

**Provider Vendor Advisory Committee
Regional Center of the East Bay
Meeting Minutes March 11, 2022**

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; Mike Pereira, Ala Costa Centers; Ramsay Mashy, California Autism Foundation; Donna Feingold, HireAble and Finding Golden Solutions; Will Sanford, SC & CS; Esther Chow, Helping Hands East Bay; Jennifer Carper, Arcadia Home Care and Staffing

Guests Present/by Phone:

Lisa Kleinbub, RCEB; Steve Robinson, RCEB; Fruc Menchavez, RCEB; Chase Ryan Kalbaugh, RCEB; Sheraden Nicholau, SCDD; Ben Chen, Alameda County DD Council; Gabby Romabiles, Alameda County DD Council; Vi Ibarra, Contra Costa County DD Council; Aimee Vitug-Hom, VistAbility; Alicia Curran, Compass SLS & ILS; Amber Avalos, NIAD Art Center; Amy Schwartz, RCEB; Amy Simons, A Brighter View Day Program; Anna Willis, Emerging Horizons; Anthony Green, Sevita Health; B.J. Cottrell, Jaqui' Foundation; Barbara Saylor, CSS-Antioch & Richmond; Bill Pelter, Ability Now; Carol Ann McCrary, VistAbility; Cecilia Connolly, the Arc of the East Bay; Cheryl Hill, Mason Tillman Associates; Dan Hogue, Las Trampas; Danon Jenkins, Futures Explored; Darrice Tillery, Harambee Community Services; Dominique Mellion, Broadmoor Community Services; Doreen Khan, Sutro Home – Shepherd House; Emily Correia, Enjoy Life More; Erica Lazaldi, DDS; Eva Muñoz, Good Samaritan RCF; Geneva Ziaoure, Manos Home Care; Heather Manes, H.A.T.C.H.; James Mercado, Open House Center; Jamie Renton, Pleasanton Adult Education; Jaynette Underhill-Levingston, Clausen House; Jessica Walters; Joanne Rolle, The Arc of the East Bay; Karen Lingenfelter, Mt. Diablo Adult Education; Kate Hartline, Las Trampas; Kelly Ko, FCSN; Kipi Iscandari, A and K Residential Homes; Kulwinder Kaur, A Brighter View Day Program; Lisa Gonzales, Deaf Plus Adult Community; Lita Guerrero, A Brighter View; Louise McClellan, Open House Center; Maria Ramirez; Maureen DeCoste, Ability Now Bay Area; Nancy Brum, Keystone Adult Learning Center; Rajeswari Arumgam, Open House Center; Ronnel Dela Cruz, Rotu Inc; Samuel Kim, We Thrive; Sarah Burgett, Toolworks; Shelley Crayton, Family Support Services; Stephanie Featherstone, Sevita Health; Sylvia Yeh, Friends of Children with Special Needs; Tracy Harvey, WT All Access Transportation Inc.; Veronica Santana, Clausen House; Yaminah Holmes, Sevita Health.

80 participants total

Call to Order:

Meeting called to order by Leslie Visbal at 9:33 a.m. with adjustments to the agenda – Leslie Visbal will report in place of Sheraden Nicholau who is not available today.

February Minutes:

Approval of February 11, 2022 minutes: M/Ramsay Mashy; S/Donna Feingold; passed unanimously.

Inclusion Time:

Leslie Visbal invited those in attendance to share good things happening in the community, to invite the sense of participation we might miss from in-person meetings.

Jamie Renton shared that she is so happy to have found the PVAC group and Leslie welcomed her for her first meeting.

Zach Wheeler shared good news from RCEB regarding disparities in the system; Courtney Singleton emailed from North Bay Regional Center to address concerns about rates for African-American providers, with an interest in remedying the situation of lower rates – this is GREAT NEWS to have identified a problem and created willingness to fix it – thanks to North Bay Regional Center for raising this issue.

Sister Marygrace visited a program yesterday and experienced their sophisticated way of doing hybrid with in-person and Zoom participants, including singing, exercise and dance. Asking the staff about their jobs, they cited exercising, dance, singing, and occasional parties – a great way to look at hybrid services and work in general!

Ben Chen shared that the Alameda County Transition Fair is coming up, and so many vendors and participants have shared the news of the transition fair – Ben thanked everyone who has helped to spread the word.

Amanda Eicher appreciated PVAC members who were so supportive of NIAD's 40th anniversary and Win Win 10 and shared that NIAD sailed past its goal with the fundraiser.

Presentation

Erica Lazaldi, DDS – Gathering data on the DSP Workforce

- Survey is being released this spring of 2022 – one link sent to each agency employing DSPs in 2021. Agencies with multiple locations may choose to submit separate surveys by location or to submit one umbrella survey.
- In-home, Residential, Non-residential supports all included.
- Seeking HR and payroll data for CY 21
- Evaluating impact of CA/DDS initiatives for DSP workforce.
- Includes DSPs who spend >50% time providing direct services, but not workers who are not employed through RCEB or 1099/contract employees.
- Questions include comparative periods throughout the year, and request data on wages and hours.
- Survey responses will be available as a downloadable PDF after filled.
- Responding to survey is voluntary, and data will be de-identified of provider information.
- Please help spread the word! Our DSPs benefit from it! DSPWorkForce@dds.ca.gov
- **Sarah Burgett** asked whether SLS is considered Residential or In-Home Supports. **Erica** responded that she will be in direct contact with Sarah. **Sylvia Yeh** also asked about Respite services, and multiple providers requested that the information be made available to the PVAC list.
- **Mike Pereira** asked whether to include information about frontline supervisors who cover in DSP capacity and hours spent in coverage. **Erica** responded that this is an important part of the data with its own section and pointed out that there is a section to address adjustments made due to COVID-19.

Presentation

Steve Robinson and Chase Kalbaugh, RCEB – Rate Implementation

- Rate increases of 25% of the total increase will begin April 1, as figured by Burns and Associates and confirmed by RCEB and vendors.
- April 1, 2022 – 25%; July 1, 2023 – 50%; July 1, 2025 – Full Implementation with 90% of the rate model and 10% quality incentive.
- Rates based on \$13 minimum wage – current rates include \$15/hr minimum wage; wage inflation; benefits inflation; and mileage inflation.
- Rates published on DDS's website reflect the rate models pre-revisions. Updates will be posted week of 3/14.
- Changes **NOT** happening in April:
 - Revendorization to new service codes will occur by July 1, 2025.
 - Unit types – transition to hourly billing will occur by July 1, 2025.
 - No rates reduced – per AB136, rates that would be reduced are held harmless until June 30, 2026.
- **Carlos Cienfuegos** asked what the quality measurements would be, and **Donna Feingold** responded that a DDS workgroup is currently meeting to identify Outcome Measurements.
- Excluded Services:
 - Non-Residential Alternative Services
 - Services not included in the rate study

- Specialized programs and services ID'd by subcode:
 - Senior Program
 - Tailored Day Service
 - Specialized Training/Medical Services
 - Paid Internship Program Payments
 - Placement Incentive Payments
 - Placement Incentive Payments
 - Health Insurance Copays and Deductibles
 - Independent Assessment Services – ILS/SLS
- **Esther Chow** asked whether TDS was excluded from the rate increase? **Will Sanford** pointed out that TDS will be adjusted by the change in underlying rate.
- Rates have been batched by service code; important to the entire batch of codes that each provider make sure to turn in the worksheets for their rate since DDS will not calculate rates without these sheets.
- Providers vendored after 6/30/21 will be included in their own batch - #5. Even if retroactive, these vendors will also receive rate increases.
- Timeline: RCEB receives worksheets > Worksheets with letters to providers with negotiated rates > DDS sends letter for temporary payment rates for 505, 510, 515, 520, 805, 862 > RCEB Accounting will plan to update rates by 4/25/22 > DDS will have a review/questions process.
- New vendors (4/1/22+) will be updated by DDS and Burns and Associates as well.
- **Mike Pereira** asked for confirmation that the worksheets published are not valid. **Steve** responded that the rates may change – or may not; they will be re-published next week. **Will** asked if the old estimates will be removed? **Steve** confirmed that hopefully they will be replaced next week at the same link.
- **Dan Hogue** asked whether SLS will switch to hourly rates? **Steve** confirmed that SLS will be converted to hourly in April.
- **Jamie Renton** asked whether Paid Internships will be included? **Steve** confirmed that they will not. **Jamie** asked for more information why PIPs not included? **Steve** responded that it's likely due to the way that PIP is based on wages earned in the field.
- **Mike Pereira** asked whether the revisions in rates will delay rates being released. **Steve** replied that there is some work to do reviewing the updated calculations before Monday.
- **Donna Feingold** asked about a new rate for services not previously provided – Job Development: are there guidelines about when/how this will be used? **Steve** replied that it may not completely be new; it may be based on responses from providers for percentage time spent on Job Development/Job Coaching. **Donna** asked how new providers can access this rate? **Steve** will look into it and respond. **Donna** asked about SLS providers – can they opt not to move to hourly? **Steve** responded that all providers must move together to hourly. **Donna** asked whether the rate would go down, and **Steve** responded that the rate would not go down as a result.
- **Sylvia Yeh** asked whether 055 would really be going away; **Steve** responded that it would go away eventually by July 2025. The goal is that by 2025, everyone will be at the same rate for services under the new codes.
- **Lisa Kleinbub** added that we'll have to stay tuned to the initiatives to adjust for minimum wage over the next few years until 2025.
- **Sylvia** asked whether there will be changes to ASD rates – **Steve** responded no. **Sylvia** asked whether ASD billing will continue beyond March 31.
- **Lisa** responded that despite asking DDS multiple times, there is no answer about continuation of ASD.
- **Will** mentioned that there has been a lot of communication from ARCA and other agencies about the notice needed for ending ASD. **Will** also asked about Medical/Behavioral programs, and Supported Employment – how will these be implemented on April 1? **Steve** responded that it is complex, and RCEB is working on navigating these situations along with providers. He also advised that there may be significant pushback for DDS if they attempt to roll out Job Development/Job Coaching on a percentage basis.

- **Will, Donna, and Darice** also thanked Steve and Chase for their attempt to be clear in a changing and murky landscape.
- **Sister Marygrace** asked Steve to confirm whether Day Programs would move to hourly rates; **Steve** responded that aside from SLS, RCEB would be calculating a daily rate from the hourly rate projections.

RCEB Staff Report – Steve Robinson

- RCEB Staff are hearing more and more that participants want to return to in-person services.
- **Priscilla Gomez** gave an update on social distancing and masking on transportation: the mask requirement is still in place. For licensed providers, refer to CCL pin recommending 6’ social distance on transportation. For unlicensed providers, requirement is dropped. If all transported live in same home, then distancing is not required.
- **Lita Guerrero** asked whether they can increase numbers of riders in their transport? **Priscilla** responded that community-based programs can increase passenger numbers again.
- **Sylvia Yeh** mentioned that they are ready to increase operations again, but EB Paratransit was not able to accommodate. **Priscilla** responded that support from RCEB for scheduling is temporary, and at some point it will go back to trip reservation requests and standing orders. For this week the scheduler is not available, so delays are expected.
- **Joanne Rolle** mentioned that at Arc of the East Bay, they are limited in increasing participant return by CCL restrictions on social distancing in programs. **Mike Pereira** asked whether there is any update about this, and **Priscilla** responded that there are no updates yet, but that within the next couple of months there may be an update. **Joanne** also mentioned that this restricts how quickly rate increases can benefit providers.
- **Lisa Kleinbub** mentioned that they are following up at a state level and she is expecting that they will be updated soon, based on other state guidance. **Mike** pointed out the inequity for the sector compared to schools, etc, and **Steve** mentioned that CCL is truly running behind the rest of society on guidance.

RCEB/State - Lisa Kleinbub

Rate Increase

- Very grateful to Steve, Chase, and new accounting staff for rapidly moving new rates into place – please bear with everyone, but also help identify and point out issues.

State Budget

- With hearings last month, this is a somewhat quiet month – May revise will bring more advocacy opportunities.
- Tax income in CA still very strong, but several items have impacted how that is seen – Gov. Newsom mentioned holding back on taxes, or rebates, to address increased gas taxes. Additions in system may be held up by interest to address cost of gas. IRS mileage rate is a basis for many things – adjustments to this rate will be important but may take some time.
- Proposal to move forward on implementation of 7/1/23 25% increase is still active, but DDS has said since it is pending review by CMS, it may not happen. This is a place for our sector to continue advocacy.
- Quality measures still being discussed by DS Task Force; also discussion on RC performance measures, which are due in early May. Provider measures will come later, but there is much discussion at present – please make comment and stay tuned for April DS Task Force meeting!
- March is the month when POS data comes out – please stay tuned for meetings and feel welcomed to participate. This is the basis for developing plans for grant funding and new initiatives.

RCEB Board – Sister Marygrace

- February 28 Board Meeting included concerns during public comment about systemic and structural racism, racial disparities, and service inequities. Board met to address concerns and bring specifics about where discrepancies lie; Diversity and Equity Committee is bringing data that may help look at low levels of services. RCEB Board is seriously and earnestly endeavoring to resolve these issues toward feeling like everyone is sitting at the table as equals in the RCEB catchment area.
- Contract approved with Independent Solution Community Services to provide SLS Services to 15 individuals, highlighting individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Director Arlene Bays, a family member with individuals in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, committed to SLS services for this population.
- Consumer Advisory Committee has noted that reinstating social recreation funding a highlight of interest. Lots of excitement around this topic on the part of consumers.
- Board Training coming up on crisis/after-hours services.
- **Zack Wheeler** pointed out that more rigorous action needs to be taken to address inequity within the system. More time spent, answers moved forward more quickly – not just another item on the agenda.
- **Maria Ramirez** asked if the Board and Sister Marygrace really understand what systemic racism really is? In this system, for individuals with I/DD? In this system, in California, eugenics laws were in place and these attitudes are built into the system – forced sterilizations, lobotomies, lockdowns – where people of color were overrepresented, and this is the root that lingers on today. As parents, supporters, since COVID, change is necessary and access is imperative. Racial disparities, systemic racism – these are part of the committee conversation and part of what we’re asking to change. Looking for real talk and real action – last month, Sister Marygrace mentioned that Lisa Kleinbub would bring new information and action this month – what is being done? **Leslie Visbal** mentioned that it is a real concern and it should take up more space in our conversations. **Zack Wheeler** said it shouldn’t take a rally.
- **Angeleter Pringle** mentioned that surveys, initiatives are not helpful – what they are looking for is answers. What will happen with the conditions put on the table? What is the plan to resolve them? RCEB’s work is not all bad, but it is necessary to see changes in the conditions being brought to the table.
- **Lisa Kleinbub** answered that the Board has received the letters and is responding to the letters – they are working to address specific issues within the community. Looking at the system as a whole, rate changes are moving forward, and change is being made to counter the legacy of eugenics and California’s history – one of the worst in the nation. Lisa welcomed PVAC members to attend meetings where dollars spent are being discussed, but also invited collaboration about moving services forward – for example, Social Rec – where change can begin to be made.

SCDD Regional Advisory Committee – Leslie Visbal with an update from Sheraden Nicholau

- Updates to the SB639 (phasing out subminimum wage in CA) webpage have launched, and here is where community members and stakeholders can find info about implementation and resources: <https://scdd.ca.gov/sb639-4/>.
- The first meeting of the SB 639 stakeholder workgroup will be Wednesday, March 16, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. We will introduce the stakeholder-members, examine best practices, review community member concerns, determine a timeline, discuss expectations, and identify workgroup member information and resources. For more details : <https://scdd.ca.gov/sb639-home/>
Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84840639804?pwd=NGtEbmxBd1RzczE5NWtSZCtLV3lsZz09#success>
This stakeholder group includes members from various state agencies, community service providers, and people who have intellectual/developmental disabilities. The public may listen to the meeting and participate in the question-and-answer portion.
- Did you know that Program Development Grants are how new initiatives like **Let’s Work** are funded? Cycle 45 RFP is now available on topics – Education, Employment, Housing, and Safety – due May 17. For more information on Cycle 45 grants, please visit <https://scdd.ca.gov/grantinformation/>
- 3/17: Legislative and Public Policy Committee Meeting @ 10a
- 3/21: Self-Advocates Advisory Committee Meeting @ 2p

- 3/22: Council Meeting @ 1030a
- 4/27: Bay Area Regional Advisory Committee Meeting @ 630p
- Autism Star Conference on April 9. Registration is now open for this free conference which is designed for parents of school-age kids with autism. The keynote presenters are two young men with autism who are going to speak to us about their experience through their school years and moving toward adulthood. Then we'll have a presentation regarding managing challenging behaviors, followed by DREDF presenting on education and advocacy. Spanish translation and closed captioning will be provided.
- Committee on Aging. This is a relatively new work group with members representing both Alameda and Contra Costa. They are working to identify and address issues as our I/DD population, and their caregivers, are aging. At the next meeting, they will be joined by the Center for Elders Independence to present information on their programs and services and be available to answer questions. That next meeting is April 12 1:00 pm. TUESDAY, APRIL 12th at 1:00 p.m. For questions contact Marianne Iversen, 925-362-8660 x 103, Marianne@dscba.org, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82397200722>
- The next DD Council board meeting will be March 23 starting at 10am. We will have a presentation from the Contra Costa Mental Health Commission so that we can better understand the work they do and learn how we can best support their efforts. Anyone is welcome to join that meeting and I'm happy to provide further meeting details if you are interested.

DD Councils –

- Alameda County – Ben Chen
 - Transition Fair March 12 – Educational Workshops; Resource Fair – March 15. Register for the 2022 Alameda County Transition Fair: <https://tinyurl.com/AlCo2022TF>
 - 2021 Alameda County Adult Resource Guide: <https://acphd-web-media.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/media/programs-services/ddc/docs/2021-adult-services-resource-guide.pdf>
To be added to our Adult Resource Guide as a new provider or make updates as a returning provider: fill out our Google form.
 - Next Alameda County DDC Board Meeting is on April 13 – 9:30am – 12:00pm
 - Board meeting April 13 – 12 – 5PM
 - Gabby Romabiles will be leaving post-transition fair; moving into another position, and remarked with gratefulness for learnings from I/DD community – a fond farewell. Thank you Gabby!
- Contra Costa County – Vi Ibarra
 - Autism Star Conference on April 9. Registration is now open for this free conference which is designed for parents of school-age kids with autism. The keynote presenters are two young men with autism who are going to speak to us about their experience through their school years and moving toward adulthood. Then we'll have a presentation regarding managing challenging behaviors, followed by DREDF presenting on education and advocacy. Spanish translation and closed captioning will be provided.
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East Bay Legislative Coalition – Will Sanford

Budget Advocacy

- Budget Advocacy for acceleration of Rate Study increases – encouraging CMS approval and DDS action.
- Action on service codes not included in Rate Study – requiring DDS to review and update.
- ARCA proposal to update ‘Core Staffing Formula’ for Regional Centers from 1991 levels.
- Emails should be directed to Dr. Arambula, Susan Eggman
- EBLC Meeting April 6 10AM-12PM.

Day Program Subcommittee – Mike Pereira

- Thanks to Steve Robinson, Chase Kalbaugh, and team for work on Rate Study increases.
- Encouraging interested providers to attend Troubleshoot and Support meeting on Wednesdays at 2PM.
- Weekly provider meetings on Fridays at 11AM when PVAC does not meet.

HireAble – Donna Feingold

- Thanks to Chevron Neurodiversity Hiring Program representatives for their presentation on February 28.
- Upcoming HireAble meeting on March 28 at 3PM; Zoom details coming through PVAC listserv.
 - Topic will be transition from School to Adult employment opportunities.
- Re: Employment Development rate, not intending to put staff on the spot, but this rate could be a game-changer if providers could hire and train staff who want to provide these supports.
- **Bill Pelter** announced that Committee Aging mtg will have a presentation with Q&A by Center for Elders Independence PLEASE JOIN US ON TUESDAY, APRIL 12th at 1:00 p.m

For questions contact

Marianne Iversen

925-362-8660 x 103

Marianne@dscba.org <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82397200722>

Membership – Marcie Hodges

- Welcoming all newcomers to consider membership in PVAC – after three consecutive meetings, PVAC counts attendees as members. Please put name and email in the chat!
- Marcie acknowledged that Leslie’s co-chair position has expired and that it would be great to hear from interested Co-Chairs for PVAC! Please email marciehodge@msn.com.
- Open positions for PVAC: Alameda/Work Program, Day Services, Transportation, Contra Costa/Employment.

Announcements

- **Zack Wheeler** mentioned that he cannot wait to apply as Co-Chair!
- Next PVAC meeting on Zoom is Friday, April 8 at 9:30AM.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:31 AM

Respectfully submitted for review by Amanda Eicher, Secretary