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Editor: Robert Levy

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- Nicole Patterson
- Desiree Boykin
- Lisa Cooley
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- Wesley Witherspoon
- Robert Levy
- Teresa Moshier
- Julie Gaona

Letter from SSAN Officers

By Nicole Patterson, California Department of Developmental Services

Desiree Boykin, Association of Regional Center Agencies

Lisa Cooley, Sacramento Regional Representative

It has been two years of great work and surprises for the SSAN membership. We are so honored that we had the privilege of leading this team over that time. It has been with great pride to see how the SSAN adapted to dealing with the pandemic and continued their work and commitment to SSAN and advocates they represent in their own communities. No words can express how delighted we are to be a part of such a great body of people. We have grown into a strong team of advocates and have learned how to support each other in new ways as we charter unknown territory. It is important for the SSAN to continue to be present, and a voice not only in our communities, but statewide even as we continue working through this difficult time.

“Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve as your Vice-Chair from December 2018—December 2020. I’ve learned so much under the leadership of Chair Nicole Patterson, along with Secretary Lisa Cooley. I’m grateful for the opportunity to work with all of you. I look forward to seeing SSAN continue to advocate for many young and older adults with developmental disabilities throughout California and encourage people with disabilities to get involved in creating positive change.”

– **Desiree Boykin, SSAN Vice—Chair 2018—2020**

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“Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the SSAN Secretary for 2018—2020. I have enjoyed working with Nicole and Desiree and getting to know them as the strong and determined advocates they are. I have learned a lot of skills that could help me with future opportunities with advocacy organizations and employment.”

– Lisa Cooley, SSAN Secretary 2018—2020

We would like to share some of the SSAN’s highlights during these past two years:

- Updates to SSAN Bylaws
- Supported our members involved in the Campfires
- Some SSAN members attended AUCD in Washington D.C. and did a presentation
- Disability Sensitivity Training
- Disability Pride and Being a Better Advocate-Training
- Established SSAN Priorities
 - ✓ Youth
 - ✓ Transportation
 - ✓ Employment
- Renewed our Memorandum of Understanding with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Person Centered Planning Training
- CalFresh Training
- Census Training
- Voting Trainings
- Public Transportation Projects and People with Disabilities presentation
- Cyber Security Training
- CFILC and YO! Disabled and Proud Training
- Distributing Personal Protective Equipment to people in their community with the Regional Offices of the State Council on developmental disabilities

As the team passes on the torch to the next executive team, we would like the next team to know that no matter what the future holds as far as who becomes elected in December 2020. Please know that the support from this team will always be there to carry out your vision to drive the SSAN forward. As things come to an end for this team, we want the SSAN members to know how much we appreciate them for doing that for this team and making it so easy to lead.



Coping with COVID—19

By Paul Mansell, San Diego Regional Representative

March seems like an eternity ago with following the pandemic protocols. They may not seem like much, sheltering in place, wearing a mask, washing your hands, but it really gets to me after a while. I have the strongest desire to get out of my apartment. Accordingly, I have returned to work three days a week and commute to work by bus. I never thought I would like to take the bus, but I do. I especially love my bus pass. I now go on walks in the neighborhood—anything to get my mind off the pandemic. At work we are very concerned about COVID-19 fatigue—people stressed out over the pandemic and tired of following the protocols. I am on a committee that will develop a training and resources to help staff cope better with the pandemic. Much has been said about tiers and how it can limit our life. Here is some info from [COVID-19.CA.GOV](https://www.covid-19.ca.gov).



Understand your county's status

Every county in California is assigned to a tier based on its test positivity and adjusted case rate. At a minimum, counties must remain in a tier for at least 3 weeks before moving forward. Data is reviewed weekly and tiers are updated on Tuesdays. To move forward, a county must meet the next tier's criteria for two consecutive weeks. If a county's metrics worsen for two consecutive weeks, it will be assigned a more restrictive tier. Public health officials are constantly monitoring data and can step in if necessary.

Current tier assignments as of November 16, 2020

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CALIFORNIA COVID-19 TIERS

Source: CA Department of Public Health

<p>TIER 1) WIDESPREAD OR PURPLE</p> <p>WHAT IT MEANS: Many nonessential indoor business operations are closed</p> <p>CRITERIA:</p> <p># of new daily cases: More than 7 per 100K people</p> <p>Positivity rate: More than 8%</p>	<p>TIER 3) MODERATE OR ORANGE</p> <p>WHAT IT MEANS: Some indoor business operations are open with modifications</p> <p>CRITERIA:</p> <p># of new daily cases: 1-3.9 per 100K people</p> <p>Positivity rate: Between 2% and 4.9%</p>
<p>TIER 2) SUBSTANTIAL OR RED</p> <p>WHAT IT MEANS: Some nonessential indoor business operations are closed</p> <p>CRITERIA:</p> <p># of new daily cases: 4-7 per 100K people</p> <p>Positivity rate: Between 5% and 8%</p>	<p>TIER 4) MINIMAL OR YELLOW</p> <p>WHAT IT MEANS: Most indoor business operations are open with modifications</p> <p>CRITERIA:</p> <p># of new daily cases: Less than 1 per 100K people</p> <p>Positivity rate: Less than 2%</p>

Reopening safely for all communities

COVID-19 has impacted some communities more than others. They face higher rates of infection and death. These include our Latino, Black, Pacific Islander, low income, and essential worker communities.

Counties must address COVID-19 in **all** communities to open further, including making sure the positivity rate in certain neighborhoods (health equity metric) does not significantly fall behind overall county positivity rates. These efforts need cross-sector and broad partnerships to succeed. The health equity metric is only used to decide whether a county can move to a less restrictive tier. To move to a different tier, a county must meet the tier’s criteria for two consecutive weeks. If a county’s numbers worsen for two consecutive weeks, it will be assigned a more restrictive tier.

COVID represents a real challenge for self-advocates. It is harder stay united these days, and the knowledge that things will only get worse before they get better is hard to deal with. As we confront the pandemic, our issues like poverty, employment, healthcare, affordable housing, transportation, and isolation are coming to the forefront for all to see. Now is the time to correspond with our governmental officials and educate them on our issues and make a difference.



Exploring the Issues: Mental Health

By Wesley Witherspoon, USC Children’s Hospital UCEDD Representative



Mental Health is important. Unfortunately, some people have committed suicide due to suffering of mental health. Due to the pandemic, most people have to stay away from other people. Mental health might cause people to act in ways that is not normal. Many people are turning to drugs and alcohol to deal with the pain. Some people stay in bed all day and they feel worthless. People’s mental health suffers due to unmet expectations, peer pressure, abuse, trauma, stress, disappointment, someone who they love passes away. Many people lost their jobs due to COVID 19. Prolonged unemployment can lead to mental health problems as well. Consider visiting [Listos California to find COVID—19 specific Resources](#) relating to fighting isolation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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SSAN Members

- Nathaniel Florez – North Coast
- Teresa Moshier – North State
- Lisa Cooley – Sacramento
- Vacant – North Bay
- Regina Woodliff – Bay Area
- Robert Balderama – North Valley Hills
- David Forderer – Central Coast
- Rebecca Donabed– Sequoia
- Julie Gaona – Los Angeles
- Sean Sullivan – Orange County
- Daniel Fouste – San Bernardino
- Paul Mansell – San Diego Imperial
- Desiree Boykin – ARCA
- Renee Wooten – CFILC
- Nicole Patterson – DDS
- Scott Barron – DRC
- Robert Levy – UC Davis Mind Institute
- Kecia Weller – UCLA Tarjan Center
- Wesley Witherspoon –SCDD and USC Children’s Hospital



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I would suggest seeing a mental health professional if sickness last more than 2 months. Almost half the US population sometime in their lives suffers from mental health issues.

Many famous people such as Kayne West, Adele, Billie Eilish, Michelle Obama, and Drew Carey have suffered from mental health issues.

Suicide is the 10th biggest cause of death to people. Alcohol and drugs are a multi-billion-dollar industry. I lost one of my classmates due to an overdose of drugs. People drink and take drugs because they want to be cool. Drug dealers can persuade anyone to take drugs including entertainers, politicians, athletes, and super rich people. 90% of the adult population has drunk alcohol. You can make a list of 20 things you can do at home. Call a friend, family member, or support staff, if you feel alone. Remember you are not alone. Disability Rights California has a program called [Peer Self-Advocacy \(PSA\)](#) that provides self-advocacy trainings for people with mental health disabilities, helps people to build self—advocacy skills, provides guidance for accessing services and supports, and other rights-related topics.

SSAN Mission Statement

The Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN) promotes leadership and builds bridges that strengthen advocacy among disability communities by focusing on policy change.

[SSAN past Newsletters, Annual Reports, and Meeting info](#), can be found at www.scdd.ca.gov under self-advocacy tab

Let us know if you want to see anything specific in future newsletters!

How do you contact the SSAN Newsletter Editor Robert Levy? Leave a message for him by contacting the SCDD Self-Advocacy Coordinator **Riana Hardin at (916) 263-8196**



Alta Regional: Thanking Direct Support Professionals (DPS)

By Robert Levy, UC Davis MIND Institute UCEDD Representative



Alta California Regional Center

Alta California Regional Center, Executive Director Phil Bonnet recently released a video to thank all the Direct Services Providers (DSP) connected with Alta Regional for all their hard work in continuing to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the region. Clients using programs like PEC/CES rely on DSPs to live independently and reach their goals.

I think that the DPS workers are doing a great job on helping us clients to have a better life. This video was a great project. Both Lisa Cooley, Sacramento Regional Representative SSAN member and I, along with many others were included in this video. You can check it out at the [Alta Regional Center Facebook page](#). Or at the [Alta Regional Center Instagram page](#). Or the [Alta Regional Center home page](#) Check out the video today.

Learn About SSAN Member Organizations

- [Association of Regional Center Agencies](#)
- [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers](#)
- [Department of Developmental Services](#)
- [Disability Rights California](#)
- [University of California, Davis MIND Institute](#)
- [University of California, Los Angeles, Tarian Center](#)
- [University of Southern California, Children's Hospital](#)

Self-Determination Update

Check out the latest [DDS Self-Determination Newsletter](#) for the latest on California's Self-Determination Program.



Regional Office Highlight: North State

By Teresa Moshier, North State Regional Representative

I recently talked with Sarah May, Regional Manager of the SCDD North State Office to learn more about the North State Office.

Question: How long were you employed with Area Board 2 before it became the North State Regional Office in 2015?

Answer: I was employed with Area Board 2 since May 18, 1998. I worked for Area Board 2 for 17 years before it became the North State Regional Office.

Question: What other jobs have you had besides the SCDD, North State Regional Office Manager job?

Answer: After graduating from Chico State University in May 1991, I started working for Work Training Center as a job coach for the Supported Employment Program that was called Jobs R Us in Chico, California. After a year of job coaching, I moved to Chicago, Illinois where I worked for 2 service provider agencies providing day program services. One agency was called Victor C. Neumann Associates and then I worked for Misericordia North as a teacher of Activities of Daily Living. After a year, I moved back to Chico and got my job back as a job coach/job developer helping people get community employment for Jobs R Us Program with Work Training Center. Then I was hired as the Program Coordinator until May of 1998. I started working for Area Board 2 in May of 1998 as the Life Quality Assessment Project Coordinator where I interviewed people using Far Northern Regional Center services and asked them about their life quality and their opinion of the services they received. After approximately 12 years of managing the Life Quality Assessment Project, I worked as the Community Program Specialist II for Area Board 2 providing advocacy and system navigation to people who use Far Northern Regional Center services. Then in February of 2012, I was selected as the Executive Director of Area Board 2 until I applied for the Manager position for the North State Regional Office in 2015. I've maintained the position as Manager of the North State Office ever since and feel honored to work for SCDD.

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Question: Do you enjoy your current job?

Answer: I can't imagine doing anything else. It's very rewarding helping people discover resources, navigating the service system, providing trainings and educational events, collaborating with community agencies and most importantly empowering self-advocates to be leaders living self-determined lives. Working with people with diverse abilities and their families, has taught me how to advocate for myself and how to utilize available resources in my own life.

Question: Tell us about how [AMJaMB](#) got the grant from SCDD?

Answer: The SCDD provides regional Program Development Grants throughout the state to the 12 regional office communities every other year and AMJaMB's The Call Connection was a previous grant recipient. AMJaMB was selected in the past for their employment service. SCDD, North State Regional Office was honored to provide grant funding to help them get The Call Connection get started. The Call Connection, which is a service through Beyond Inclusion Program is a wonderful service for Far Northern Regional Center clients who benefit from a welfare check for many reasons. Maybe someone wants to be called for a reminder to take their medication or just to check in on them to make sure they are okay or even for a friendly chat. The Call Connection employs people with developmental disabilities, and they earn a competitive wage. Most people who work for The Call Connection, say it's the best job they've ever had. The Call Connection is still in business and operating successfully today!



Exploring the Issues: Human Trafficking

By Wesley Witherspoon, USC Children's Hospital UCEDD Representative



Human Trafficking is a serious problem. Human Trafficking is when someone is forced to work for free (modern-day slavery). People who are victims of human trafficking, may do different types of work, including being forced into prostitution.

Victims of Human Trafficking are controlled by someone or a group. Anyone can be a victim of Human Trafficking. Predators target people with low self-esteem or vulnerable by wanting relationships or trying to find work. People are being exploited every day.

If you or someone you know are or suspect are a victim of Human Trafficking, you can call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at (888) 373-7888 or check out the [California page on the National Human Trafficking website](#), your local law enforcement agency, social services, and a human service agency.

People with disabilities are vulnerable because they are looking for a relationship or work. Human Trafficking is a serious crime and people who are found guilty of this crime can serve many years in prison. They try to silence the victims of Human Trafficking. You have rights. You have the same rights as everyone else. You matter. Don't let anyone control you.

There are many agencies and organizations in California to address human trafficking. Check out these pages on the California Attorney General's website to learn more about Human Trafficking:

- [Office of California Attorney General Human Trafficking Page](#)
- [Office of Attorney General Human Trafficking Resources](#)



Progressive Employment Concepts Celebrates 25 Years

By **Robert Levy**, UC Davis MIND Institute UCEDD Representative

25 years ago, on October 16, 1995, Carole Watilo decided to open her own business and help people with people disabilities to have a productive life. The nonprofit organization was called Progressive Employment Concepts (PEC) and initially served Sacramento and Placer Counties. Over the years PEC expanded to serving Del Norte County; as well as Yolo County through Community Employment Concepts (CES), based in Davis, California. Over the years, clients have gotten jobs at Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), Franklin Templeton Investments and like me, working at UC Davis MIND Institute and other organizations. The great thing about PEC/CES is that they continue to help their clients after they get a job by helping their clients to understand how to manage working and receiving benefits like SSI and SSDI through the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program, and develop and strengthen job related skills.

I had the opportunity to ask Carole Watilo a few questions about PEC/CES.

What made you decide to start PEC/CES?

I had been working in this field for 11 years doing ILS/SLS, working with kids in schools and then supporting people with work. There were very few services for people who wanted to work, go to school and be involved in their communities. Most services were segregated, site based and paid people subminimum wage. We wanted better options for people.

What was your process for starting PEC/CES?

Luckily, I had a lot of help. The person that I worked for at the time was very supportive during the process of starting PEC. They were able to mentor me and connect me to the resources that they used. I was able to reach out to other agencies doing this work and get advice from them as well. It was a big learning experience. First, we had to start the business, then we had to vendorize with the regional center in order to get funding to do our work.

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What has made PEC successful for the last 25 years?

I think the key to our success is that we offer people the support they need and want. We believe in people’s abilities and hold very high expectations of both the people we support as well as ourselves. PEC has become successful because the people that we serve desire to succeed—we just provide them with the resources that help them do that.

What are PEC/CES future plans in supporting other clients like me?

PEC/CES has grown beyond what we ever envisioned but we are very happy it has. We have had the opportunity to work with some amazing people and businesses. We continue to learn and grow and want to always offer people the services they want and need. I will continue to be the Executive Director at PEC/CES as long as they’ll have me. I am very lucky that we now have an outstanding leadership team that can carry on our services even if I take some time off here and there. It is a team effort at PEC/CES!



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Kudos Corner

By Julie Gaona

Nicole has been a good leader and chairperson for the SSAN. I knew she was going to be a good chair because she is a good leader. She works hard to try to get people involved in the SSAN. She wants to hear our ideas and gives us suggestions on how we can expand our ideas and goals for SSAN. I feel even though Nicole has a lot of experience she learned a lot from us, and we learned a lot from her. I'm very impressed with Nicole because she is so busy with other things. I don't know how she was able to take on the SSAN as chair like she did. She inspired me to try to improve my advocacy skills. Right now, I have a lot on my plate with my husband's health. I am not able to advocate like I was, but this time will pass. So, for right now I am relying on Nicole to keep doing her best and I will be there cheering her on and then fighting the biggest storm we have coming ahead. Do not think I do not recognize all the hard work that we do as well. We are all leaders and fighters. Nicole is just one of the leaders that really inspires me. Kudos to you!!

Community Resources

Check out the State Council on Developmental Disabilities' [Series of Informational Videos on COVID—19](#) featuring people with disabilities on YouTube.

[California Disaster Strategies Coalition](#) consists of a broad group of community service providers and advocates working on inclusive emergency planning, response, recovery, and mitigation.

SAVE THE DATES

Disability Rights California



Disability
Rights
California

Events and Trainings:

<https://bit.ly/3jmZV6N>

California's 13th Annual Developmental Disabilities Public Policy Conference

Monday March 15th—
Thursday, March 18th, 2021

[WE'RE GOING VIRTUAL!](#)



The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration

Plain Language COVID—19
Resources Available on:

[SCDD Website](#)

Contact your SCDD
Regional Office for:

- information on upcoming trainings
- local self-advocacy meetings
- find out how to get Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for you and your family.