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Minutes
ARCA Board of Directors
March 21, 2025
Embassy Suites Riverfront Promenade and via Webinar

Board of Directors Members Present:

Lori Banales, Kelly Pennington, ACRC
Ed Araim, Randy Tellalian, CVRC
Melinda Sullivan, Brigitte Sroujeh, FDLRC
Gloria Wong, ELARC
Melissa Gruhler, Cali McKinzie, FNRC
Eric Zigman, Edith Arias, GGRC
Patrick Ruppe, Laurie Zaleski, HRC
Lavinia Johnson, Briseida Ramirez, IRC
Enrique Roman, Tracey Mensch, KRC
Gabriel Rogin, Martha Valdez, NBRC
Angela Pao-Johnson, Lety Garcia, NLACRC
Kim Smalley, Mike Sawyer, RCRC
Larry Landauer, Sandy Martin, RCOC
Becky Nanyonjo, Frank Paré, RCEB
Javier Zaldivar, Lisa Lopez, SARC
Jesse Weller, SG/PRC
Dexter Henderson, Cynthia Torres, SCLARC
Leinani Walter, Alicia Schott, VMRC
Jane Borochoff, Vanda Yung, WRC
Mark Klaus, Terri Colachis, SDRC
Omar Noorzad, Ramon Hooper, TCRC

Board of Directors Members Absent:

Julie Chetney, SG/PRC

ARCA Advisory Representatives

Aaron Olson, CVRC, Co-Chair, Community Services Directors
Cesar Garcia, SCLARC, Co-Chair, Directors of Client Services
Cristine Couch, VMRC, Co-Chair, Directors of Client Services
Kyla Lee, SCLARC, Co-Chair Chief Financial Officers

Guests Present:

Pete Cervinka, Dr. Michi Gates, Carla Casteneda, DDS
Briseida Ramirez
Amy Sullivan
Suzy Requarth, WRC
Lucina Garza, SG/PRC
Lisa Utsey
Erria Kaalund
Maureen Fitzgerald
Lynda Mendoza
Mark Halvorsen, CVRC
Kate Kinnamont, SDRC
Anh Nguyen
Scott Rice
Srbui Ovsepyan, FDLRC
Manaho Takaichi
Amanda Pyle, GGRC
Mireille Maxime
Heidi Aboites

ARCA Staff Present:

Amy Westling, Tony Anderson, Lauren Ettensohn, Sidney Jackson, Roxy Ortiz, Vivian Umenei

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Terri Colachis.

Introductions

Introductions were made around the room.

Approval of Agenda

The Board of Directors agenda was presented.

M/S/C: To approve the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of January 17, 2025, Board of Directors meeting were presented for approval.

M/S/C: To approve the minutes.

Public Comment

None.

President's Report (ARCA)

Teri Colachis expressed great appreciation for all of the hard work of Kelly Pennington as the Chair of the Board Delegates. She also called out the efforts of Tony Anderson and Roxy Ortiz on the Board

Competencies and Onboarding presentation. The last meeting for The Master Plan of Developmental Services meetings are concluding this month.

Treasurer’s Report – Omar Noorzad

The financial statement for January and February of 2025 was shared with the meeting participants. ARCA’s financials remain in good standing, with no changes to original projections. The statements indicate that ARCA is in the black by over \$200,000 year to date.

M/S/C: To accept the financial statements for January and February 2025

Regional Center Response to Recent Wildfires

Lucina Galarza, Deputy Executive Director, San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center (SG/PRC) and Suzy Requarth, Director of Client Services, Westside Regional Center (WRC) provided an overview of the work done on behalf of the centers regarding the recent Los Angeles County wildfires. Information pertaining to the immediate response actions taken on behalf of the centers including the outreach efforts to those in evacuation areas. Targeted outreach continued throughout the evacuation period.

DDS Report

Pete Cervinka expressed appreciation regional centers’ response to recent Los Angeles County fires. Medicaid provides 37% of the funding of the California developmental services system and is a target for federal budget reductions. The Master Plan for Developmental Services Committee report will be released in final form on March 28, 2025 and includes approximately 170 recommendations. The report reflects the voice of the community that DDS will use to inform existing and future work. The Committee will be convened two times annually to inform reports to the Legislature. Last year the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 3291, which will allow regional centers to pay some housing costs for people who meet certain criteria and are at-risk of homelessness.

Dr. Michi Gates reported that caseload ratios continue to decline, and she expressed appreciation for all of the efforts to make the improvements. SB 138 standardization and transparency initiatives are moving forward. There is a report due to the legislature on generic and common services by July 1, 2025. The department is continuing to work with SANDIS regarding the Individual Program Plans (IPP) initiative and is testing the IPP Agreement Forms. Work continues on the Standardized Intake process and early steps will include quarterly reporting on intake timeliness. Dr. Gates expressed appreciation for the regional centers’ assistance testing the Family Support Tool. A standardized vendorization process is targeted for completion soon. Regional Center Performance Measures amounts to be received for 2023-2024 will be sent out very soon. She asked the group to send information to the department for individuals interested in becoming members of the Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention.

Carla Castañeda reported that DDS may reach out to ARCA and regional centers to better understand expenditure trends. She also stated the department may reach out to regional center staff to identify different strategies for encouraging vendors to participate in the Provider Directory.

ARCA Executive Director’s Report – Amy Westling

Amy Westling acknowledged Ed Araim of Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC) for all of his hard work and dedication over the many years as Executive Director of CVRC. She congratulated Ed Araim on his retirement and wished him the best of luck.

Ms. Westling also noted that today is actually the 40th anniversary of the California State Supreme Court decision in The ARC versus DDS. She emphasized the importance of the court decision for Californians with developmental disabilities, as it established the legal entitlement to services.

Potential Sponsorship of California Community Living Network Conference (CCLN)

There is a proposed sponsorship opportunity for the California Community Living Network’s conference scheduled for April in the amount of \$1,500.00.

M/S/C: To sponsor the April CCLN conference in the amount of \$1500.00.

Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget Update

Budget hearings will be held in the next couple of months. The focus will be primarily on the Governor's January budget as presented. Budget hearings related to developmental services are scheduled in the Assembly Sub. 2 for next Wednesday, March 26th and then in Senate Budget Sub. 3 Thursday, April 24th. The hearings will provide an opportunity to talk about some of those proposals contained in the Governor's Budget, as well as the Master Plan for Developmental Services. The financial climate in California has changed fairly significantly since the Governor's January Budget was introduced. There's a lot more uncertainty in the budget and available resources and expenditures than was anticipated. ARCA is expecting a lot more details in terms of what the Administration is proposing when the Governor releases his May Revision no later than May 14th. ARCA has reserved the West Steps of the Capitol for an advocacy event scheduled for May 22nd.

Master Plan for Developmental Services

The Master Plan for Developmental Services was proposed in the Governor's January Budget in 2024. The Committee has been meeting for a year. Ms. Westling voiced appreciation to those in the room who have been part of those meetings, either as Committee members or as workgroup members. The Master Plan is going to be finalized later this month. It is important to note that the Master Plan is a reflection of the consensus of and the will of the stakeholder community rather than a document that is being developed by the Administration. As we reflect on the plan development process, probably most impressive was seeing the incredible power of the voices of our self-advocates and the state's commitment to hearing their voices and to supporting them to speak through providing them with lots of space and opportunity to do so.

Key Initiatives Update

DDS and regional centers are implementing a variety of policy initiatives from enacted legislation and prior Budget cycles. While much work on these items has been carried out, there remain additional steps to be taken. A document outlining the current status of various policy changes is in the board materials provided ahead of the meeting and was briefly reviewed.

Legislative Report – Eric Zigman

Legislative Updates

All bills that have been introduced are now being scheduled for hearings as the 30-day waiting period has concluded. There is some consideration of lowering the amount of dollars that a bill would have to cost to be assigned to Suspense in Appropriations.

Federal Updates

Tony Anderson of ARCA informed members that ARCA is very active right now as it relates to proposed Medicaid cuts. ARCA is assisting people to advocate within their districts. Federal legislators are back in California, and so a lot of people are starting to go visit. The President released an executive order to disband the Department of Education. In terms of special education, the plan is for its administration to be reassigned to other departments.

Grassroots Day

Roxy Ortiz of ARCA provided the Board with an update regarding the Grassroots Day event held on March 3-4, 2025. Ms. Ortiz shared that regional center participation was great as a majority of the centers were represented. Over 200 delegates from all over the state attended the event.

ARCA Sponsored Legislation

AB 1172 (Nguyen)- Adult day programs: administration of inhalable emergency antiseizure medications. This is an idea that's come up through the ARCA Clinical Directors Group indicating that there are people with seizure disorders prescribed a particular medication that are ineligible to participate in certain licensed programs.

SB 422 (Grayson)- California Workforce Development Board: developmental services. There are about 60 different solutions that have been proposed from various reports and even some bills in Congress proposing some solutions for addressing the workforce problem. Various studies and ideas have been shared with the California Workforce Development Board.

ACR XXXX (Gonzalez) - Anniversary of Entitlement Decision Resolution. The resolution is the acknowledgement by the California Supreme Court that that IPP between the regional center and the person with a disability is a contract and an entitlement.

Bills for Consideration of a Formal Position

ARCA's proposed bill positions that were recommended yesterday by ARCA's Executive Committee were shared with meeting participants.

AB 49 (Muratsuchi), which in summary would prohibit immigration raids from taking place at school sites and day care centers was discussed. Members discussed the merits of engaging with this legislation.

M/S/F: To support AB 49 (Maratsuchi).

Given the lack of consensus on the above bill, the Board of Directors will revisit ARCA's position during its next meeting.

M/S/C: To approve the formal positions recommended by the Executive Committee.

Committee/Task Force Reports

Nominating and Bylaws Committee – *Melissa Gruhler*

The group met in March and developed the proposed slate of officers. President, Terri Colachis (SDRC); Vice President, Randy Tellalian (CVRC); Secretary, Julie Chetney (SG/PRC); Treasurer, Gloria Wong (ELARC); and, Parliamentarian, Melissa Gruhler (FNRC). This will be the proposed slate of officers for FY 2025-26 that will be voted on during the Annual Meeting in June.

Executive Committee – *Teri Colachis*

No report; all major items were also discussed during this Board meeting.

Board Delegates Group – *Kelly Pennington*

The group met on March 20, 2025. A small group of Delegates went to the Capitol for a tour and were able to see Senate and Assembly votes. Onboarding and board competencies were discussed in addition to a presentation from Patrick Ruppe of Harbor Regional Center.

Directors Group – *Gabriel Rogin*

The Directors Group met on March 20, 2025. Discipline group reports were discussed and Patrick Ruppe of Harbor Regional Center gave a presentation on the approach to measuring board composition. Amy Westling provided an update on the steps ARCA is taking to help with implementation of the Public Records Act. Updates on different approaches to calculate the Core Staffing Formula were discussed. The possibility of an Executive Directors' retreat later in 2025 was discussed. The meeting concluded with a discussion with Pete Cervinka and Dr. Michi Gates from DDS.

Finance Committee – *Patrick Ruppe*

The Committee met last week. DDS provided an update on the Budget, which included information about a one-time projected expenditure report using February payments. It's going to be due in April to DDS, which will help DDS better understand the fiscal impact of rate reform. DDS is starting to focus on the B-1 allocation for next fiscal year. Cash flow is good right now for the centers, and centers are advised to reach out to DDS if there's any cash flow issues. Updates on provider rate implementation, performance measurements, Quality Incentive Payments, and system initiatives, were provided.

Client Advisory Committee – *Tracey Mensch*

The ARCA CAC met via video conference on February 28, 2025. During the meeting, members shared thoughts on the Housing Symposium held in Sacramento on February 4th. Members also shared the recent activities of their local CAC. The next ARCA CAC meeting will be held via video conference on March 28, 2025.

Contract Negotiating Committee – *Larry Landauer*

The Committee did not meet. However, the contract included two additions this past month related to

artificial intelligence and generative artificial intelligence. Those two areas were added to regional center boilerplate contracts.

Standards & Practices Committee – Amy Westling for *Mark Klaus*

The Standards and Practices Committee met last month and will meet again next Tuesday. The Committee is looking at regional center leadership, which includes the board and regional center Executive Director.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Information Sharing

None.

Adjournment/Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m. The next meeting will be held on June 27, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in Sacramento.