

OCRA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 1, 2013

Present: Lakeisha Burkes, Billy Hall, Amy Kalivas and Jean Townsend

Staff: Cara Armstrong, Catherine Blakemore, Julie Garton, Katie Hornberger, Andrew Mudryk, Alice Ximenez

Facilitators/Attendants: Emily Spurgeon, Monica Huezo and Zina Guerrero

Introductions:

Billy called the meeting to order at 3:04p.m.

Committee members and all present introduced themselves.

Approval of Agenda and Last Minutes: The agenda was discussed. It was M/S/C (Burke/Kalivas) that the agenda and the September 21, 2012 OCRA Advisory Committee Minutes be approved.

Process for Selecting New Public Members: Katie Hornberger explained that there is room for one more member on the OCRA Advisory Committee, and recommended that the hire process begin. The recommendation is that two weeks prior to the next OCRA Advisory Committee Meeting, applications will be reviewed, and then they will be discussed at next meeting. Billy Hall suggested that the applicant not have any conflicts of interest and if he/she does, he/she should tell the board. Jean Townsend suggested that the applicants be willing to talk a lot and come to meetings full of ideas so the committee members have a good exchange of information and remain open. Lakeisha Burkes commented that people can receive a good experience by being a member because they can see what is happening. Amy Kalivas shared that new DRC members are asked to indicate what board committees they want to be a member of, and Ms. Kalivas will encourage other DRC members to join the OCRA Advisory Committee. It was M/S/C (Burkes/Kalivas) that the hire process begin to hire a new member for the OCRA Advisory Committee.

Re-Appointment of Members: Billy recommended re-appointment of current OCRA Advisory Committee members to be extended to three years, ending in 2014. This would affect Lakeisha Burkes and Jean Townsend. It was M/S/C (Kalivas/Burkes) to approve this recommendation.

Semi-Annual Report: Katie Hornberger gave a report on the OCRA Semi-Annual Report submitted to Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

The Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) served more clients than the previous year. The majority of OCRA calls were about regional center services and eligibility, following with Income Maintenance which includes In-Home Support Services (IHSS), social security issues and then special education services. Consumers are finding OCRA and are able to contact OCRA for assistance.

There were many OCRA staff changes in the past six months. OCRA hired Katie Hornberger as the new Director of OCRA, Tim Poe as the new Supervising Clients Rights Advocate, Patricia Martin, as the new Assistant Clients Rights Advocate for the OCRA San Diego Regional Center office, and Hannah Liddell, as the new Clients' Rights Advocate for the OCRA Frank D. Lanterman office. OCRA is now in process of hiring a new Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate for the OCRA Golden Gate Regional Center office in San Rafael.

OCRA conducted many outreaches. The number of outreaches has gone down by four in comparison to last year. OCRA conducted 165 outreach events, and 7,949 people received information about OCRA to help them in their daily lives.

Billy Hall asked if outreach event coordination is done by mail and how it gets started. Ms. Hornberger explained that all outreach events are in-person. Some outreach events in the past year, included national events with a table, training sessions at the People First of California conference, or through local parent groups.

Ms. Hornberger talked about the very positive survey statistics and how surveys showed that 88% of people were satisfied with the timeliness of callbacks. OCRA has done training for its staff since then to improve that one area.

Ms. Burkes talked about independent living skills (ILS) and how the local regional center is trying to stop the process of ILS workers signing up new clients. Ms. Burkes receives questions from many people so she wants more information to share with them. Andy Mudryk suggested that more discussion be done after the OCRA Advisory Committee Meeting ends. Ms. Hornberger explained that CRAs get calls regarding vendor choices and they receive questions about how to work with regional centers to get services they want or need and was happy to discuss with Ms. Burkes in more detail.

Ms. Townsend talked about elderly people being put in nursing homes since the number of older callers has increased. Ms. Hornberger recently attended a conference about elderly people preparing for transition. OCRA is recognizing that people with developmental disabilities want to retire and slow down just like everyone else. Most people don't want to go into a nursing home. OCRA Golden Gate Regional Center office serves San Francisco. Recently, a client called and explained that he lived at home with his mother. He was calling because he was concerned about what would happen to him in the future without his mother. He wanted to live independently in the family home in the future. So, he asked for an IPP meeting and in the IPP meeting, which OCRA attended with him, it was written that supported living services would start when his mother could no longer assist him. The caller would not have to go into a group home when his mother could no longer care for him but rather stay in his family with appropriate supports. OCRA is working with clients ahead of time to make a plan for them and encouraging families to plan ahead.

Presentation about the Budget Update: Ms. Hornberger shared information about the state budget and distributed a memo explaining the changes. Ms. Burkes asked if budget has been decided. Mr. Hall talked about sequestration; which is part of the federal budget. Ms. Hornberger explained that the state budget will be impacted if sequestration happens but that is not included in the current proposed budget we are reviewing.

Ms. Burkes asked what the affects will be on schools. The local Sacramento Unified School District has been talking about closing many local schools and the schools are teaching children well. Ms. Hornberger explained that was a very local issue related to local budgets.

DDS funds our regional center system. One of the areas of the budget to continue is the Annual Family Program Fee; where families pay \$250 per year unless they meet certain income guidelines. The new budget calls for regional center funding of insurance copays for behavioral services for children and adults with autism. This budget includes increases in special education money. There are proposed cuts to Medi-Cal but it is unclear as to what cuts will actually happen. The Coordinated Care Initiative will also move people into managed care.

Mr. Hall asked if the OCRA Advisory Committee members are allowed to lobby at the State Capitol for In-Home Support Services. Mr. Mudryk explained that as a board member, if you speak on behalf of DRC, there are rules. OCRA Advisory Committee members need to talk to DRC staff

such as Mr. Mudryk, Ms. Hornberger or Ms. Blakemore before deciding to do an activity related to lobbying. Mr. Hall also asked about the grassroots idea hoping that many others would be part of it, and Mr. Mudryk suggested that Mr. Hall talk to DRC staff first.

Ms. Burkes asked if she had to speak to DRC staff before helping gather a group regarding the budget. Mr. Mudryk explained that if a board member is speaking on behalf of DRC, talk to Ms. Hornberger first. If a board member wants to do something on their own, than it is okay to move forward without talking to DRC staff.

Zina Guerrero asked about the \$250 fee. Ms. Hornberger explained that it is an annual family program fee for consumers under 18 and not receiving Medi-cal. It is for families above income guidelines. It is not for families solely receiving respite or daycare. The fee is assessed once a year. There are also exemptions for those families who cannot afford it.

Ms. Hornberger continued to explain the cuts to the IHSS program. Ms. Hornberger explained that even if people getting maximum hours, OCRA understands that it is often still not enough.

East Bay Regional Center Update: Arthur Lipscomb, Clients' Rights Advocate for the Regional Center of East Bay (RCEB), gave the Committee an overview of the work the Regional Center of the East Bay OCRA team does. This office had a variety of cases this past year. The type of cases this office has worked on are related to social security, IHSS, special education and regional center. One case was regarding a \$14,816.00 overpayment for social security. Mr. Lipscomb met with the local social security office on behalf of the client, and it was determined that social security actually owed the client money.

Mr. Lipscomb talked about another case involving a 13-year old boy. He had multiple disabilities including intellectual disability, autism and PICA. PICA is described as a person who will eat non-food items. IHSS did an evaluation and it was determined that this client did not qualify for IHSS hours. Mr. Lipscomb met with the appeals specialist to reverse the decision. The appeals specialist refused so they went to hearing. Mr. Lipscomb won the case, the County was ordered to approve the 195 IHSS hours for the client and pay retroactive benefits. The County filed for a re-hearing. Then Mr. Lipscomb sent a letter to the judge to challenge the decision, and it was ordered that the County enforce the judgment. The family was very happy with the positive outcome.

Mr. Lipscomb also worked with the Public Defender's office. A consumer committed a crime in Los Angeles, and was placed in a locked facility as he awaited a group home placement. The public defender felt that the regional center was dragging its feet and called Mr. Lipscomb to help. Mr. Lipscomb got involved and asked the judge to order the regional center to find an appropriate placement. The client was going to turn 18 years old so adult group homes would be an available resource for him. Ultimately, the client was placed in a group home.

Mr. Lipscomb has done many outreach events. The target group is the Spanish speaking population. Many of the outreach events are regarding special education.

Ms. Hornberger explained that RCEB is one of the two busiest offices in the state. The RCEB office averages 55 cases per month. Ms. Burkes asked for more information about Mr. Lipscomb and Ms. Hornberger reminded Committee members that Mr. Lipscomb's office only serves Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Ms. Guerrero asked for more information about OCRA. Mr. Lipscomb explained that OCRA provides services to regional center consumers but does not directly represent in immigration and criminal law issues.

Ms. Hornberger confirmed that all OCRA Advisory Committee members have a CRA they can call.

Ms. Burkes asked about Mr. Hall's role on the OCRA Advisory Committee, and for DRC. Ms. Hornberger explained that Mr. Hall is currently Chairperson for the OCRA Advisory Committee and a member of the board.

Training Topics for Next Meeting: The next OCRA Advisory Committee meeting will be held in September. Ms. Hornberger explained that the members could suggest training topics. Ms. Burkes suggested, "accessing provider choice." Mr. Hall suggested topic of, "having a second service agency back-up," in case one service agency doesn't serve the needs, there would be another service agency that could be called. Julie Garton confirmed that the next OCRA Advisory Committee meeting would be held in Los Angeles. Ms. Townsend suggested having a training on IHSS because she has many questions about IHSS services. Ms. Kalivas enjoyed hearing the staff presentations and suggested that they be included in next meeting as well.

Ms. Burkes thanked the OCRA Advisory Committee for letting her continue to sit on the board.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

ATTEST,

Billy Hall, Chair