



Statewide Self-Determination Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes July 10, 2024

Attending Members

Charles Nutt (FNRC)
Chris Miller (RCRC)
David Forderer (SARC)
Debby Hight (NBRC)
Lori Walker (NLACRC)
Jan Opsvig (IRC)
Joyce Clark (SDRC)
Ken Parekh (GGRC)
Lisa Cooley (ACRC)
Michelle Smith (CVRC)
Pierre Landry (FDLRC)
Rick Wood (KRC)
Sherry Alvarez (SCLARC)
Vi Ibarra (RCEB)
Vivian David Nicolas (VMRC)
Yougeng Sun (ELARC)

Absent Members

Ellen Hunt (TCRC)
Betty Monterrey (SGPRC)
Rosalinda Garcia (HRC)
Regional Center of OC
Westside RC

Others Attending

Aaron Carruthers
Aminah Abdul-
Hakim
Amethyst Ehrler
Ashley Willett
Beth Hurn
Christine Tolbert
Crystal Smith
Dena Hernandez
Diana Perez
Faviola Valencia
Gabriel Baca
Ibrahim Muttaqi
Jeanette Castro
Judy Mark
Julie LaRose
Juli Singley
Kristianna Moralls
Katie Dempsey
Katie Hornberger

Others Attending

Kavita Sreedhar
Liz Gongora
Lorena Gomez
Maria Lopez
Maribel Oliver
Miriam Erberich
Mozh Akbari
Naomi Hagel
Tumori Hill
Rachel Teefy
Regina Schekall
Renee Bauer
Rihana Ahmad
Robin Monroe
Robin Maitino-Erben
Roxy Ortiz
Sandra McElwee
Sandra Menendez
Sandra Van Scotter
Selvin Arevalo
Shelia Jordan Jones
Veronica Lopez

1. CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Rick Wood (FA) called the meeting to order at 11:05 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 APRIL 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

It was moved/seconded (Nutt [SA]/Landry [FA]) and carried to approve the April 2024 meeting minutes as presented (Motion passed by acclimation, with one abstention from Debby Hight).

5. **OFFICER ELECTIONS**

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers reviewed the SSDAC Co-Chair election process, reminding members that at the April SSDAC meeting, the committee discussed changing SSDAC policy to allow a Co-Chair to serve more than 2 consecutive terms. SSDAC Co-Chair Rick Wood presented his candidate statement, highlighting his accomplishments during his first two terms and his willingness to continue to serve. The floor was opened for any committee member to self-nominate. No other members wished to be considered.

It was moved/seconded (Nutt [SA]/Walker [FA]) and carried to change the SSDAC policy to allow a Co-Chair to serve more than two consecutive terms (Motion passed unanimously, see Page 1 for a list of members present).

Rick Wood was re-elected to serve as SSDAC Co-Chair (Vote was unanimous. See Page 1 for a list of members present).

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

Co-Chair Rick Wood reported on SSDAC-related activities that have taken place since the last meeting. Members were provided with the SSDAC FMS Recommendations and SSDAC Regional Center Training and Outreach Recommendations, which have been submitted to DDS. Members were informed about the May 16th DDS SDP Advisory Group meeting and that DDS grantee Qlarant has convened a workgroup and are seeking participants to provide input on training content and standards for Independent Facilitators.

Members and attendees were encouraged to visit the SSDAC Best Practices Platform to view updates and were informed that the SSDAC Workgroup are working with staff to put together a Resource Binder for new SSDAC Members. The presentation for the Co-Chair report can be found here:

https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2024/07/SSDAC-Co-Chair-Report.Final7_9.2024.pdf

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gabriel Baca – asked the committee if members of the public are able to join the SSDAC workgroup or if there are other ways for the public to participate in SSDAC meetings and was informed about public comment and invited to email chair Rick Wood. Mr. Baca stated that he is a relative of RC clients, is learning about the system and has ideas for improvement. He stated that he wants to support the system in coming up with ideas for changes and implementing them.

Tumboura Hill stated that he worked for the RC as program evaluator and that Service Coordinators, RCs, and PCS don't know enough about SDP. He stated that there is a need for education. He also expressed concern about frequently changing certification requirements for those who want to become Independent Facilitators.

Liz Gongora stated that she has been acting as an independent facilitator to assist her son with SDP and that she is experiencing delays in payment due to confusion about which service code she should be using for IF services.

7. DDS AND OMBUDSPERSON UPDATES

Kathleen Dempsey, DDS Self-Determination Program Branch Manager provided a presentation that covered current SDP enrollment data, recent DDS SDP directives, and upcoming areas of focus. DDS has released directives to clarify billing requirements and to provide guidance on Employer burden and other employment-related costs, updated FMS provider requirements, updated SANDIS reporting requirements, and implementation of regional center LVAC reporting. DDS areas of focus will include enhanced data collection to track enrollment and participation in SDP and establishing standards and certification processes for Financial Management Services and Independent Facilitators. Members were informed of upcoming DDS community meetings. The full presentation can be found here: <https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2024/07/DDS-Update.pdf>

Katie Hornberger, Acting SDP Ombudsperson provided a presentation of data from the Office of the Ombudsperson and informed the committee that recruitment is underway for the Ombudsperson position. The full presentation can be found here: <https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2024/07/SSDAC-Ombuds-Presentation.pdf>

Committee members encouraged DDS to continue to seek diverse stakeholder feedback regarding IF and FMS standards and asked for clarification regarding reimbursement for recreational services.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sandra Van Scotter stated that very few people have a smooth transition from year to year. She described her experience with delays and extensions during the process and requested that FMS providers treat their clients like customers by sending reminders and starting the transition process earlier.

Crystal Smith stated that she appreciates the SSDAC and the update from DDS and asked that a template for participant surveys be shared across regional centers to gather consistent information about why people aren't getting into the program.

Gabriel Baca stated that regional centers largely ignore SDP in favor of the traditional system and that regional center consumers should be supported in choosing which service delivery system works best for them. He stated that the Latino and African American populations are underserved in the SDP and that a lot of work remains to ensure that these communities are reached and have the support they need to transition into the program.

Juli Singley described difficulties with seeking reimbursement for recreational services due to requirements that service providers are vendors of the regional center. She stated that this requirement creates burdens for service providers and families and is taking opportunities away from her child.

Miriam Erberich asked that DDS provide clarification on its timeline for changes in the billing code for IF services.

Sandra Van Scotter stated that the calendar on the DDS website does not include SDP update meetings and asked if there is a plan to increase community involvement by increasing notification about the meetings.

8. SCDD UPDATES

SCDD Executive Director Aaron Carruthers provided an update on SCDD's SDP activities. This included current participant data and updates for SCDD led SDP Orientation trainings, which will continue under a renewed contract with DSS for an additional 3-5 years and will contain new and updated curriculum. Mr. Carruthers reported that SCDD staff will participate in a workgroup led by DDS grantee Qlarant to provide input on the standardization of IF services. Mr. Carruthers also reported that State Council supported legislation SB 1281, the Advancing Equity and Access in the Self-Determination Program Act, has been referred to the Appropriations Committee and placed on suspense file. The full SCDD Update presentation can be found here: https://scdd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/33/2024/07/ED.Report.SSDAC7_9.2024.pdf

PUBLIC COMMENT

Judy Mark with Disability Voices United (DVU) thanked SCDD for supporting SB 1281 and informed members that DVU will continue to fight for the legislation and advocate for DDS to monitor solvency of FMS providers and simplify the spending plan process. She encouraged SSDAC members and attendees to contact their legislators, the governor's office, DDS and California's Health and Human Services Agency to advocate for the bill.

Gabriel Baca stated that she would like to see more effort to involve more non-English-speaking families into SDP, and more follow-up to these families after they attend orientation.

Karelia Barton stated that as an IF she has observed that Hispanic families are not able to obtain the information needed from the RC to transition to the SDP and feel that they are not a priority.

Vanessa Garcia asked if there was an option to identify as mixed-race or bi-racial in the SDP Orientation demographic data, stating that it may explain those who declined to answer that question.

Amethyst Ehrler asked what is being done to offer Spanish speaking IF trainings, stating that she completed an IF training and English was the only language available.

Karelia Barton stated that families are frustrated because they can't access basic SDP information from the RC, and that it seems like the RC does not want them to move from the traditional model to SDP.

Karelia Barton stated that there are not trainings available for IFs and that the RC has a lot of requirements that need to be met to become an IF.

9. FUTURE MEETING PLANNING

SSDAC Co-Chair Rick Wood informed members that because Local Advisory Committees have been administering grant funding for a variety of administrative, outreach and educational efforts, he would like SSDAC members to let him know if they have recommendations for past/current grantees to highlight at a future SSDAC meeting.

Committee members were asked to share topic ideas for the next SSDAC Townhall meeting. Committee members discussed and submitted their ideas through the chat. These responses will be considered by the SSDAC workgroup as they plan for the December 2024 Townhall.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Amethyst Ehrler asked for and was provided with instructions on how to be added to the DDS SDP distribution list. To be added to the list, email your request to SDP@dds.ca.gov.

Cindy Cox encouraged the committee to address barriers to finding IFs at the next SSDAC meeting. Several meeting attendees entered messages in the Zoom chat in support of this, citing the cost of IF services and the misconceptions about the roles of IFs.

Jon Francis stated that antiquated IT systems, payroll IT systems and portals are causing tremendous frustration not only for basic payment of bills but delays/mistakes on pay checks for direct staff, and IFs are given limiting access to make corrections. He stated that it takes too much correspondence to clear matters up. He stated that RC's have little or no tracking and accountability for where an individual is in the process of transitioning. He thanked the committee for their efforts and passion for making SDP sharp, responsive, trustworthy, and functional.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 P.M.