



**SELF-ADVOCATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAAC) MEETING  
MINUTES  
March 18, 2024**

**Members Present**

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

**Others Attending**

Rihana Ahmad  
Julie Beadle-Brown  
Riana Hardin  
Dena Hernandez  
Beth Hurn  
Stacey Martinez  
Mark Melason  
Charles Nguyen

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Eric Ybarra called the meeting to order at 1:34 P.M.

**2. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM**

A quorum was established.

**3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Committee members and others in attendance introduced themselves.

---

Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate

FA = Family Advocate

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

#### **5. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 22, 2024 MINUTES**

Members reviewed the minutes from the January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 meeting. The minutes can be found starting on page 7 of the March 2024 SAAC packet.

##### **ACTION 1**

It was moved/seconded (Witherspoon [SA]/ Ryan [SA]) and carried to approve the January 22<sup>nd</sup> minutes as presented. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

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

Members shared their concerns about the ongoing need to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community living. Members emphasized the importance of getting involved in issues that are important to them. Members continue to want to see a greater awareness of the work that SCDD does. The topics of Self-Determination, mental health, marriage and benefits, cuts to services and supports, employment, emergency preparedness, transportation, and voting access were brought up by Committee members. Members shared concerns about possible budget cuts and their impact on supports and services for people with I/DD.

#### **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 of State Plan and Self-Advocacy Rihana Ahmad asked for committee feedback on the plain language of three (3) Requests for Proposals (RFPs) under consideration by the Council. Members requested that the social isolation project also include an effort to help people who have restricted mobility and are unable to attend many in-person activities. Members shared concerns about connecting to advocates in both rural and urban settings.

## **9. PERSON-CENTERED ADVOCACY VISION EDUCATION (PAVE) PROJECT**

California Community Living Network (CCLN) Executive Officer Mark Melanson and Person-Centered Advocacy Vision Education (PAVE) Project Manager Dr. Julie Beadle Brown ask for Committee feedback on four (4) draft plain language resources under development related to four (4) regional center service codes: Supported Living, Independent Living, Respite, and Employment. Members shared concerns about how children with disabilities who have parents with disabilities would be able to access services and supports. Members were also concerned that the Employment resource did not include enough employment options.

## **10. DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH DISCUSSION**

This item was tabled due to time constraints.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 P.M.

---

Legend:

SA = Self-Advocate

FA = Family Advocate