specialized Residential Facility for those who are Deaf or hard of hearing and requiring staff who use ASL; also requesting a Specialized Residential Facility for individuals who speak Cantonese and requiring Cantonese-speaking staff.
- Upcoming EVV workshop 1/25 from 3-4PM for providers who provide personal care services to sign up for EVV through the state – EVV is required by federal law for all personal care providers.
- **Eva Muñoz** asked whether additional funding for home-based day services will continue.
Steve: If someone is on a schedule to attend day program on a regular basis, in-home day program should not continue on those days. Residential providers can bill for days when residents are home, but not when residents are attending day program.

RCEB Board – Sister Marygrace

- No report

SCDD Regional Advisory Committee – Sheraden Nicholau

- Sheraden Nicholau was not able to attend this month; will return next month.

DD Councils –

- Alameda County – Ben Chen
 - Happy New Year!
 - COVID updates – case rates are at 100 per 14,000 residents – 3x last January's surge. Fewer hospitalizations, including among children, and testing rates are high – 1 in 5 people. There is still a risk of hospitals being overwhelmed and patients experiencing delays in receiving care. Please stay home if ill or testing positive – even if it feels like a cold, it may be Omicron.
 - Alameda County vaccination sites are providing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd doses. Make an appointment for 1st, 2nd, or 3rd dose vaccines through Alameda County: <https://my.primary.health/|/alco-vax-signup> or by calling 510-208-4VAX (4829)
 - Alameda County residents are now vaccinated at 86.8%, 55% of children ages 5 – 11 also vaccinated.
 - Mask order is back - while at one point, there were settings where folks could go unmasked, health order now requires masks in all public places.
 - Updated recommended actions for COVID-19 positive results are to stay home for 5 days, with a preferred negative test before ending isolation or continued isolation until day 10 without test. If symptoms are still present, isolate until all symptoms are resolved, even if beyond 5 or 10 days. Risk of transmission may exist beyond day 5, so masking and 10-day isolation is best practice. More guidance here: <https://covid-19.acgov.org/isolation-quarantine>
 - Mandate to boost everyone by February 1; AlCo booster clinic coming sometime before the end of the month. Booster clinic pre-registration coming next week.
 - Family Resource Navigators new event flyer is out including: Yoga for Kids, Support Groups in various languages – registration and information here: <https://familyresourcenavigators.org/what-we-do/services-programs/find-a-training/>
 - East Bay Legislative Coalition breakfast coming up on Friday, January 28 at 10AM. Zoom registration is open at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZluf-qrqzwiH903y7KI7KTulc8zeJ8Tlqwu>
 - Opportunities coming up to provide input on AlCo Emergency Medical System redesign including behavioral health response and acute care.

Disability Community Engagement and Listening session - Alameda County EMS System Redesign.
Jan 24, 6 - 7:30pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85068837482?pwd=NktrNlZ0b1JmeHNQMUhTRTVyU0Vvdz09>

General Public EMS System Redesign Listening Session.

Tue, January 18, 2022; 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM PST; <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ems-redesign-community-forum-tickets-239606799387>

- Next Alameda County DD Council Meeting: Feb 9th, 9:30am - 12:00pm
- Contra Costa County – Vi Ibarra
 - CCHHealth.org is the best general resource for updates on frequently changing Health Department guidance. Please reach out to Vi Ibarra with questions about specific information that may be missing; she can help connect with County Health Officers.
 - Shout out to Las Trampas for offering a vaccination clinic today!
 - Three open seats on the board for Contra Costa DD Council – attend three consecutive meetings to be eligible; next meeting is January 26 at 10AM and the Governor’s proposed budget will be the topic.
 - **Mike Pereira:** general question – how should consumers receive transportation to booster appointments?
Lisa Kleinbub: Should be provided through MediCal as a part of the managed care plan – will take a closer look to make sure.
Vi Ibarra: Advised that there is an online form in Contra Costa County for Homebound Residents – no clear definition of ‘homebound’ so may be a good resource more broadly if folks can’t get to appointments.
Contra Costa County, homebound vaccination request:
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=3tkgKC3cY0OGJvKwA00MRS41XWRGeRJBtHJgApNLJo1UNjQ4WTM0VVbXWEY3MDRHMjFGVjllUEc2My4u&wdLOR=cFCC83D0F-655C-4300-9FDE-E2C3459CE5BA>
Ben recommended MediCal plans first, and then looking to Homebound services in Alameda County.

RCEB/State - Lisa Kleinbub

- Sharing a powerpoint from DDS re: Governor’s Budget 2022/23.
- Some changes between last year and this year – by end of 2023 FY, system will be serving over 400,000 people – so much growth including a catch-up on intake since the beginning of the pandemic.
- Numbers for DDS HQ are a bit lower than in the past, as well as state-operated services.
- Regional Center Operations spending and POS spending projected to increase.
- Some American Rescue Act Funds developments: HCBS services spending including – adults living in the family home with coordinated services, personal care, respite; language access and cultural competency; children and adolescent programs in the community; rate model implementation; information technology modernization; Early Start.

Policy

- Re: Regional Centers: Case management increases at \$83.8M to come closer to meeting case load ratios. Workforce training/development for DSPs. Service Coordination for low/no POS caseloads. Specialized home monitoring. Lanterman Act Provisional Eligibility. Specialized Caseload Ratio for Complex needs. RC Emergency Coordinator increased funds for higher level of expertise. Rate reform estimates increased by \$427.1M. Minimum wage increases. Social Rec & Camp services. START Crisis Training.

New Policies

- RCs & DDS: Reduced caseload ratios for children through age 5 – a dramatic change and budget increase to support young children’s success.
- Inclusivity for preschool age children.

- IDEA Technical support to target IEPs and Service Coordination.
- Communications assessments for consumers who are Deaf and hard of hearing.
- Pilot to phase out sub-minimum wage.
- Federal Compliance activities to include Medicaid enrollment for all service providers including background checks for every individual including board of directors for all provider organizations.
- DDS resources for SDP, HCBS monitoring and extension of HCBS with staffing for RC's and DDS.

DDS Budget Change Proposals and State Operated Facilities

- STAR homes are increasing in number.
- Porterville Sprinkler System, shutdown funding for Sonoma and Fairview.

OTHER

- SSP Increase in 2024.
- Universal Healthcare for all individuals including those without citizenship.

Questions –

- Are the increase for rates enough, or do they need to increase to keep up with inflation/economy, cost of living, staffing challenges? More funding may not help meet the wage pressure, challenge to hire robustly to meet increased ratio demands.
- Cost of living increase over the past year has been 7%; hoping that state might respond with supports in this area given the surplus in California.
- **Dan Hogue** and **Sylvia Yeh** requested the slides from Lisa's presentation.
- **Mike Pereira** noted that Lisa's report concurred with EBLC's analysis.

Question re: Day Programs – will alternative services be continued, and if so, how long? Ultimately, rates may need to be adjusted for Alternative Programs as well; is DDS considering this?

Lisa: Has not heard anything about this. When there's no potential to be in person because of health concerns, Alternative Services works, but consumers would prefer availability of direct services and tailoring day services to provide hybrid programs on an ongoing basis.

Alternative Services is a pandemic solution, not an ongoing thing.

What will this mean if we still see surges in April and beyond? Burns and Associates and DDS do not appear to be calculating for this right now.

Mike: Since this is continuing, we need to consider how we will navigate in an ongoing way, especially acknowledging that no day program to date has completed a full return to prior capacity after prior waves.

Lisa: No sign that DDS is considering the pandemic as an ongoing phenomenon; none of us wants to envision this as a lasting reality – instead, thinking through tailored day services to meet consumers' needs.

Steve: Even if we could go back, coordination of services including transportation makes it nearly impossible to return to what we know. Pointing out that although we're seeing new hires at RC's happening at higher rates, system exists with many more continuing employees who are vastly underpaid.

- **Mike:** Come to the legislative breakfast!

New POS Data:

- POS expenditure data is posted on RCEB website; meetings coming up to look at this data, which is not so easy to analyze year-to-year considering the pandemic's impact on POS utilization. By two years from now, we'll have a little more long-range data to compare, but rate changes will also skew the data. Haven't heard yet from DDS on how to interpret this data, but hoping to hear more.
- Locations of community meetings will be announced on RCEB website in the next few weeks.

East Bay Legislative Coalition – Will Sanford

- Big picture budget items: \$7.4 Billion surplus; \$20 Million available for general fund expenditures. Governor has targeted areas to spend: Prop 98 K-12 schools and community colleges: \$16B; \$9B to increase reserve deposits to increase rainy day fund to \$20B; paying down pension liability for state and governmental employees.

Five big areas of focus: 1 - Fighting COVID; 2 – Climate Crisis; 3- Confronting Homelessness; 4-Tackling cost of living and Increasing child care and early education; 6 – Keeping streets safe w law enforcement.

- In three hours of presentation, I/DD community didn't come up at all; spending last year may mean our system isn't a big focus for new spending.
- In planned spending, much of the budget growth is either caseload growth which trends nationwide or rate study implementation.
- In 22-23, \$45M will be eligible for provider performance incentives. Work groups active on this, but no defined incentives yet.
- Thanks to Ben for promoting the EBLC Breakfast on January 28.
- I/DD has support in the legislature but always needs to advocate with Governor's administration.
- Self Determination expected to grow from \$35M - \$90M in services provided and services + supports.
- \$15M in HCBS waiver grants expected to be available for targeted compliance by March 2023.
- Talking points for legislators – Alternative Services, impacts of COVID, Self Determination.
- With change in legislators, we have a different set of champions in the assembly – important to connect now.
- Federally, Build Back Better still in conversation but not likely to move forward; Voting Rights Act; filibuster changes.
- EBLC beginning to look at legislation to reintroduce bills: Fair Caring, Conservatorship Reform.

Comments/Questions:

- Hoping to have five offices represented at the Legislative Breakfast; please attend and spread the word! Service providers, families, self-advocates – welcome to attend and share stories and experiences.
- **Donna Feingold:** I know there is a huge push to address the rate study, but there are issues with the rate study and its impact isn't equitable or positive for all providers.
In the interest of DSPs, it would be great to see either one-time payments or recruitment bonus budget money, that would be a way to improve our system across the board.
- **Mike Pereira:** Lanterman Coalition is advocating around rate study disparities, and will be in communication with legislators, DDS, hold-harmless language, sustainability language from Build Better Act to update rates with cost-of-living adjustments, and orphan codes not included in the study.
- **Question from Purvi Knopf:** When will hourly rates begin?
Steve: July 1, 2025, hourly rates will commence for all day programs.
For vendors currently billing daily, include information for the hours included in one day, usually 6 hours.
Until 2025, rate increase will be to the daily rate, unless already billing hourly.
Purvi: information provided for a 5-hour program day; will it be divided by 5 and compared to hourly rate, And result in a reduced increase? Concerns about hourly rate – glad not to have to work with this until 2025, but wanting to maximize rates in the meantime, worrying about reductions in rate increase due to daily rate figures.
- **Donna:** hourly model for those currently using daily and monthly rates is very challenging and advocates are working on this since it provides a new admin burden for providers.
- **Mike:** if we want to transition to outcomes-based system, it will take work since we currently work with a compliance-based model. There's still some time to address this, but time is ticking!
- **Lisa:** Much of this work is not about the hours of support, but for many people served and their families, knowing the hours provided is needed accountability.
We know that transportation is a big deal as it impacts the hours spent in program. However, we need to improve the transportation system as well.
There hasn't been consistency about what a day program means in terms of hours, so we want to provide that consistency for consumers, residential providers, and support systems at home.

Day Service Providers – Mike Pereira

- During December, Day Providers met less frequently; covering reacting to the impact of COVID and the booster mandate for employees. Challenges discussed reflect what's happening nationwide – lack of testing, booster availability, staffing impact of repeated vaccinations.

- Ramping up for legislative breakfast, applying advocacy efforts.
- Sharing resources for antigen testing – through the state, county health offices, CityHealth, ensuring safety in returning to programs.
- Shout out to Las Trampas for providing Booster clinic! And to AICo DD Council for organizing to provide one soon.

Membership – Marcie Hodges

- Marcie Hodges wished everyone a happy new year and welcomed everyone; those attending three meetings in a row will automatically be added as members. Marcie advised that Leslie termed out as Co-Chair in December, but Leslie advised she will continue as needed. Interested Co-Chairs should email Marcie or Leslie with their intent to have name placed on ballot; Co-Chair is shared with Sister Marygrace, co-chair. Open positions: Work Group Day Program; Transportation; Employment Services from Contra Costa County.
- Leslie mentioned that typically PVAC presents a slate of officers for vote at the end of the year and this has not happened recently because of pandemic and lack of candidates.
Lisa asked when the slate for the Board is presented? **Leslie:** November, with vote in December and confirmation and presentation of new officers in January.

HireAble – Donna Feingold

- An introduction – HireAble started as the East Bay Employment Coalition with mission to increase outcomes for adults with I/DD. Through a grant from Long Foundation, three orgs including East Bay Innovations, Futures Explored, and Arc of Contra Costa County (now Vistability), formed a coalition to increase employment opportunities. Denise Cartwright was a consultant to HireAble, and upon her retirement, Donna became the new consultant.
- Unemployment and underemployment for people served in I/DD community has hovered around 75-80%.
- HireAble works with employers, individuals, but also with providers – K-12 reps, Adult Schools, Regional Centers, Department of Rehab.
- To join meetings or listserve, email Donna Feingold at donna@hireable.org. Presentations at each meeting, including this month January 26 at 3PM, ARC Fresno on transition out of sheltered workshop by working with Regional Center and service codes in creative ways. One of the biggest barriers in working with employment is fear of working with DOR for supported employment. While Supported Employment may work for many, it's not for everyone. With new opportunities, we are better able to serve people through more traditional day programs for people who would like a mix of work with social rec and other offerings.
- HireAble promotes alternative ways to increase employment. Regular meetings going forward will be either Monday or Wednesday afternoons following this month's meeting on January 26 at 3PM.
- HireAble has also been vendorized for benefit planning to minimize loss of SSI benefits. More information on how to connect with Donna and HireAble coming up!
- **Carlos Cienfuegos** asked whether RCEB is accepting vendors to apply for employment services. **Steve:** Yes; Rose is working with vendors on their applications. **Carlos:** Their application has been over the threshold of the usual timeframe. Concerned about fairness of process.

Announcements

- Next PVAC meeting on Zoom is Friday, February 11 at 9:30AM.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:12 AM

Respectfully submitted for review by Amanda Eicher, Secretary