

**Disability Rights of California
OCRA Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 11, 2016, 3:00 p.m.
San Diego Marriott Mission Valley, San Diego, CA**

PRESENT: Charles Ehrlich, Elizabeth Gomez, Judy Mark, David Oster, Angela Van Ostran, Esther Kelsey, Howard McBroom

ABSENT: Cheryl Hewitt

STAFF: Jennifer Alfaro, Koleen Biegacki, Catherine Blakemore, Katie Hornberger, Jesse Magano, Andrew Mudryk, Layla Sharief

INTERPRETERS/FACILITATORS: Rose Idano (CLIP), Jillean Reitz (CLIP), Marcia James

1. Welcome and Introductions

David Oster called the meeting to order at 3:12p.m. Members and staff introduced themselves.

2. Agenda Review

The Committee reviewed the agenda.

3. Approval of September 18, 2015 Minutes

The Committee reviewed the minutes. It was M/S/C (McBroom/Gomez) to approve the September 18, 2015 meeting minutes with the correction to Judy Mark's name on pages 3 and 5. Abstention by Van Ostran and Ehrlich.

4. State Budget Update

Catherine Blakemore gave a highlight on the budget and its process. The budget was released by the Governor on March 1, 2016. It provides for changes to Regional Center funding for various services, which will go into effect 90 days after it is passed and signed by the Governor.

One item provided a caseload adjustment to OCRA, based on the assumption that as more people come into the system you need more staff and money to provide services to them. This was negotiated for within the contract for OCRA. The effective date should be July 1st.

California has provided for a Managed Care Organization tax that was not properly implemented therefore we needed to revise it. This provides for a

wage increase to those staff who provide care to clients (direct care staff is defined as staff who provide support to clients at least 70% of their workday). It also provides for increases to supported living services and independent living services. Two significant increases are going to Competitive Integrated Employment program proposals: internships and supported work programs. Employers who provide supported work programs get incentives to maintain those clients in their jobs. The internships will cover 20 hours per week of work for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The committee discussed the Self Determination Waiver. The waiver application was submitted on time but not approved. California is far behind in its larger Transition Plan and the Self Determination Waiver is a piece of this. We have put forward an idea of using the local advisory committees to help move Self Determination forward.

Ms. Mark highlighted a new group called Self Determination Now, sponsored by LA Autism Now, and other local groups.

5. OCRA Report

Regional Center Board Meeting Data

After a recent OCRA Advisory Committee meeting, we surveyed OCRA staff on their knowledge of what governs a Regional Center board meeting; OCRA then conducted a training on this topic.

It was helpful for staff to better understand the laws that govern those boards so that when they receive client calls they can help them better access those meetings.

The committee held a discussion on how to better monitor the Regional Center board meetings; including notifying DDS when there are violations of the laws of those boards. What kinds of reporting could be done to the legislation to assist in more accountability was also discussed.

Semi-Annual Report

The report is a highlight of work done during the last six months of 2015. Ms. Hornberger encouraged the committee to review the Semi Annual Advocacy Report since it contains success stories about, for instance, IHSS, services such as sports access, and special education cases.

Between July 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015 OCRA resolved 5,120 issues for 3,611 consumers. OCRA also participated in 178 trainings

during the 6-month period, presenting to approximately 6,840 people. So, in addition to direct help, we were giving information through our trainings. OCRA's outreach coordinator for the Asian community has been assisting individual OCRA offices to identify new ways to reach out to the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities in their catchment areas, including OCRA involvement in a statewide API conference for consumers with disabilities and their family members. API clients represent 7.2% of clients served during this six months.

There are many nice stories about people moving into the community. Ms. Hornberger noted that many people who contact OCRA are family members of clients who live at home with their family.

OCRA measures consumer satisfaction by use of a survey developed jointly by staff, the OCRA Consumer Advisory Committee, and DDS. Seven hundred and fifty-eight (758) surveys were mailed out. One hundred and four (104) people returned the surveys. This represents a 14 percent return rate, which is lower than previous review periods. OCRA will consider sending more surveys in order to get a higher number back.

Of those responding to the questions, 95 percent felt they were treated well by the staff. 90 percent believed their call was returned within two days; 94 percent of the respondents reported that they understood the information they received; 95 percent felt they were listened to; 89 percent of respondents felt they were helped with their question/problem. 93 percent of respondents said they would ask their Clients' Rights Advocate for help again, which shows an increase from the 91 percent in the last annual report. Ms. Hornberger noted the hiring of new bilingual staff in both Northern and Southern California.

The committee discussed how to address the need for more Clients' Rights Advocates in the large populated areas. For instance, Inland RC has 33,000 clients and one CRA. The committee also reviewed how a caller gets 'evaluated' for services from OCRA. Ms. Hornberger noted that often if OCRA provides training and information to the family or client, then the CRA doesn't need to be in physical attendance at a particular meeting or hearing. Additionally, timing of a call due to a CRA's caseload at a particular time is factor. When a CRA takes on a matter, they must provide timely services of high quality. Lastly, for emergency issues that arise such as housing in jeopardy or cessation of benefits we can share resources between offices to ensure that the client's needs are met.

Presentation about Community Integration Work

Jennifer Alfaro, Community Integration CRA, gave a brief overview on what her role is in the unit. The goals are to allow people to remain in the community or for people in developmental centers or locked facilities to move back into the community. For the southern area of the state, she provides direct advocacy and assistance to others in the unit. Monitoring systemic issues and concerns, via working with many people in the community. Building connections by finding providers for the clients and passing along that information.

Ms. Hornberger noted that statewide there are under 1000 people with developmental disabilities in DCs. The total number of people in an IMD is a hard number to nail down as OCRA only has access to those that are funded by Regional Centers. Last July we got a change in the law that the IMDs now have a responsibility to notify OCRA even when the placement is not funded by the Regional Center.

Ms. Alfaro reviewed an issue with the Public Guardians and the difficulty in getting responses from their offices. OCRA and DRC worked collaboratively to connect with the LA Public Guardian's office, provided trainings to their staff, and to create a liaison all which have all helped to facilitate better representation.

David Oster adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

David Oster, Chair