

## **OCRA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **September 23, 2011**

**Present:** Lakeisha Burke, Billy Hall, Izetta Jackson (Board Member), Amy Kalivas (by phone), Lily Lambert, Leslie Napper (Board Member), and Jean Townsend

**Staff:** Cara Armstrong, Catherine Blakemore, Maxine Dalaza, Christine Hager, Kendra McWright (by phone), Jeanne Molineaux, Maria Ortega, Milanka Radosavljevic, and Beatriz Reyes (by phone)

**Facilitators/Attendants:** Zina Guerrero, Jeannie Sholly and Melissa Steffenhagen

**Introductions:** Jeanne Molineaux introduced the Committee's new Chair, Billy Hall. Mr. Hall called the meeting to order at 11:13 a.m. Committee members introduced themselves.

**Valley Mountain Regional Center Update:** Christine Hager, Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate for Valley Mountain Regional Center in Stockton, gave the Committee an overview of the work OCRA does for Valley Mountain RC clients. Valley Mountain Regional Center serves five counties.

Ms. Hager also does outreach. Recently she participated in an outreach event in Sonora for Tuolumne County. OCRA and DRC staff did a training for clients and they learned about their rights by playing Clients Rights Bingo. Another outreach featuring Clients Rights Bingo was done at a day program in Sonora. The most recent outreach in the foothills was held at the day program, Community Compass. Over three hundred consumers attended an outreach in August in conjunction with the area board and Valley Mountain Regional Center.

Ms. Hager highlighted some recent cases with successful outcomes for OCRA clients:

- Social Security overpayment - OCRA helped the client fill out her waiver request and spoke with the Social Security office. OCRA was able to assist the client in getting the overpayment waived.
- School suspension for child with disabilities - A ten year old boy with disabilities in the foster care system was suspended from school due

to behavioral issues. The school district threatened to expel him for behaviors on the playground. OCRA looked through school and regional center records and referred him to a psychologist to be assessed. At the IEP meeting they advocated to get the school to understand that the behaviors were related to the client's disabilities and added his mental health diagnosis to his IEP. The client was not expelled; instead, he received additional supports so he could stay in public school.

- Medi-Cal pays for wheelchair for child with disabilities - In this case, a seven year old boy with multiple disabilities was using a stroller to meet his mobility needs, which he'd outgrown. Medi-Cal denied payment for a new wheelchair. OCRA reviewed his paperwork and asked the occupational therapist to clarify some items in their report to help Medi-cal understand that he needed a wheelchair and they funded a new pediatric wheelchair for the client.

**Introductions:** Jean Townsend joined the meeting. She introduced herself and her assistant, Melissa Steffenhagen. Ms. Townsend expressed that she is excited to be joining the Committee.

The Committee and staff introduced themselves to Ms. Townsend.

**OCRA Outreach Coordinator Update:** Beatriz Reyes, Outreach Coordinator South, and Kendra McWright, Outreach Coordinator North, gave the Committee an update on OCRA's outreach to the communities they serve.

A memo was handed out to the Committee which reported on OCRA outreach from June 2010 – June 2011. The Committee was also provided with a sample Bingo card used in OCRA's Bingo game that's used in clients' rights group trainings.

This year OCRA presented over 422 outreach presentations which included General Outreach, Targeted Outreach, and Self-Advocacy Outreach. Additionally, this year, many offices were also responsible for presenting the "My Own Choice" presentation as required by the Capitol People First settlement.

**Introductions:** Izetta Jackson, Leslie Napper, and Maria Ortega joined the meeting and introduced themselves. The committee members and other

attendees introduced themselves to Ms. Jackson, Ms. Napper, and Ms. Ortega and welcomed them to the meeting.

**Legislative and Budget Update:** Catherine Blakemore gave the Committee updates on last year's state budget that was approved in June:

The Developmental Disabilities budget was reduced, resulting the following:

- A new requirement for private insurance cards to be given to the regional center to pay for some services.
- Electronic billing for vendors to submit their bills.
- Transportation access plan requirements.
- Limitations on regional centers paying for educational services for consumers ages 18-22.
- Requirements for consumers whose supported living services exceed the average cost to receive an independent assessment.
- A new Annual Family Program Fee – It specifies that if the family income is more than 400% of poverty level (about \$75,000 for a family of four) and they are not on the Medicaid waiver, then they have to pay an annual fee to the regional center. It's either \$100-\$200 per year, depending on the income level.
- If the State's revenue in December is not at anticipated level, trigger will go into effect that will result in an additional 100 million dollars in reductions.
- Beginning in 2009, there was a reduction to IHSS of 3.6%. This cut expires in June, 2012. This year there was a proposal for more cuts. The cuts didn't happen. In the trigger language there's a cut to IHSS by 20%. DRC will be putting together materials to let IHSS recipients know how to request the exemption and deciding if it can challenge the cut.
- There are trigger cuts for K-12 education. There's less certainty about whether or not this will happen.

- Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) was also eliminated. DRC sued to stop this cut. The judge postponed the hearing to November unless the case settles.

**OCRA Brochure:** Jeanne Molineaux showed the Committee the new OCRA brochure and pointed out that new Committee members were also provided with the DRC brochure and the DRC Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) brochure.

**Annual Report Update:** Jeanne Molineaux gave the Committee highlights from the annual report. Last year OCRA served 9,323 people and conducted 422 trainings, attended by approximately 18,000 people. The number of cases that each office handles varies, based on the number of people the regional center in that area serves.

Ms. Molineaux reported on the results of the most recent OCRA Consumer Satisfaction Survey. OCRA mailed 2,994 surveys and received 502 responses. This represents a 17 percent return rate. Ninety-six percent of responders felt they were treated well by the staff, ninety three percent understood the information they were provided, ninety three percent believed their CRA listened to them and ninety one percent believed they were helped by the CRA. Ninety four percent would ask for help from OCRA again.

Ms. Molineaux encouraged the Committee to read about the good outcomes of the cases reported in the annual report.

Ms. Molineaux reported that OCRA received nine grievances for the year.

**Approval of Minutes:** It was M/S/C (Jackson/Burke) that the February 25, 2011 OCRA Advisory Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

ATTEST,

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Billy Hall, Chair