



**Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 9, 2023**

**Attending Members**

Betty Monterrey (SGPRC)  
Carla Lehmann (WRC)  
Carolyn Tellalian (CVRC)  
Casey Taylor (TCRC)  
Cathay Liu (ELARC)  
Charles Nutt (FNRC)  
Chris Miller (RCRC Designee)  
Darlene Williams (TCRC)  
Debby Hight (NBRC Co-Chair)  
Doug Pascover for Martha Johanson (SARC)  
Frank Van Curen (RCRC)  
Irene Litherland (RCEB)  
Jerry Corradi, (NBRC Co-Chair)  
Jon Francis (NLACRC)  
Joyce Clark (SDRC)  
Lori Walker (NLARC Co-Chair)

**Attending Members**

Lisa Cooley (ACRC)  
Maia Pawoskar (IRC)  
Mariela Ramos (VMRC)  
Martha Johanson (HRC)  
Pierre Landry (FDLRC)  
Richard Dier (NLARC Co-Chair)  
Rick Wood (KRC)  
Robert Taylor (RCRC)  
Rosalinda Garcia (HRC)  
Sascha Bittner (GGRC)  
Sherry Alvarez (SCLARC)  
Tim Jin (RCOC)  
Viviana Barnwell (Co-Chair)

**Absent Members**

Darlene Williams (TCRC)

**Others Attending**

Aaron Carruthers  
Aminah Abdul-Hakim  
Ana Ramirez  
Beth Hurn  
Chelsea Coffin  
Chris Arroyo  
Christian Nava  
Chloe Hayes  
Cindy Cox  
Cindy Johnson  
Crystal Chavez  
Debbie Wechsler  
Danielle Isola  
Dena Hernandez  
Dustlyne Beavers  
Felicia Ford  
Georgina Kier  
Hima Suri  
Jan Opsvig  
Judy Mark  
Julie LaRose  
Karen Bonacci  
Kate Brittain Duwe  
Katie Gallagher  
Katie Hornberger  
Kay Medina  
Lilia V.

**Others Attending**

Lisa Culley  
Lisa Hooks  
Martha Gradjeda  
Mary Ellen Stives  
Mary Nahidi  
Melanie Waters  
Michelle Smith  
Renee Bauer  
Robin Maitino-Erben  
Rondale Holloway  
Sandra McElwee  
Sandra Von Scotter  
Scarlett VonThenen  
Sofia Cervantes  
Suzy Requarth  
Tamra Pauly  
Theresa Scripps  
Victoria Schlussler  
Vicki Smith  
Yaritza Sanchez  
Yolanda Cruz

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Co-Chair Rick Wood (FA) called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M.

**2. ESTABLISH QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

**3. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS**

Members and others in attendance introduced themselves as indicated.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

It was moved/seconded (Bittner [SA]/Cooley [SA]) and carried to approve the December 2022 meeting minutes as corrected. (Motion passed unanimously. [see page 1 for a list of voting members], see corrections below).

- Remove John Francis from attendance list and replace with Lori Walker and Richard Dier

**5. CO-CHAIR INTRODUCTION**

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Caruthers introduced the newly appointed SSDAC Co-Chair, Viviana Barnwell. Co-Chair Barnwell is a family advocate and works as an independent facilitator and is committed to improving the SDP and working on the priorities that the SSDAC has identified. Viviana Barnwell stated that she is excited to join this committee and is looking forward to learning and sharing information and experiences.

**6. CO-CHAIR REPORT TO SSDAC**

Co-Chair Rick Wood informed members that due to the feedback that they provided on the SSDAC workgroup's proposed disparity project, the SSDAC will revisit the disparity goal at a later date to revise and reimagine how best to approach reducing disparities in the SDP. Co-Chair Wood explained that the SSDAC workgroup has begun to move forward on creating and collecting content for the SSDAC's Best Practices Platform and will be asking for members feedback on the work that has been done later in the meeting.

**7. DDS AND OMBUDSPERSON UPDATE**

Interim Ombudsperson Katie Hornberger provided a presentation to update members about the work of the Office of the Ombudsperson. Of the 533 inquiries that have been received by the office, 431 have been resolved and 102 remain open for monitoring purposes. The issue that consumers are reporting to the Office of the Ombudsperson most frequently is that there are long waiting lists for FMS providers, leaving consumers unable to begin receiving services under the SDP for weeks or months. The office of the Ombudsperson also continues to respond to inquiries regarding Regional Center issues, spending plans, budgets, Person Centered Planning, Orientation and other concerns.

Katie Hornberger discussed the partnerships between the Ombudsperson office, the HCBS and SDP team, the office of Community Operations, and the director of DDS. She discussed the importance of addressing barriers to SDP participants finding FMS. The office of the Ombudsperson has found DDS to be responsive to suggestions to improve SDP and have they have worked together to address issues with FMS payments and to eliminate gaps in participants budgets as they await approval between years. Committee members asked questions about the methods used to provide technical assistance to SDP participants and discussed the barriers that they're seeing at their RCs.

DDS representatives Vicki Smith and Suzy Requarth provided an update on the Self-Determination Program. The presentation included enrollment numbers, data on racial disparities, an update on recent DDS directives, and an overview of the issues that DDS are looking to prioritize in coming months. DDS presentation slides can be found at <https://scdd.ca.gov/ssdac/>.

The Committee asked questions and discussed a variety of issues. Conversation included questions about the SDP advisory group convened by DDS, which includes various stakeholders and is not a public group or subject to public meeting laws. The group discussed the requirement of family resource center representatives at LACs and asked for specific data about SDP withdraw reasons. Members discussed the difference in participation rates between people with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities and the need to simplify the program to increase access across disabilities as well as ethnicity. Suzy Requarth and Vicki Smith informed the committee that DDS is working with RCs to identify how to collect and extract more specific and meaningful data on the SDP and how to make modifications to billing systems to improve payment processes. The group also discussed increasing the capacity of FMS providers.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Karen Bonacci, LAC Co-Chair at VMRC expressed that people are unable to keep up with constant changes for FMS. She suggested that monthly budget reports include a column for RC expenses and called for RCs to be transparent in sharing information about how they're handling FMS issues. She suggested that DDS provide lump sum payments to RCs to help move payments forward faster and called for compatibility in software systems between DDS and RCs.

Mary Nahidi expressed that there needs to be a mechanism to ensure that services that are not provided through the traditional service delivery system are available to SDP participants.

Michelle Smith stated that FMS providers need to be able to bill code 099 to recuperate staff on-boarding costs.

Debra Adler thanked SSDAC members for their work to improve the SDP and asked what can be done to help train RC case managers so that they are better informed to help people transition to the SDP.

Judy Mark with Disability Voices United expressed concern about the Office of the Ombudsperson's ability to operate independently, expressed that many SDP participants are experiencing racism at their RCs, and urged the SSDAC to change the meeting format to make it more inclusive of members of the public.

## 8. **SCDD UPDATES**

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers provided an update on SCDD's SDP activities. SCDD provided feedback on the UCLA SDP evaluation survey in December 2022. As of January 2023, SCDD has held a total of 105 SDP Orientation trainings, reaching 1,528 people. Feedback from Orientation Training participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with 93% of respondents stating that they were satisfied with the training. This presentation can be found at <https://scdd.ca.gov/ssdac/>.

Members made comments and asked questions about how to simply describe the SDP to people who don't know about the program. They discussed generic examples and stories to help people new to the program understand how SDP can meet their needs. The group discussed the ways that the framework of traditional services is being applied to the SDP in ways that limit participants freedom to be creative with the services and supports they use to meet the goals of their PCPs.

*PUBLIC COMMENT:*

Richard Dier commented that he felt energized by an email he received from his RC about requiring SDP providers to provide reports that they would have had to provide if they had been vendored by the RC. He stated that he wanted to validate the concern about allowing flexibility and creativity within the program.

Judy Mark with Disability Voices United stated that DVU has not received any updates from SCDD or UCLA regarding the UCLA survey. She stated that DVU is hearing the same concerns as SCDD regarding the RC expecting a linear connection between services from budget to spending plan. She asked that SCDD staff speak up about these issues at LAC meetings.

Melissa Ardon, an Independent Facilitator, asked for advice to deal with a client who cannot find an FMS who will provide service. Melissa stated that she believes changes that are coming from DDS directives will make her job more difficult and create more obstacles for her and her clients.

Stella, the parent of a child with autism said that they joined SDP to access a specific service that has been denied everywhere, and that it is still being denied although it has been approved for others at different RCs. She expressed concern about service coordinators' lack of understanding of SDP and the differences in how it is implemented between RCs.

Mary Munoz-Rosales stated that SDP is supposed to allow the greater freedom, but that some Regional Centers micromanage the spending plans and attempt to maintain power over the consumer.

Theresa Scripps stated that SDP needs to be simplified at all levels to increase participation.

Georgina Kier expressed concern that RCs tell participants that the programs authorized under traditional services must be used in SDP.

Jan Opsvig entered a comment in the chat stating that vendors are doubling the rate that they usually charge in traditional services and that the Regional Centers are not transparent with the rate that is charged. She said that vendors are fearful because they don't understand Self-Determination and are concerned about getting paid.

Michelle Smith entered a comment in the chat stating that some RC service coordinators are under the impression that SDP takes away from traditional services, leaving participants under traditional services with less access.

Kristianna Moralls suggested that SCDD or DDS provide trainings for Participant Choice Specialists to inform them that there is no direct link between budget and spending plan.

## 9. **BEST PRACTICES PROJECT**

Co-Chair Rick Wood introduced SCDD Committee Specialist Robin Maitino-Erben, who provided an overview of the original timeline for the SSDAC Best Practices platform, along with a demonstration of the work that has been done on the SSDAC Best Practices Submission Form and webpage. Committee members and members of the public participated in a Jamboard exercise to provide feedback on the draft webpage and submission form.

The Committee discussed the differences between best and promising practices and how the platform will be used to improve the SDP. Members discussed how involved they would like the full committee to be in the development of these tools, and how much should be done by either the workgroup, SCDD staff or the Co-chairs.

## 10. **WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS**

Co-Chair Rick Wood informed the committee that feedback will be analyzed by staff and co-chairs and will be implemented where appropriate. The SSDAC workgroup and staff will finalize the form and platform come back to the full committee for approval.

## 11. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Debra Adler thanked everyone who is working to make the SDP successful. She stated that the program has changed hers and her daughter's lives and that she is excited about the positive impact of the program.

Judy Mark announced that Disability Voices United has finished a new edition of their "Think Outside the Box" manual, which can be accessed at <https://disabilityvoicesunited.org/resources/publications/>. This publication will also be available in Spanish. DVU has hired staff to work on SDP and is looking to hire an SDP Project Director. Judy asked that anyone who is interested visit the DVU website at <https://disabilityvoicesunited.org/>

Richard Dier voiced concerns about SCDD's proposed unprofessional conduct policy for local SDAC members. He stated that he is concerned about a system where there are different standards applied to members of the same body.

## 12. **NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 3:40 P.M. The next meeting will be announced in late April or the first week of May 2023.