



Report on Public Meetings Regarding Disparity in the Purchase of Services

Westside Regional Center (WRC) held five (5) public meetings for our community to:

- Learn about the disparities in the Purchase of Services (POS) data during Fiscal Year 2016-2017;
- Understand the limitations of the data;
- Learn about the barriers that may prevent members of the community from obtaining services;
- Learn about Westside’s efforts to increase equity and reduce POS disparities

The meetings were held on: February 28, March 12, March 19, March 21, and March 24, 2018. All meetings were held at Westside Regional Center except on March 24th which was held at Therapy West in Gardena.

Bilingual (English and Spanish) notices of the Public Meetings were posted on the WRC website and were also sent to service providers, clients, and families via Everbridge (automated call) and/or SimpleSend (email). Service coordinators were also invited to share the notices with their clients and families.

At every public meeting, materials were provided in both English and Spanish, with simultaneous professional Spanish interpretation of the presentation. Limited on-site childcare was also available on February 25th and March 21st given advanced notice. Parents were also able to request up to 4 hours of additional respite hours via their service coordinators to attend a meeting.

Carmine Manicone, WRC Executive Director, reviewed and explained the data provided by DDS concerning Annual Purchase of Services Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2016-2017: services used by ethnic groups, per capita spent by all ages, per capita spent by age groups, per capita spent by residence type (all ages), number of individuals with case management services only versus other POS trackable services, number of individuals in different ethnic groups with case management services only, and number of individuals in different age groups with case management services only across last six fiscal years. Emphasis was placed on POS disparities among the African American and Hispanic population when compared to their White counterparts. A summary of the data presented is as follows:

- WRC serves 9,796* individuals (see data limitations)
- The ethnic distribution of individuals served range from Hispanic (34%), White (28%), Black/African-American (21%), Multi-Ethnic/Other (12%), and Asian (5%)
- The ethnic distribution of WRC’s staff is similar to that of the WRC client population: Hispanic (45%), White (29%), Black/African-American (17%), Multi-Ethnic/Other (1%), and Asian (4%)
- The languages identified as primary by 30 or more clients in each of the following categories are English (7,758), Spanish (1,854), and Farsi (60)
- The majority of WRC clients are children/young adults (4,158) followed by adults (3,457) and Early Start (2,181)
- The vast majority of WRC clients live in the home of a parent or guardian (82%)—only 18% of all WRC clients live in other types of living arrangements



- When comparing services used by ethnic groups by all ages, the average amount spent per capita is higher for Whites (\$24,341) than for Hispanics (\$12,373), Blacks/African Americans (\$20,774), Asians (\$16,483), Multi-Ethnic/Other (\$15,652), and American Indian or Alaska Native (\$8,036)
- A large amount of all WRC authorized expenditures are for adults (ages 22 and up)
- A significant portion of all WRC authorized expenditures are to support out of home living arrangements (e.g. Residential [Group Homes], Independent Living Services, Supported Living Services)
- Based on POS data, 7,990 WRC clients have funded services and 876 do not have funded services/receive case management only.
- The largest WRC population without funded services/receiving case management only are Hispanics (356), followed by Whites (226), Blacks/African Americans (157), Multi-Ethnic/Other (125), Asians (12), and American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

Sandy Rivera, Equity and Cultural Diversity Specialist, provided to the community a preliminary list of barriers that were identified by the Equity Project funded by DDS, which the Enhanced Case Management and Parent Empowerment Project components noted as preventing families from utilizing services: information accessibility; service accessibility; system navigation; method of communication; financial hardship; transportation; childcare; cultural barriers; low satisfaction with services and supports.

Sandy also spoke about Westside's efforts to reduce these barriers and increase equity in POS through our Equity Project components:

- Cultural Competency Training (CCT) for WRC staff, board members, service providers, and community members;
- Re-designing WRC's website to be user friendly and accessible in multiple languages;
- Developing bilingual media messages that provide information about WRC's intake process and services;
- Increasing the use of interpreter services and developing written publications in multiple languages;
- Providing "Enhanced" Case Management services for the target population which would conceivably improve access to services by paying special attention to clients receiving the lowest, per capital service expenditures;
- Partnering with Autism Society of Los Angeles, Parent Empowerment Project (parent-led program) to target populations with low to no POS and help them learn how to navigate systems and access RC services and community resources;
- Contracting with 5 vendors to provide early start and/or children services in underserved areas and increase office hours to after 5:00 PM Monday through Friday as well as weekend hours;
- Contracting with culturally competent, bilingual (English and Spanish) Early Start occupational, physical, and speech therapy providers to provide therapeutic services to clients in-home and on a site-based location;
- Informing African American and Hispanic clients and families (with little to no POS) of the availability of one-time use, transportation and childcare funds to increase their access to information regarding RC services and to address other unique individual and family situations that could be service barriers



- Utilizing an Automatic Call system (Everbridge) to inform clients and families about important upcoming WRC hosted events, trainings, workshops, and parent support groups
- Monitoring, tracking data, and overseeing improvement cycles of POS disparities via a Dashboard
- Measuring client and family satisfaction with the services and supports provided by WRC to help us improve and provide the most appropriate services that encourage and support persons with developmental disabilities to live fully

In addition to the WRC staff in attendance at all 5 meetings, there were a combined total of eighty-eight (88) attendees present: (22) self-advocates, (60) family members, (4) service providers, (1) DDS representative, and (1) SCDD representative.

Questions, Comments & Responses from all 5 Public Meetings

These are the questions and comments raised by those in attendance at the meetings held on 2/28/18, 3/12/18, 3/19/18, 3/21/18, 3/24/18 and their responses.

Questions/Comments	WRC Response
Families want additional Social Skills groups in the WRC catchment area that are inclusive	WRC developed two (2) Social Skills groups with RFP funds provided through DDS disparity funding. These and other groups already vendored by WRC are being encouraged to find ways to include typically developing peers into their groups.
“Bring more quality vendors into our catchment area”	
What happens to the money not used that is authorized?	The state gives us an annual budget for Purchase of Service (POS). Typically, WRC has not had a surplus of POS dollars at the end of our fiscal year.
How can families hear about trainings, events, meetings, etc. going on at Westside?	WRC is currently using an automatic call and email system to alert families about WRC hosted events, trainings, workshops, support groups, meetings and much more.
I have not received a call or email from WRC. Why am I not receiving it?	Typically every year a service coordinator should be updating the client’s CDER during their IPP meeting. Families should make sure to contact their SC right away if their contact information changes. SCs also need to make sure to enter this information correctly onto SANDIS.
How can families hear about trainings, events, meetings, etc. going on in the community?	WRC parent shared with attendees that the Westside Family Resource and Empowerment Center is the best place to learn about any event that is coming up in the community. There is a wall listing events that is always available for parents.
Can WRC create a Facebook to share information with the community?	WRC has re-designed its website and everyone is encouraged to sign-up for our e-newsletters or to click on the website calendar of events to find out what is going on at WRC.
Sometimes I try to contact my Service Coordinator but	Escalate your call if it’s not getting attention. Speak to



<p>they won't answer. I call them several times and I don't hear from them. What can I do to get into contact with someone?</p>	<p>your service coordinator's program manager if your SC is not returning your call. Additionally, our Employee Contact information is now on the website. WRC also has a "Counselor of the Day" (COD) that you can speak with. Call the receptionist's desk and they will transfer your call to the COD.</p>
<p>Spanish-speaking parents stated that there are inequalities in the Early Start intake process. Spanish-speaking parents felt that there is a lack of available professionals who speak Spanish when assessments are being made and that this leads to incorrect diagnosis/eligibility decisions.</p>	<p>Agreed that we do not have enough Spanish speaking therapists including Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech providers. We have been trying to be more creative in securing new providers. For example we recently contracted with a Spanish-speaking speech therapist through a nationwide professional head hunting agency. However we acknowledge that there is a need to be even more creative in how we are advertising for providers and any suggestions or referrals to us are greatly appreciated.</p>
<p>Parents are not being well informed about the Early Start transition process—Who will provide their child's services? Who can parents communicate with about this transition process? How early on can this conversation be held with parents?</p>	<p>Have created and are regularly implementing an annual early start transition conference which parents are encouraged to attend with all of the information on transitioning to the school district and ongoing regional center services if appropriate. Also beginning conversations with caregivers earlier. For example these conversations are beginning sometimes as early as two years of age.</p>
<p>Parents feel there is a lack of communication between the service coordinator, parents, and school district about who will be providing the child's services (once they turn 3 years of age)</p>	<p>Every child should be having a transition meeting between 30 and 32 months about who will be doing what. That being said however it is recognized that this is a confusing process and subsequently have been emphasizing to Service Coordinators to have more than one conversation and also materials have been created in English and Spanish that detail transitional issues in a more visual format. There is also work being done to reformat the "Turning Three" booklet to make it even more accessible for families.</p>
<p>How can WRC ensure that authorized services (such as those in Early Start) are actually being delivered? Is there a tracking system?</p>	<p>There is not a real specific tracking system currently in place. In our IFSP however there is an agreement between parents and service coordinators that the caregiver will give us notification if the service is not being delivered. Subsequently we are making more of an effort to inform parents of the need to keep us informed. We are also making more of an effort to review progress reports which gives us some understanding of service utilization practices.</p>
<p>Need for more publications/information on the WRC website about: services/supports, frequently asked questions, process for accessing services, etc.</p>	
<p>Need for more resources for the deaf+ community</p>	



Parents asked for clarification on the process for registering for respite services	Respite services are authorized through the IPP and POS process and are initiated through the Service Coordinator. If a family has an identified provider the family can choose several vendors to refer to. The family provider will then be referred to the vendor to complete application paperwork and background clearance. If the family does not have an identified provider to use then WRC has vendors who can be referred to in order to find an “agency” provider for the family.
Parent asked how families/clients request on-going transportation services through POS	Requests should be initiated through the SC and the IPP process. Transportation requests can be complicated and are reviewed on a case by case basis - requests for transportation to adult day services can be fairly routine but other requests need deliberation by an expanded funding committee.
Is there a flyer available to share with others about the “Office Hours” before the Equity Task Force to discuss individual cases?	Currently we do not have one but we can certainly create one.
There is a need for housing among adult individuals with disabilities.	
When will we find out about the results from the Satisfaction Survey?	In late April 2018. Ami Sullivan from Kinetic Flow will be presenting the findings.

WRC will continue to support, educate, and serve all people with developmental disabilities.