



## SELF-ADVOCATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES July 17, 2023

### **Members Present**

Nicole Adler (SA)  
Jeana Eriksen (SA)  
Sonia Jones (SA)  
Nester Nieves (SA)  
Kara Ponton (SA)  
Alex Reyes (SA)  
Rosanna Ryan (SA)  
Wesley Witherspoon (SA)  
Eric Ybarra (SA)

### **Members Absent**

Julie Gaona (SA)  
Julio Garnica (SA)

### **Others Attending**

Mozh Akbari  
Rihana Ahmad  
Haneef Akbari  
Renee Bauer  
Aaron Carruthers  
Rondale Holloway  
Riana Hardin  
Beth Hurn  
Marianne Iversen  
Stacy Martinez  
Charles Nguyen  
Debra Ponton

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Nicole Adler called the meeting to order at 2:02 P.M.

### **2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Committee members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

### **3. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

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#### Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate

FA = Family Advocate

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment

#### **5. APPROVAL OF MAY 22, 2023 MINUTES**

Members reviewed the minutes from the May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 meeting. The minutes can be found starting on page 7 of the July 2023 SAAC packet.

##### **ACTION 1**

It was moved/seconded (Ponton [SA]/ Witherspoon [SA]) and carried to approve the May 22<sup>nd</sup> minutes as presented. (Aye: Adler [SA], Jones [SA], Nieves [SA], Ponton [SA], Reyes [SA], Ryan [SA], Witherspoon [SA], and Ybarra [SA]; Not Present: Gaona [SA], and Garnica [SA]).  
Motion passed.

#### **6. MEMBER UPDATES**

Members shared their recent advocacy activities, including attending local People First meetings, Regional Advisory Committee Meetings, attending the California Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference, and starting their own podcast. Members discussed issues of concern in their communities, including access to medical care, specialists, and social rec, making friends and connecting with others, low attendance at self-advocacy meetings, and continued frustration with the Self-Determination Program.

#### **7. REVIEW OF COUNCIL BUSINESS**

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers provided members with an update on the status of the agency and an overview of the July Council meeting agenda. SCDD continues statewide efforts to promote access to supports and services for people with I/DD so they can be included in their communities. Executive Director Carruthers assured members that SCDD is monitoring federal developments on the debt ceiling.

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## **8. SCDD Self-Determination Program Evaluation**

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers provided the committee with a high-level overview of the recommendations in the Self-Determination Program Evaluation, which has been submitted to the legislature. Recommendations from the report included improving access to information about the program, streamlining the enrollment process, reducing the administrative burden, increase training and support for independent facilitators, using the Self-Determination Program as a tool to improve workforce hiring and retention, and increasing equity within the program.

Members voiced their appreciation for the concept of self-determination but recognized that there is room for improvement. Members were concerned about the number of steps and amount of paperwork involved in the Self-Determination Program and noted that many regional center clients choose to leave the program out of frustration or lack of support.

## **9. Reflecting on the Americans with Disability Act**

Members ended the meeting by sharing reflections on the meaning and impact of the Americans with Disability Act. Committee members shared ideas about how to build on the ADA by improving access to medical care, increasing the accessibility of community events, expanding collaborations with mental health services, creating spaces to talk about the intersectionality between disability and other identity groups, continuing to update the language used in laws and everyday communications to be more inclusive, and strengthening and safeguarding state legislation.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 P.M.

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