

Regional Center of Orange County

Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee Meeting

March 21, 2022

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Virtual Public Meeting

Present

Cathy Furukawa, RCOC Self-Determination Program Coordinator

Bruce Hall, Parent

Larry Landauer, RCOC Executive Director

April Lopez, Parent

Karen Millender, Parent

Kathleen McFarlin, CCFRC Manager, Family Support and Community Outreach

Jacqueline Miller, Clients' Rights Advocate

Tina Stang, Parent

I. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. April Lopez called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. She welcomed all attendees of the Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee (SDPLAC) Meeting. Each committee member introduced themselves.

II. Discussion: Draft letter to DDS Regarding FMS Services

Ms. Lopez stated that the committee will review and discuss the letter drafted by Ms. Von Thenen addressed to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) regarding the lack of Financial Management Services (FMS) to serve RCOC persons served in the Self-Determination Program (SDP). Ms. Cathy Furukawa reported that the letter requests DDS respond and provide assistance with the lack of FMS providers serving Orange

County. Ms. Furukawa then read the letter in its entirety to the committee. Ms. Kathleen McFarlin motioned to approve the letter to DDS as drafted. Ms. Jacqueline Miller stated before taking a vote on this matter, it should be opened for discussion to receive community feedback. Ms. Lopez noted that the committee would move on to the next agenda item in order to receive community feedback before taking a final vote.

III. Discussion: Barriers with FMS Agencies

Ms. Furukawa reported that FMS agencies were notified about the meeting and only two agencies are in attendance, Aveanna and GT Independence. Mr. Bruce Hall stated that it was important to hear from FMS and DDS regarding the backlog issues.

Ms. Alma Morales, with Aveanna, reported that their agency has created an onboarding process to ensure transparency about the agency and its services. Aveanna is currently accepting new clients and begins its process with a consultation meeting. In order to schedule a consultation, a family is required to have a draft or a finalized spending plan to ensure that the agency can fulfill the services required in the plan.

A member of the public asked how long does it take for a family to transition from one agency to another. Ms. Morales stated that each FMS agency has their own process and policies for transitioning families. The process itself can take one month to three months. It really depends on what the budget requirements are and if providers are already in place and how long it takes the current agency to close out the account. Families also need to take into consideration that if personal care is involved, background checks or Department of Justice (DOJ) live scans will be required and those can take an additional 2-3 weeks to a month. Ms. Terrasel Jones, with GT Independence, stated that a background check can take up to 72 hours and a DOJ Live Scan can vary from two to three weeks or longer. All DOJ live scans are processed through DDS and FMS agencies are excluded from this process. DDS can take 30, 60 or 90 days to generate a clearance letter and if there is a problem, the process will take much longer since DDS follows their internal protocols that includes a panel to determine if a person will be cleared or not.

Mr. Hall asked what are some internal barriers FMS agencies experience that contribute to the delay in services. Ms. Morales stated that their agency has their policies in place to ensure services can be met. Their agency spends a lot of time educating families, service coordinators and vendors about their processes, requirements and timelines to make certain they are aware that this process will take time. Ms. Morales noted that it is difficult to gauge how long the process can take and it differs by case. Additionally, the SDP system for billing and processing is very challenging and one of the main reasons why some vendors do not take on SDP cases. SDP is a new process and many agencies do not have the financial and staffing means to take it on.

Mr. Hall asked what are the FMS agencies policies on changes to the spending plan. Ms. Morales stated that changes to their spending plans are part of the process and families

need to understand that this will cause a delay in services. Ms. Furukawa noted that to begin or make changes to a plan is not a hurried process. FMS agencies are not able to purchase services as funds for the spending plan need to be approved under SDP, which will then cause a delay in services. Ms. Morales also stated that when spending plans are developed, they should be specific in the type of services that are required. For example, a plan can include a camp and the plan should include the specific camp to ensure that it is HCBS compliant and will not be denied by the regional center. Families need to understand that FMS agencies cannot pay with cash or credit cards. Services that require any enrollment process need to be specific in the spending plan to allow time for enrollment and payment of services through the SDP billing process.

Mr. Hall asked how the committee could assist FMS agencies ease the process. Ms. Morales stated that the SDP program is a great program in theory but not in practice. She noted that it is vital that families are well educated and understand the timelines for developing, changing and implementing spending plans. Expectations are huge and in order for them to be fulfilled, it takes time and patience. Ms. Morales asked families to take the time to fully understand the process in order to help develop plans that are service specific and are fundable under SDP. She stated that now that two FMS agencies have opted out, it has created a greater demand on the current agencies.

Ms. Lopez thanked the FMS agency representatives for attending the meeting and moved to call for a vote on the motion made earlier to approve the letter to DDS as drafted by Ms. Scarlett Von Thenen. All committee members voted in favor of forwarding the letter as presented to DDS. Ms. Furukawa reported that she will finalize and forward the letter to DDS.

Ms. Morales stated that low FMS rates should also be included in the letter to DDS. Ms. Furukawa responded that the issue of rates is included towards the end of the letter and a copy of it will be included with the meeting minutes. Mr. Hall noted that low rates are a major issue across the entire system.

A member of the public asked how often rates are reviewed. Mr. Larry Landauer reported reviews vary but there is a strong movement to have provider rate increases, based on the DDS 2019 Rate Study, implemented all at once instead of the incremental rate adjustments scheduled for April 1, 2022 to July 2025.

IV. Other

Ms. Kathleen McFarlin reported that she contacted Ms. Katie Hornberger, DDS' Acting SDP Ombudsperson, who has agreed to hold a virtual town hall meeting on Monday, May 23, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Hornberger requested to receive community questions ahead of the town hall meeting, which Ms. McFarlin stated will be collected during the

registration process. Additionally, there will be an opportunity for the community to ask questions at the event.

V. Date of the Next Meeting

Ms. Furukawa requested to cancel the April 4, 2022 advisory meeting. The next scheduled meeting is set for May 9, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. All committee members voted in favor of canceling the April 4, 2022 meeting.

Ms. Miller stated that she will not be in attendance at the next advisory meeting since she will no longer be working with the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA), effective March 30, 2022. She will follow up with her agency to ensure that they assign a representative to the advisory committee. Ms. Lopez thanked Ms. Miller for all her work and support with the advisory committee.

Ms. Furukawa reaffirmed email blasts will go out to both this group as well as the general community regarding the DDS Ombudsman Town Hall meeting scheduled for May 23, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.