



NBRC VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MAKING IDEAS TANGIBLE THROUGH FOCUS AND EFFORT

VENDOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

North Bay Regional Center

October 24, 2006

Members present: Beth Atton, NVSS; Donna Feingold, Moving Forward; Stan Higgins, Oaks of Hebron; Carin Lawrence, Becoming Independent; Don Morgan, BAFS; Lance Parker, On Our Own, Inc.; Liz Sutton, North Bay Industries; Edie Thomas, Connections for Life; Michael Woodson, ARC Solano

Members absent: David Mauger, Christopher House; Terri Rowland, Milestones

Guests: Jami Davis, Lindy Smith, Adele Butler, James Kuehn, Eric Martin, Joe Brier

- I. Introductions and Acceptance of Minutes** – September minutes were not available for acceptance. Minutes will be distributed at a later date.
- II. Agenda Changes or Additions** - no changes/additions.
 - a. VAC holiday event was discussed. It was decided that a luncheon at La Strada will occur after the November 28th VAC meeting. Information will be distributed soon.
- III. Group Reports and/or Clarifications**
 - a) **Best Practices Training Update** - Carin Lawrence reported that Best Practices met last week. The next training will be “Assisting People with Developmental Disabilities to Cope with the Death of a Peer”. The training will be held Nov. 1st at NBRC in Napa (10am to noon) and on Nov. 2nd at NBRC in Santa Rosa (10am to noon) and at BI (2-4pm). In January 2007, a training calendar for the entire year should be available making it possible for agencies to plan in advance. The next Best Practices meeting will be held on Jan. 17th at 10am at BI in Sonoma.
 - b) **Sonoma Vendor Group** – It was requested that the agenda for future VAC meetings be issued a week ahead of the scheduled meetings versus the Friday before scheduled meeting dates.

There was a discussion regarding clients being pulled from placement without adequate notice or participation being solicited from their Day Program service providers. Ideally, a 30 day notice should be given to vendors as well as an invitation to review the situation leading to the change. Jim Kuehn (NBRC) stated that when consumers are pulled without adequate notice it is usually due to group home closures or the consumer’s physical relocation. Beth Atton stated that she strongly supports a team approach versus last minute decisions. The VAC also was in favor of the team approach and encouraged NBRC to not exclude the client’s day program when these situations occur. Jim stated that it is not intentional by regional center – it’s largely the result of unforeseen circumstances.

The consensus was that NBRC should make a concerted effort to look at the overall picture and seek to understand the client and their patterns of behavior. Donna F. reminded the VAC that NBRC had previously agreed that there would be a team meeting before a consumer is pulled from a day program. This would give the day program the opportunity to address any issues and resolve the problems if possible. The exception being when the issues were related specifically to either the health or safety of the consumer.

The closure of a great number of residential homes was also discussed. Current residential providers are having problems breaking even financially, yet RFP's are being issued for the opening of new homes. More specifically, the wages paid and the levels of reimbursement within the industry are of growing state-wide concern. The current economic climate is making it hard for group homes to survive. In Sonoma County, new homes to replace those that are closing are not starting up quickly enough and consumers are being forced to be placed outside of their communities.

A past NBRC Residential Developer stated that there were few inquiries to open new homes in Sonoma County during her term as Residential Developer for NBRC. It was hypothesized that this could have been due to the economic variables cited previously. Some level three homes were opened but were merely replacement homes for those that closed. NBRC has no control of State rates for Level three homes. It's a serious issue – higher income areas versus rate reimbursement. It was theorized that follow-through from potential residential home providers was poor due to their analysis of the fiscal numbers and once realizing the financial challenges associated with the endeavor many abandoned the process.

Lance shared that he recently attended a SCOE meeting where it was reported that there was a 5% cut to non-public schools being considered.

The group also discussed the College of Direct Care and its current status of use by vendors, state agencies and associations. There seems to be some fragmentation in the process.

- c) **Napa-Solano Vendor Group** – The group continues to have lively luncheons. At the last meeting, the Group discussed SEIU and the formulation of potential questions for the November meeting. They also discussed the “New Day” meeting and if it was in fact an invitation only event. Other topics of discussion were Disaster Preparedness and housing availability.

The Napa-Solano Vendor Group intends to meet on the first Tuesday of every other month. The next meeting is scheduled for the 5th of December.

d) **Legislative**

- 1. **CRA** - There has been no meeting since the September annual meeting in San Diego. CRA has hired a new CEO, Dr. Michael McCoy. There will be an emphasis on regional meetings versus the January meeting at a single site. The January meeting is being dropped in lieu of hosting local, day conferences in hopes that more folks will attend. There will be two annual CRA conferences; the fall annual meeting and the spring legislative/grassroots meeting.

The next Bay Area Caucus meeting will be held November 9th at the Contra Costa ARC located at 1340 Arnold Drive, Suite 127, in Martinez from 10am to noon. All VAC participants are encouraged to attend; the meeting is open to all.

- 2. **ARCA** - no report
- 3. **Budgets & Bills** – nothing new at this time.

- IV. **Policies and Procedures Update:** Jim Kuehn stated that NBRC tries to keep all policies and procedures up to date and in line with the needs of the consumers that NBRC serves. A major point of concern is the need for more education and training for respite providers. More than half do not respond to the invitations to participate in training that is offered. June 30th, 2007 is the deadline for new policies.

A brief discussion ensued about the orientation of new CPC's at NBRC and their understanding of the array of provider services. It often seems that new case managers are not clear about the explanation of service hours to families. It was suggested that NBRC intensify its efforts to clarify to families the ramifications of service hours.

Another VAC suggestion was to encourage new CPC's to attend a VAC meeting or two to foster a better understanding of the intricacies of the service system and to stimulate a greater sense of solidarity.

Lance suggested that it might be worthwhile to put together a communication tool that would help with the necessary relationships between CPC's and vendors. Donna suggested that a mandatory training for new CPC's and VAC representatives occur so that there is a greater collaborative effort in understanding the relationship and paperwork between all parties. While there is an established orientation for new CPC's, more detail regarding vendor process would be helpful.

Jim K. reported that there was a Vendor Fair that used to be held in which programs participated and introduced CPC's to their services. The VAC group was concerned that this might be considered more of a marketing tool and not a pure training format. One idea was presenting a "Day in the Life" of vendors in an attempt to show CPC's what vendor programs do first hand. It would not be agency specific.

There was definite interest from the group for this type of training. John Kuehn will follow-up with Richard Ruge for a possible training. The aim is communication and training about procedures. Donna Feingold will also follow-up with Richard.

V. Presentations – none

VI. New Business – VAC planning for CRA/SEIU presentation for the November meeting.

- There was a discussion about providing an explanation to November attendees about why we are hosting such a meeting.
- Group reviewed the presentation plan. Don wants little posturing from the presenters - just the facts. More specifically, what are the benefits and advantages of each presenter's position?
- It was agreed that Lance Parker will be the moderator.
- The group discussed the AB 2193 bill. Should we include an outline of the bill? There will be two different issues to discuss: the Work Force piece (AB 2193) and unionization specifically. We want to know about unionization and how it would affect our employees.
- It was agreed to take out the AB 2193 outline as it will come up in the discussion.
- Group discussed process. We will distribute several questions that have been processed and agreed on by the VAC group. We will have four points that will be asked of both presenters. Presenters will receive these in advance. VAC responsibilities:
 - Index cards – Liz
 - Signs – Edie
 - Room set-up – Beth Atton and Donna Feingold
 - Card organization – Donna, Edie, Carin, Stan
 - Flyer about meeting and room– Lance
 - Time keeper – Don

VII. Announcements – none

VIII. Vendor support time -

a. Further discussion about the SEIU meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00.

Next meeting: November 28th.