



**SELF-ADVOCATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAAC) MEETING
MINUTES
JANUARY 22, 2024**

Members Present

Nicole Adler (SA)
Julie Gaona (SA)
Julio Garnica (SA)
Sonia Jones (SA)
Nester Nieves (SA)
Kara Ponton (SA)
Alex Reyes (SA)
Rosanna Ryan (SA)
Wesley Witherspoon (SA)
Eric Ybarra (SA)

Others Attending

Rihana Ahmad
Renee Bauer
Michelle Cave
Brandi Halstead
Riana Hardin
Dena Hernandez
Patricia Herrera
Beth Hurn
Christy Lam-Julian
George Lewis
Charles Nguyen
Nicole Patterson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Eric Ybarra called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

A quorum was established.

Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate

FA = Family Advocate

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Christy Lam-Julian, a mother of an 8-year-old who received a late-diagnosis of a disability, requested that the Council look into the gap between anti-bullying and anti-sexual harassment of people with I/DD.

5. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 27, 2023 MINUTES

Members reviewed the minutes from the November 27th, 2023 meeting. The minutes can be found starting on page 7 of the January 2024 SAAC packet.

ACTION 1

It was moved/seconded (Witherspoon [SA]/ Ponton [SA]) and carried to approve the November 27th minutes as presented. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

6. MEMBER UPDATES

Members had an opportunity to share their updates and concerns about issues in their local area. Members brought up the ongoing need to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community living. Members would like to see greater awareness of the work that SCDD does and make sure that Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) meetings and SCDD committee meetings have better attendance. Members talked about the need to do outreach to media outlets about SCDD's work. Self-Determination, employment, and the accessibility of health care services were also brought up as ongoing opportunities for improvement.

7. STATEWIDE SELF-ADVOCACY NETWORK (SSAN) REPORT

SCDD SSAN Representative, Alex Reyes, provided a verbal report of the December SSAN Meeting.

Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate

FA = Family Advocate

8. REVIEW OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

SCDD Manager, Rihana Ahmad provided members with an update on the status of the agency and an overview of the January Council meeting agenda. Members of the Committee expressed an interest in hearing about the impact the Governor's proposed budget will have on the disability delivery system.

9. SCDD PAID INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (PIP) EXPERIENCE

Brandi Halstead, Outreach Coordinator Intern for SCDD's San Bernardino Regional Office, shared her experience with the Paid Internship Program (PIP). Interning with SCDD has helped her to develop advocacy skills and connect with other advocates in the region. Through her position, Ms. Halstead has provided trainings on emergency preparedness, attended outreach events, and gained office skills. Ms. Halstead would like advocates who are interested in getting a job to know that it is ok to ask for support, including requesting a job coach.

10. OVERVIEW OF SCDD STORYTELLERS BLOG

Michelle Cave, SCDD Communications Manager, provided the Committee with an overview of the SCDD Storytellers Blog and encouraged members to take a look at the digital space and share their thoughts and feedback with staff.

11. PLANNING FOR 2023 – 2024 SAAC ACTIVITIES

As a follow-up to the November 2023 meeting, members shared that early identification, marriage penalty for benefits, and helping advocates participate in advocacy are some of the issues that affect them personally. Marriage penalty for benefits, access to education, housing access, and helping others participate in advocacy activities were mentioned as issues for their community/region, and marriage penalty for benefits and access to education were identified as statewide issues.

Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate

FA = Family Advocate

Additionally, members shared that they would like the Committee to create plain language guidance for medical professionals, be a part of the effort to get rid of the marriage penalty for Social Security/ Disability benefits, invite representatives from the field of education to talk about methods used to educate children with disabilities, advocate for better access to medical services for people with I/DD, develop trainings, and educate professionals on the needs of people with disabilities.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 P.M.

Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate

FA = Family Advocate