

Esteemed Chairpeople and Members of the Council and Committee,

I would first like to thank you for this time and thank the council for sending me to the Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference in Sacramento on May 12th and 13th. It was a privilege and honor to attend this event.

The conference was informative with a variety of topics, That included sessions on employment challenges, advocacy, self determination, managing relationships, and end of life decisions just to name a few. Our own Wesley Witherspoon was a charismatic speaker for the Saturday opener; he then co-presented a session on "Health during Covid" and followed up with a forum on "Self-Care for Self Advocates".

Unfortunately, due to technical and travel challenges, I was only able to attend four of the six desired sessions on Self Determination (SD).

Session One: "Self Determination: What it is and how it can help us meet our dreams"- explained what Self Determination is and how securing your own services could help you ensure your future is supported and enriched with reliable people.

Session Two: "Looking back on the History of Self-Determination Program: Where we are and how to make it work for everyone"-was a presentation on the history and the steps created to build a program giving consumers independence and control over their lives.

Session Four: "What is the Self Determination Program?"-presented by Client Advocates and Regional Center Staff- supplied information on Self Determination core concept, including an overview of FMS types, budgets, allowable categories, and the steps for a successful plan.

Session Five: "How to Join Self Determination and Make the Program Work for You"- outlined the steps, to transition to the program; and it covered suggestions to overcome challenges and obstacles, as well as, creative ways to make the program work for you.

Over all, the sessions I attended provided a clear guidance towards the Self-Determination Program and the necessary steps to ensure a successful plan. Personally, the conference identified that my own Self-Determination transition requires I start securing adequate supports for my unique situation.

Thank you again for your time and allowing me to speak.

Eric Ybarra

Council Member at Large