

**Disability Rights of California
OCRA Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 5, 2017, 3:30 p.m.
Crowne Hotel, Sacramento, CA**

PRESENT: Elizabeth Gomez, Esther Kelsey, Judy Mark, David Oster, Howard McBroom

STAFF: Cherri Alcantara, Ryan Bradley, Katie Hornberger, Jesse Magano, Alice Ximenez

INTERPRETERS/FACILITATORS: Barbara McCants, Sheila Woods

1. Welcome and Introductions

Elizabeth Gomez called the meeting to order at 3:38p.m., and thanked David Oster for chairing previously. Members and staff introduced themselves.

2. Agenda Review

The Committee reviewed the agenda.

3. Approval of September 16, 2016 Minutes

The Advisory Committee reviewed the minutes. It was M/S/C (Oster/McBroom) to approve the September 16, 2016 meeting minutes.

4. Recruitment of New Members

Katie Hornberger reported that 3 applications have been received and recommended choosing someone from Northern California to balance the committee geographically. Ms. Hornberger reminded everyone that the position needs to be an individual with a disability, and that the application could be found on-line or available in hard copy. Both David Oster, Elizabeth Gomez and Howard McBroom volunteered to participate in phone interviews with potential candidates.

5. OCRA Report

Ms. Hornberger summarized the Office of Client's Rights Advocacy (OCRA) Semi-Annual Report, during the past year, OCRA resolved 5,522 service requests, and conducted 251 trainings, far exceeding the DDS contract requirements.

Ms. Hornberger reported that OCRA hired a new Community Integration CRA, to continue helping people move from institutions into the community.

Cherri Alcantara was introduced. Ms. Hornberger talked about a recent IPP for a consumer in an acute crisis center, and explained that these centers house individuals on time restrictive placements. (13 months). These centers have been very successful and have met the 13-month planning deadline of assisting consumers to move into the community. Ms. Alcantara and Katie Meyer assisted in making sure that the client viewpoint was heard during the IPP.

OCRA staff continue to do a lot of this work. Ms. Hornberger shared that Eva Casas-Sarmiento, who spoke to this committee previously, is a Community Integration CRA. Ms. Hornberger shared that Eva's mental health background helps in this role. The community integration team is now fully staffed with four CRAs: Eva Casas-Sarmiento in Tustin, Jennifer Alfaro in Cerritos, newly hired Cristina Kinsella in Bakersfield and Cherri Alcantara in Santa Rosa. David Oster asked what IMD stood for and Ms. Hornberger shared that it stands for *Institute for Mental Disease*.

Judy Mark talked about self-determination. Ms. Hornberger reviewed purchase of service data released in December and the regional center meetings that OCRA staff are attending where the data is reviewed. OCRA staff are attending self-determination local advisory committee meetings on an ongoing basis. They know they need to speak up and continue to promote the program. Ms. Mark shared that CRAs really need training in self-determination and that something needs to be done sooner than later. Ms. Hornberger also shared that Valley Mountain Regional Center has 3 scheduled community trainings coming up and they are almost at full attendance. Ms. Mark and Howard McBroom shared information regarding the Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center committee meetings. Ms. Mark asked for more information about the scheduling of meetings and trainings. Ms. Hornberger agreed to gather that information and send it to the committee.

Ms. Hornberger reminded members to follow DRC on Facebook and Twitter as OCRA posts daily including information regarding reports, success stories, updates regarding community events and legislative information.

Ms. Hornberger shared a story regarding a consumer who was placed in an intermediate care facility as an infant. The parents received training and nursing so the consumer could go home. But he lived in a rural area and

technology including specialized supplies were needed. OCRA and staff from the regional center assisted with the discharge planning and came up with a creative plan to utilize multiple resources including a local medical center to secure all of the supplies. After 5 years of living in the intermediate care facility, the client left the facility in December, and was able to spend Christmas with his parents at home. This is a true example of working together and doing creative planning.

Ms. Hornberger continued to share that there are lots of problems with early start, children 0 – 3 years old, in the area of accessing health insurance for therapies. There are a number of different problems including finding an appropriate provider. Ms. Hornberger shared information about an early start client with a sensory disability. He was granted 4 hours of occupational therapy a week but the regional center could not find a service provider for 6 months. Eventually, a provider was found, OCRA negotiated with the regional center for the compensatory hours. The clients' sensory issues are improving now. OCRA has had good success in this area and Ms. Hornberger has been giving many trainings on this area.

Ms. Hornberger discussed the OCRA statistics. Jackie Dai, CRA, OCRA East Los Angeles Regional Center is also, Asian Outreach Coordinator for OCRA. OCRA surpassed parity in this reporting period, in the Asian community. DDS reported 6.5% of regional center consumers identified themselves as Asian. OCRA served 7%. Jackie Dai also sits on the Asian and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities of California board to help OCRA maintain contacts with these communities.

Ms. Hornberger shared that Redwood Coast Regional Center Eureka office had recent staffing changes including the retirement of Lynne Page and the newly hired bilingual Spanish speaking ACRA, Mariana Nava. OCRA has never had a bilingual staff person at RCRC, where they have a large number of underserved communities, so OCRA looks forward to having Mariana in that office.

OCRA has also recently hired a new CRA for the OCRA Golden Gate Regional Center office. Karis Daggs is from East Bay Children's Law office with experience in dependency matters. The GGRC ACRA position remains vacant. Shannon Cogan has been hired as the new CRA for the San Andreas Regional Center office. Shannon has good general civil experience including working as county counsel and is a parent of a

regional center client. Kendra McWright, CRA, Tri-Counties Regional Center office, was promoted to Supervising CRA and is supervising 5 offices. Perla Huizar was hired as the new CRA for the South Central Los Angeles Regional Center office. We are hiring this week to replace Raquel Garcia, the former SCLARC ACRA. Vanessa Ochoa, Bilingual ACRA, is transferring to the regional office, to become a Multi-Cultural Affairs Advocate. This transfer will help coordinate cross outreach trainings between OCRA and the regional offices. Bernice Nguyen, Vietnamese speaking ACRA, resigned, so this position is vacant at this time.

Ms. Mark asked how OCRA is providing bilingual assistance while positions are being filled. Ms. Hornberger responded that if it is phone work, OCRA uses a vendor called, "*Voiance*." Voiance has interpreters available for all languages except Mexican Indian dialects. For those languages, OCRA uses a different vendor. The group asked for more information including rates about Voiance. Ms. Hornberger will secure that information from accounting and let them know. Sometimes literacy skills that are the barrier to communication. In those instances, OCRA has recorded an audio letter for the recipient. OCRA tries to meet a variety of needs.

Ms. Mark spoke about the complex language that IPPs and other documents are written in and how difficult it is for non-native English speakers. Ms. Mark suggested that OCRA work on legislation to make IPPs in plain language for clients. She shared a story of a Chinese speaking mother who lost conservatorship of her son because she not understand the court forms. Ms. Hornberger shared that during focus group meetings for the DRC Strategic Plan a number of participants indicated difficulty with completing forms.

5. Case Report by Ryan Bradley

Ryan Bradley introduced himself. He was a government benefits attorney for 16 years focusing on Social Security, CALFRESH, IHSS and other benefit areas. Mr. Bradley supervises Alta California Regional Center, Far Northern Regional Center, Redwood Coast Regional Center, San Andreas Regional Center and Valley Mountain Regional Center and he shared that the trends in different offices include access to respite care, securing IHSS protection supervision, and regional center policies around notices of action.

David Oster talked about the problem with Torrance Transit System moving to a paperless on-line map. Mr. Oster shared that you have to request a paper map as they no longer give them out. This is a problem for consumers who do not use a computer or smart phone. Ms. Hornberger explained that the consumers will need to call or write letters to the company to tell them they need paper maps as a reasonable accommodation and that as long as the company accommodates people who cannot access the map, it is legal.

Mr. Oster talked about the problem with independent living service workers not being allowed to drive and questioned whether it is statewide or just Harbor Regional Center. Ms. Hornberger will reach out to DDS to see if it's a DDS issued directive and report back to the committee.

Mr. McBroom shared information about the regional center pilot project that involves 25 consumer clients currently. The focus is on socialization and learning skills and offers information about getting out into the community and finding vendors. The Consumer Advisory Committee will be working on this pilot project.

Ms. Gomez talked about all of the immigration questions coming up. Many people are having a hard time trying to decide who they can trust. The questions keep coming up for example, can they call OCRA and if so, can OCRA help them without getting into the immigration status topic? Ms. Hornberger shared that generally, OCRA does not ask or record immigration status. Anyone can contact OCRA to help obtain services regardless of status. The exception is that some benefit program depend on status and in those case, OCRA will ask about status. OCRA cannot help with immigration issues except for offering referral lists. Mr. Bradley suggested that other programs do not ask about status but rather ask other questions more specifically related to eligibility criteria for example – do you have a social security number. Ms. Gomez reported a situation with a WRC service coordinator asking very invasive questions. Ms. Hornberger will contact the regional center director and find out more information about those questions.

Ms. Gomez adjourned the meeting at 5.21 p.m.

ATTEST:

Elizabeth Gomez, Chair