



San Bernardino Regional Office

Regional Advisory Committee (RAC)

Minutes

June 10, 2025

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Members Present

Eric Aguilar, **Vice-Chair**

Fanny Cisneros (New appointed member)

Stephen Donohue (New appointed member)

Kelli Guillory

Chiriece McCorley Smith (New appointed member)

Shannen Mitchell

Kimberly Risser

April Sayre (New appointed member)

Lisa Williams

Michael Wilson

Members Absent

Dustlyne Beavers, **Chair** (Leave of Absence)

Sandra Diaz (excused absence)

Elizabeth Felix Discussion

Ryan Nelson (excused absence)

SCDD SBRO Staff

Patricia Herrera, Regional Manager

Alondra Castillo, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

Jose Valle, Office Technician

Guest Speaker(s)

Dakota Brown - Wellness and Disability Equity Alliance Riverside and University Health System – Behavioral Health

Public Attendees

Esther Rodriguez
Flerida Meza
Glenis Ulloa
Greg Damewood
Gurtej Khalsa
Jeannie Ablon
Kim Merzouk
Michelle Koo
Ryan Hutchison

English/Spanish Language Interpreter(s)

N/A

Meeting called to order at 4:05 PM

Welcome from Eric Aguilar, Vice-Chair.

Approval of Minutes

Eric Aguilar motioned to approve minutes of the 04/08/2025 meeting. Motioned seconded by Stephen Donahue and Kim Risser. Unanimously minutes were approved.

Presenter: Dakota Brown

Wellness and Disability Equity Alliance Riverside and University Health System – Behavioral Health

Topic: Self-Care and Care Giving

4:08 PM – 4:15 PM: Eric Aguilar introduced himself and asked members of the RAC, and SCDD employees to introduce themselves.

4:15 PM – 4:35 PM Patricia Herrera introduced Regional Advisory Committee member Kim Risser completing two terms for a total of six years serving as an appointed Committee member. Patricia then introduced Councilman Ryan Hutchison, from the City of Rancho Cucamonga who presented a Recognition Certificate to Kim for her contributions to SCDD

and her dedicated advocacy to individuals with disabilities and their families. Councilman Hutchison highlighted Kim's contributions to SCDD and in the community. He praised her for her advocacy work, multilingual abilities, and commitment to helping others, emphasizing her impact on the lives of people with disabilities.

4:35 PM – 5:25 PM: Patricia Herrera introduced Dakota Brown and thanked her for her time and gave Dakota the floor for her presentation. Dakota started the presentation by discussing the importance of self-care and caregiving, emphasizing that self-care is not selfish.

Dakota shared insights about the challenges faced by caregivers, drawing parallels to the difficulties ships encounter with barnacles in the Columbia River. She highlighted how caregiving is a complex and essential role, often performed by unpaid workers, and emphasized the importance of identifying oneself as a caregiver to access resources and support. Dakota also discussed the stress associated with caregiving, noting that many caregivers need more help but do not receive it, and stressed the need for preparation and support to make a difference in this field.

Dakota discussed the impact of stress on mental and physical health, distinguishing between eustress and distress. They explained the hand model of the brain to help manage stress responses and introduced the 4Fs: Fight, Flight, Freeze, and Fawn. Dakota led a breathing exercise to center and ground participants and highlighted the physical, cognitive, and emotional impacts of chronic stress. Dakota emphasized the importance of recognizing stress symptoms and taking steps to regulate both body and mind.

Dakota emphasized the importance of sleep and setting boundaries, sharing personal experiences and techniques for managing stress and anxiety. She also discussed nature deficit disorder, its effects on mental health, and the restorative benefits of spending time in nature.

Dakota then led a discussion on self-compassion and social connection, emphasizing their importance in maintaining mental health and resilience. She shared various strategies for nurturing social connections, including engaging in activities like cooking for others, joining book clubs, or simply reaching out to old friends. She also highlighted the benefits of self-compassion, debunking myths and explaining how it can lead to healthier behaviors and personal growth. The session concluded with a focus on simple joys and pleasures, encouraging participants to find moments of happiness in everyday life, and ended with a brief meditation exercise,

focusing on loving-kindness, guiding participants through exercises to cultivate compassion for themselves and others.

Dakota presented mental health resources and support services available in Riverside County, including Care Pathways, Riverside University health system trainings, peer support centers, and crisis lines. She emphasized the importance of being specific when requesting help and shared that stress can be beneficial when managed properly. Dakota announced a Cultural Competency Department listening session for the following day and promoted an upcoming Inland Empire Disabilities collaborative conference.

Report from Regional Manager – Patricia Herrera 5:30 PM

Patricia talked about the importance of the Tell Your Story – Medicaid letter writing campaign and how the potential cuts to Medicaid can affect all those that benefit from it. She indicated how many letters have currently been collected and how more letters are still needed.

[Tell Your Story letter-writing campaign link](#)

Patricia discussed the importance of increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities, highlighting the success of the business roundtable and the upcoming employment conference. She emphasized the need for personal relationships between businesses to drive recruitment. She also mentioned the development of crisis intervention services, housing solutions, and leadership development programs. She encouraged everyone to participate in the training sessions and to spread the word about these initiatives.

Public Comments on Matters Not on the Agenda – 5:45 PM

No public comments.

Meeting Adjourned - 6:00 PM

- Eric Aguilar motioned to adjourn meeting. Motion approved by Kelli Guillory and second by Kim Risser.