

Board of Governors

Temporary Transitional Executive Community Advisory Committee (TTECAC)

Meeting Minutes – February 14, 2024

1055 W. 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017



L.A. Care
HEALTH PLAN

ECAC Members	RCAC Members/Public	L.A. Care Board of Governors/Senior Staff
<p>Roger Rabaja, RCAC 1 Chair *</p> <p>Ana Rodriguez, TTECAC Chair and RCAC 2 Chair</p> <p>Lidia Parra, RCAC 3 Chair</p> <p>Silvia Poz, RCAC 4 Chair</p> <p>Maria Sanchez, RCAC 5 Chair</p> <p>Joyce Sales, RCAC 6 Chair</p> <p>Martiza Lebron, RCAC 7 Chair</p> <p>Ana Romo, RCAC 8 Chair</p> <p>Tonya Byrd, RCAC 9 Chair</p> <p>Damara O Hernández de Cordero, RCAC 10 Chair</p> <p>Maria Angel Refugio, RCAC 11 Chair</p> <p>Lluvia Salazar, At-Large Member</p> <p>Deaka McClain, TTECAC Vice-Chair and At Large Member</p>	<p>Izmir Coello, Interpreter</p> <p>Henry Cordero, Interpreter</p> <p>Isaac Ibarlucea, Interpreter</p> <p>Eduardo Kogan, Interpreter</p> <p>Adriana Martinez, Interpreter</p> <p>Katelynn Mory, Captioner</p> <p>Andrew Yates, Interpreter</p> <p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p> <p>JoAnn Cannon, Public ***</p> <p>Elizabeth Cooper, Public</p> <p>Nereyda Ibarra, Public ***</p> <p>Estela Lara, Public ***</p> <p>Russel Mahler, Public</p> <p>Adriana Martinez, Public ***</p> <p>Kimberly Martinez, Public</p> <p>Pedro Martinez, Public ***</p> <p>Andria McFerson, Public</p> <p>Maria Montes, Public ***</p> <p>Raul Montes, Public ***</p> <p>Demetria Saffore, Public</p> <p>Dazzling Sanchez, Public</p>	<p>Alvaro Ballesteros, Board Chairperson, Board of Governors</p> <p>Layla Gonzalez, Advocate, Board of Governors</p> <p>Fatima Vazquez, Member, Board of Governors</p> <p>John Baackes, Chief Executive Office, L.A. Care</p> <p>Sameer Amin, MD, Chief Medical Officer, L.A. Care</p> <p>Francisco Oaxaca, Chief of Communication and Community Relations</p> <p>Tyonna Baker, Community Outreach Field Specialist, CO&E</p> <p>Malou Balones, Board Specialist, Board Services ***</p> <p>Kristina Chung, Community Outreach Field Specialist, CO&E</p> <p>Idalia De La Torre, Field Specialist Supervisor, CO&E</p> <p>Auleria Eakins, Manager, CO&E</p> <p>Hilda Herrera, Community Outreach Field Specialist, CO&E</p> <p>Christopher Maghar, Community Outreach Field Specialist, CO&E</p> <p>Rudy Martinez, Safety & Security Program Manager III, Facilities Services</p> <p>Linda Merkens, Senior Manager, Board Services</p> <p>Frank Meza, Community Outreach Field Specialist, CO&E</p> <p>Cindy Pozos, Community Outreach Field Specialist, CO&E</p> <p>Victor Rodriguez, Board Specialist, Board Services ***</p> <p>Farid Seyed, Lead Unified Communication Mobility Engineer, IT Operations & Infrastructure ***</p> <p>Priyanka Thanki, Local Government Advisor, Government Affairs ***</p> <p>Martin Vicente, Community Outreach Field Specialist, CO&E</p> <p>Shavonda Webber-Christmas, Director, Community Benefits, Community Benefit Program ***</p>
<p>* Excused Absent ** Absent</p> <p>*** Via teleconference</p>		

AGENDA ITEM/PRESENTER	MOTIONS / MAJOR DISCUSSIONS	ACTION TAKEN
<p>CALL TO ORDER</p>	<p>Ana Rodriguez, <i>TTECAC Chairperson</i>, explained the process for making public comments via Zoom chat and a toll-free line for WebEx bridge line listeners. She also mentioned that public members could submit comment cards and that they would be allowed time to speak during the appropriate agenda items. Ms. De La Torre welcomed L.A. Care staff and the public to the meeting and encouraged L.A. Care members with healthcare issues to contact the Member Services Department.</p> <p>Members of the Temporary Transitional Executive Community Advisory Committee (TTECAC), L.A. Care staff, and the public can attend the meeting in-person at the address listed above. Public comment can be made live and in-person at the meeting. A form will be available to submit public comments.</p> <p>Accordingly, members of the public should join this meeting via teleconference as follows: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81355205145</p> <p>Teleconference Call –In information/Site Call-in number: 1-415-655-0002 Participants Access Code: 2493 314 7631 (English) Call-in number: 1-415-655-0002 Participants Access Code: 2499 728 9601 (Spanish)</p> <p>For those not attending the meeting in person, public comments on Agenda items can be submitted in writing by email to COEpubliccomments@lacare.org or by calling the CO&E toll- free line at 1-888-522-2732 and leaving a voicemail.</p> <p>Attendees who log on to lacare.zoom using the URL above will be able to use “chat” during the meeting for public comment. You must be logged into Zoom to use the “chat” feature. The log in information is at the top of the meeting Agenda. This is a new function during the meeting so public comments can be made live and direct.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The “chat” will be available during the public comment periods before each item. 2. To use the “chat” during public comment periods, look at the bottom of your screen for the icon that has the word, “chat” on it. 3. Click on the chat icon. It will open a window. 4. Select “Everyone” in the to: window. 5. Type your public comment in the box. 6. When you hit the enter key, your message is sent and everyone can see it. 7. The chat message, text, voicemail, or email must indicate if you wish to be identified or remain anonymous, and must also include the name of the item to which your comment relates. 8. L.A. Care staff will read the chat messages for up to three minutes during public comment so people who are on the phone can hear the comment. 	

Your comments can also be sent by voicemail or email. If we receive your comments by 10:00 a.m. on February 14, 2024, it will be provided to the members of the Temporary Transitional Executive Community Advisory Committee at the beginning of the meeting. The chat message, voicemail, or email must indicate if you wish to be identified or remain anonymous, and must also include the name of the item to which your comment relates. Once the meeting has started, public comments should be submitted prior to the time the Chair announces public comments for each agenda item and staff will read those public comments for up to three (3) minutes. Chat messages submitted during the public comment period for each agenda item will be read for up to three (3) minutes. If your public comment agenda is not related to any of the agenda item topics, your public comment will be read for up to three (3) minutes at item IX Public Comments on the agenda.

Please note that there may be a delay in the digital transmittal of emails and voicemails. The Chair will announce when the public comment period is over for each item. If your public comments are not received on time for the specific agenda item you want to address, your public comments will be read at the public comment section of the agenda.

The purpose of public comment is that it is an opportunity for members of the public to inform the governing body about their views. The Temporary Transitional Executive Community Advisory Committee appreciates hearing the input as it considers the business on the Agenda.

The process for public comment is evolving and may change at future meetings. We thank you for your patience.

All votes in a teleconferenced meeting shall be conducted by roll call.

If you are an individual with a disability and need a reasonable modification or accommodation pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act please contact the Community Outreach & Engagement staff prior to the meeting for assistance by calling our toll-free line at 1-888-522-2732 or by email to COEpubliccomments@lacare.org.

SB 1100 was signed by Governor in August 2022, and added a short section to the Brown Act as Govt Code Section 54957.95 to supplement language already part of the Brown Act :

(a) In addition to authority exercised pursuant to Sections 54954.3 and 54957.9, the presiding member of the legislative body conducting a meeting may remove an individual for disrupting the meeting.

(b) As used in this section, “disrupting” means engaging in behavior during a meeting of a legislative body that actually disrupts, disturbs, impedes, or renders infeasible the orderly conduct of the meeting and includes, but is not limited to, both of the following:

(1) A failure to comply with reasonable and lawful regulations adopted by a legislative body pursuant to Section 54954.3 or 54957.9 or any other law.

(2) Engaging in behavior that includes use of force or true threats of force.

	<p>(54954.3 contains provisions related to public comment time restrictions, and 54957.9 allows the presider to clear the room if the meeting can't continue.)</p> <p>AGENDA and PRINTED MEETING MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION BEFORE THE MEETING AT L.A. Care's Offices at 1055 W. 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017 through the Reception Area in the Building Lobby.</p> <p>Chairperson Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 10:09 A.M.</p>	
APPROVE MEETING AGENDA	<p>Chairperson Rodriguez announced that Al Ballesteros, <i>Board of Governors, Chairperson</i>, will give his update before John Baackes, <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>.</p> <p>The Agenda for today's meeting was approved.</p>	<p>Approved Unanimously. 11 AYES (Byrd, Cordero, Lebron, Parra, Poz, McClain, Refugio, Rodriguez, Romo, Salazar, and Sanchez)</p>
APPROVE MEETING MINUTES	<p>Member Deaka McClain stated that at the bottom of page 4 of the November 8, 2023 meeting minutes, the date should read October 3 should be October 13.</p> <p>The November 8, 2023 meeting minutes were approved with the changes noted above.</p> <p>The December 13, 2023 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.</p>	<p>Approved Unanimously. 11 AYES</p> <p>Approved Unanimously. 11 AYES</p>
STANDING ITEMS		
SPECIAL GUEST	<p><i>(Member Sales arrived at 10:19 A.M.)</i></p> <p>Member McClain introduced herself and wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day. She reminded the public that they have three minutes for their public comment.</p> <p>Alvaro Ballesteros, <i>Board of Governors, Chairperson</i>, thanked TTECAC for the opportunity to address and listen to the group. He emphasized the importance of the Board's connection with the public and acknowledged the significance of consumer involvement in L.A. Care Health Plan, considering it a unique feature in Los Angeles. He apologized for a previous meeting where an unplanned closed session ran longer than expected, causing inconvenience to those waiting. Mr. Ballesteros assured that future meetings would adhere</p>	

to the posted agenda time to prevent such issues. Providing some personal background, he shared his involvement with a nonprofit health organization that caters to LA Care members, the poor, the homeless, and those affected by mental illness and substance abuse. Growing up in Los Angeles, his family relied on Medi-Cal and Medicaid, instilling in him a commitment to improving the healthcare system. Reflecting on the challenges faced by his family, particularly his mother's dependence on Medi-Cal and county hospitals, Mr. Ballesteros expressed a desire to see the healthcare system become more efficient and less challenging for individuals. He noted that many board members share similar backgrounds, bringing valuable perspectives to their roles. As a board member and community member, he highlighted his belief that LA Care Health Plan offers the best opportunity for Medicaid-dependent individuals to have their needs met. He expressed a commitment to incorporating ideas, suggestions, and issues from the community into board-level discussions to better serve the plan's members. Mr. Ballesteros acknowledged the robust structure of LA Care in gathering input from its members, making it uniquely positioned to respond quickly to community needs. He concluded by stating his intention to attend future meetings, engage with the community, and spend time listening to and supporting their needs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Elizabeth Cooper acknowledged Member McClain's reference to the song "What's Love Got to Do with It," stating that business is also a crucial aspect. She then responded to Mr. Ballesteros, noting her past role as one of the Vice Chairs before L.A. Care transitioned to a government entity. Ms. Cooper expressed concern about the lack of public comment and emphasized the importance of respecting the opinions of the people actively participating. She highlighted the need for more opportunities for public input, as the current situation leaves attendees uninformed about committee decisions. Stressing fairness under the enabling legislation, she urged for increased efforts to involve the public in shaping committee meetings. Ms. Cooper underscored the significance of being heard and urged Mr. Ballesteros to take notice of the public's concerns. She specifically addressed the government committee, suggesting that they should be more attentive to the enabling legislation and involve the public in decisions regarding major changes. In conclusion, she thanked the audience and urged greater acknowledgment and consideration for the public's perspective.

Ms. McFerson expressed gratitude to the Chair for a decision that she appreciated, emphasizing the need for comfortable and accessible meetings for the public. She sought an additional minute for her comment. Ms. McFerson

acknowledged Black History Month and reminisced about past events and outreach efforts related to each region. She expressed concern about the discontinuation of such activities, especially considering the ongoing challenges, including the prevalence of COVID-19 and related deaths in Los Angeles County. Advocating for more events, particularly in Regional Community Advisory Committees (RCACs), she highlighted the importance of providing essential information to save lives. Ms. McFerson praised the warmth of the Chair and stressed the significance of empathy and understanding in healthcare decision-making. She urged the inclusion of RCACs in discussions and criticized the apparent absence of democratic processes, citing a lack of motions and decisions related to the TTECAC. Expressing alarm over the changes that have disrupted open conversations and functional collaboration, Ms. McFerson questioned when the collaborative system, with mutual support and input, would be reinstated. She called for a return to open discussions and collaborative decision-making processes involving the board.

Member Lluvia Salazar raised a concern during her public comment, focusing on a healthcare rights issue affecting undocumented Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. These individuals, known as DACA recipients, were removed from Medi-Cal when their income exceeded \$300, which Member Salazar argued is still considered low income. After the supposed transition to Covered California, it was revealed that Covered California does not accept DACA recipients. Ms. Salazar, a single parent, college student, and DACA recipient herself, shared her personal experience of being transferred to Covered California despite qualifying and subsequently being charged. To complicate matters, she received a letter stating that she did not qualify. She highlighted this significant problem, affecting numerous college students and young adults without health insurance who turn to LA Care Health Plan for assistance. Ms. Salazar urged the implementation of proactive measures to address this issue and provide support to the vulnerable population of DACA recipients within the community. Mr. John Baackes acknowledged the identified gap created by the state of California when extending Medi-Cal coverage to undocumented residents. He explained that undocumented individuals can qualify for Medi-Cal if their income is below 138 percent of the federal poverty level. However, if they don't meet this criteria, they are placed on Covered California. The challenge arises because undocumented individuals can't access Covered California due to federal dollars being involved in subsidies, and the federal government does not support undocumented residents being in Medicaid. Mr. Baackes clarified that for California to address this issue, the state would need to pass a law and allocate money to subsidize Covered California with state dollars, as the problem lies in the lack of state funding for the subsidy in Covered California. Unfortunately, as a qualified health plan in Covered

California, LA Care Health Plan must adhere to the rules set by the program. He expressed the difficulty in addressing this situation but acknowledged the gap identified by Member Salazar. Mr. Baackes mentioned ongoing efforts to lobby for changes in Sacramento, emphasizing that it's a state-level problem rather than a federal one. He mentioned the need for federal government support for undocumented residents in Medicaid. In closing, he clarified that New York and California are among the few states paying for undocumented residents to be in Medicaid or Medi-Cal, and he expressed the need for broader access to address this challenge. Member Salazar responded by acknowledging the complexity of the issue raised by Mr. Baackes. She noted her involvement in fighting for the law that extended health insurance coverage to undocumented adults aged 50 and over in Sacramento. Drawing on this experience, she expressed a determination to advocate for the cause, emphasizing that undocumented immigrants do qualify for Medi-Cal. Member Salazar stressed the personal impact of this issue on herself and many DACA recipients who currently lack health insurance. She highlighted the productivity of these individuals and affirmed her commitment to fighting for their access to health coverage. Her involvement in past advocacy efforts served as a motivating factor for her continued commitment to addressing the healthcare coverage challenges faced by the undocumented population. Mr. Baackes agreed, acknowledging the state's liberal approach to extending coverage to the undocumented population. He suggested that the current gap might be an oversight as it involves a relatively recent cohort. Mr. Baackes expressed a commitment to continue lobbying for the issue, assuring that they would represent this position in Sacramento. In a lighthearted manner, he suggested involving Member Salazar in the advocacy efforts, humorously mentioning the possibility of her joining them with "pitchforks and torches" to emphasize the urgency of the cause.

Mr. Ballesteros asked Mr. Baackes if other health plans that are similar to L.A. Care also have this on their radar. Mr. Baackes asserted L.A. Care's leadership role in addressing the healthcare coverage issue for undocumented residents. Highlighting the substantial population and enrollment in LA Care, he stated that about 18 percent of the total enrollment consists of undocumented residents, making it the largest cohort in a Medi-Cal managed plan in the state, both in terms of percentage and numbers. Mr. Baackes emphasized the need to communicate this information to other stakeholders and encourage their advocacy, considering the impact of coalition efforts, such as during the MCO tax discussions. He highlighted the importance of educating others about the stranded population of undocumented residents and mentioned ongoing efforts to gather data on the cohort's size. He expressed confidence that presenting this data to legislators, demonstrating the number of individuals left without coverage, would help garner support for addressing the issue. Mr. Ballesteros stated that Member Salazar's brings a valid point that can be brought up to the Board for support.

Member Refugio expressed gratitude to Mr. Ballesteros for his presence and shared appreciation for the significance of his involvement in the L.A. Care meetings, considering him an important figure. She thanked him for sharing his childhood experiences, believing that it helps him understand the needs of L.A. Care members, most of whom are low-income individuals under Medi-Cal. Member Refugio acknowledged the ability of undocumented individuals in California to access medical services, expressing confidence that Mr. Ballesteros understands their needs. She highlighted the challenges faced by L.A. Care members and requested Mr. Ballesteros's support in voting against reducing the RCAC meetings from 11 to 8 and changing their frequency to quarterly instead of every 2 months. She hoped that his vote would contribute to improvements benefiting all L.A. Care members. Member Refugio also expressed a desire to see Mr. Ballesteros more frequently, similar to Mr. Baackes, and thanked him for being present at the meeting.

Member Byrd expressed her perspective on the Medi-Cal system, describing it as broken, emphasizing the challenges faced by recipients. Member Byrd shared her personal experience, noting that even her dentist dropped her due to low insurance payments, which she found insulting. As the Chair of RCAC 9, Member Byrd highlighted the large Cambodian community she represents. She expressed concerns about the lack of clarity regarding Mr. Ballesteros' planned visits to the RCACs, pointing out that there are no scheduled RCAC meetings until June. She conveyed a growing sense of urgency in addressing systemic racism within Medi-Cal, specifically mentioning the disparities faced by Black African Americans, Black women, and communities like Hispanic and Cambodian. Member Byrd sought clarity on the timeline for upcoming events and emphasized the need to address and stop the systemic racism present in the Medi-Cal system. Mr. Ballesteros responded to Member Byrd's concerns by expressing gratitude for her comments and acknowledging that the challenges within the community are not always smooth. He mentioned Mr. Baackes might provide additional insights into the issues being discussed. Mr. Ballesteros agreed with Member Byrd, recognizing that challenges persist in the community, and he expressed regret over hearing about her negative experiences. Mr. Ballesteros, speaking from his role as the head of an agency, encouraged individuals to keep working towards addressing these challenges. He suggested that, when facing issues with providers, it is essential to communicate experiences to bring attention to the problems. While recognizing that not all providers may be open to feedback, he emphasized the importance of individuals with challenges being the most significant contributors to improving the system. Mr. Ballesteros expressed his appreciation for Member Byrd's comments and reiterated the commitment to making healthcare services better by addressing and learning from the challenges faced by the community. Mr. Baackes responded to Member Byrd's comments, addressing specific concerns she raised. He acknowledged the issue of providers dropping patients due to low compensation from

Medi-Cal, recognizing that the reimbursement rates are considerably lower than those of Medicare or commercial insurance. Mr. Baackes highlighted L.A. Care's role as an advocate for providers, striving to ensure they receive fair compensation. He informed Member Byrd that L.A. Care had undertaken efforts to increase Medi-Cal funding, and through leadership in the state budget, a process had been initiated. This process, though unfolding over three years, represents the first increase in Medi-Cal funding in California in 25 years. Mr. Baackes emphasized the organization's commitment to addressing issues like low compensation and working towards improving the situation for both providers and members. Regarding providers' behavior, Mr. Baackes acknowledged that within L.A. Care's extensive network of 19,000 providers, there might be instances of a lack of empathy or inappropriate conduct. He assured Member Byrd that L.A. Care takes such cases seriously and would take action against providers displaying egregious behavior, including removing them from the network if necessary. Mr. Baackes expressed appreciation for Member Byrd's comments, emphasizing L.A. Care's commitment to hearing and addressing the concerns of its members.

Member McClain expressed gratitude to the Chair for attending the meeting, appreciating the symbolic significance of his presence as a demonstration that he sees and values the community. She acknowledged the Chair's active engagement, emphasizing the importance of actions aligning with words. Member McClain, also part of RCAC 9 in Long Beach, echoed concerns raised by another member about the challenges faced by individuals having both Medi-Cal and Medicare but not having them integrated under L.A. Care. She highlighted issues where some doctors may not accept Medi-Cal, causing difficulties for individuals in accessing care. Member McClain recognized that this might not be directly within Mr. Ballesteros' purview but suggested that L.A. Care could play a role in addressing these challenges. She brought attention to the perceived systemic issues, describing instances where individuals with dual coverage face judgment or different treatment, emphasizing the need for equal and unbiased care regardless of insurance status. Member McClain raised a logistical concern about the order of closed sessions during board meetings, proposing the possibility of allowing community members to enter after the closed session to avoid extended waiting times. She acknowledged that the inconvenience wasn't the Chair's fault but wanted to highlight it for consideration. Mr. Ballesteros took responsibility for the inconvenience caused during the closed session, acknowledging that he could have managed it better. He expressed a commitment to address the issue, stating that they will assess the agenda items for the first closed session hour and continue any unfinished business at the next meeting to avoid inconveniencing attendees.

Member McClain raised a concern about the need for additional time during medical appointments for individuals with disabilities and seniors. She emphasized that these groups often feel rushed during visits and suggested that LA Care could play a role in facilitating

	<p>more time for patients to ensure they feel heard by their healthcare providers. Mr. Baackes responded to Member McClain's concerns by addressing the issue of dual eligible and the challenges they face with separate plans. He explained that LA Care is actively working to address this problem and aims to have all eligible individuals enrolled in a single plan for both Medicare and Medi-Cal. He provided information about the scheduling of meetings, suggesting that participants can join at 2:00 P.M. to avoid inconveniences during the initial closed session. Mr. Ballesteros emphasized the importance of treating everyone with respect, especially individuals seeking medical services. He expressed his commitment to ensuring that people receive care with dignity and respect, acknowledging the significance of addressing the needs of those seeking help without making them feel neglected or unimportant.</p>	
<p>UPDATE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER</p>	<p>Mr. Baackes provided several updates during the meeting, highlighting important points. He acknowledged Chairman Ballesteros' extensive experience as the CEO of the JWCH system, emphasizing the value of his insights. Mr. Baackes informed the ECAC about the ongoing redetermination process, noting that a significant number of individuals have been recertified or exited the process. He discussed the initiation of an accessible equipment fund, addressing the need for equipment for individuals with disabilities in clinics. This fund, amounting to \$450,000, aims to provide accessible tables and scales for approximately 0.45 sites. The launch of this fund is expected by the end of the month. Additionally, Mr. Baackes addressed concerns about changes to RCACs dictated by a new contract with the state. He outlined a comprehensive plan to engage with RCACs, seeking their input on the proposed changes. The process involves presentations at each RCAC meeting, with members providing feedback, forwarding comments to the ECAC through their Chairs, and ultimately considering recommendations before reaching the Board of Governors. While acknowledging a potential delay in meeting the state's deadline, Mr. Baackes emphasized the importance of getting stakeholders' input to make informed decisions.</p> <p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p> <p><i>Elizabeth Cooper addressed Mr. Baackes during her public comment, expressing concern about the lack of input from the Governance Committee and emphasizing the role of the committee in overseeing matters affecting the RCAC. She called for evaluations of staff members after each meeting, emphasizing the importance of assessing their performance in dealing with members' concerns. Ms. Cooper pointed out instances where senior staff failed to return calls, highlighting the need for improved communication. She acknowledged Mr. Baackes as a popular CEO for his listening skills but stressed the importance of staff understanding their role and being available to address members' needs. Ms. Cooper concluded her comment by expressing her expectation for a</i></p>	

response from Mr. Baackes and ensuring the record reflected her concerns under the ADA.

Mr. Baackes responded, acknowledging Ms. Cooper's concerns and informing her that the RCAC meetings would be reinstated over the next two months to review the proposal. He explained that once the new changes were adopted and incorporated, the RCAC meetings would return to their regular routine session.

Member McClain made an announcement addressing concerns related to accommodating the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). She clarified that the delay in providing accommodations is not intentional but is due to time constraints during the meetings. McClain emphasized the challenge of managing time while ensuring ADA accommodations and expressed her intention to bring attention to the matter.

Ms. McFerson discussed the challenges faced by members with chronic illnesses and the importance of peer-to-peer communication within RCACs. She highlighted the need for discussions beyond financial matters, focusing on the healthcare needs of individuals with various ailments. Ms. McFerson questioned the decision to have only two RCACs this year and sought clarification on the authority making such decisions, emphasizing the impact on life-saving access and the decisions affecting members' lives.

Mr. Baackes responded to Ms. McFerson, expressing responsibility for the actions of the 2100 employees at L.A. Care. He assured her that he was attentive to the concerns raised and mentioned the reinstatement of RCACs in their original format. Mr. Baackes emphasized that these forums provided an opportunity for members to voice their community's concerns, emphasizing the importance of representing the broader community rather than personal experiences. He acknowledged the state requirements that LA Care needed to address and committed to making clear proposals during the RCAC meetings. Mr. Baackes highlighted the presence of senior executives at these meetings to ensure diverse perspectives in presenting the proposed changes.

Ms. McFerson highlighted LA Care's growth into the largest public insurance company through the advocacy facilitated by the RCACs. She emphasized the importance of discussing personal illnesses within the limited time provided during the meetings.

	<p>Mr. Baackes explained that the time limits for public comments during regular RCAC meetings could be determined by the RCAC members themselves, allowing more flexibility compared to the constraints imposed by the Brown Act during public meetings.</p> <p>Member McClain expressed gratitude for the reinstatement of RCACs and appreciated Mr. Baackes' willingness to take the necessary steps, even if it means informing the state about missing deadlines. She emphasized the importance of continuing the conversation after the RCAC meetings in the upcoming months, where members can gather information, vote, and contribute to the decision-making process.</p>	
<p>UPDATE FROM CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER</p>	<p>Sameer Amin, MD, gave the following update:</p> <p>Dr. Amin delivered a detailed update on the COVID-19. He acknowledged the importance of booster shots and provided an overview of the infection rate in Los Angeles County. Dr. Amin highlighted a significant surge in COVID cases between November and December of 2023 but assured the audience that the infection rate was gradually decreasing in January, with an anticipated continuation in February. The health education efforts were emphasized, with COVID-19 vaccination information being incorporated into various touchpoints of L.A. Care's flu campaign, including calls to businesses, email blasts to exchange members, social media campaigns, and the member newsletter. The fight against the flu web page was also utilized to disseminate information. Community Resource Centers (CRC) played a crucial role, serving as places for both information and vaccination. L.A. Care organized flu events, distributing COVID-19 vaccines alongside providing free COVID-19 test kits at many community resource centers. The pharmacy network collaboration was highlighted, ensuring vaccine promotion through fliers, texting, and phone calls. Dr. Amin detailed the efforts made through the nurse advice line, addressing respiratory issues related to COVID-19. Monitoring calls in November and December, the team engaged with members, directing them to urgent care or primary care based on the severity of symptoms. Dr. Amin spoke about ongoing efforts to strategize and address the pandemic and noted a meeting with the Los Angeles County Department of Health on January 10 that was meant to focus on these efforts. Coordination with the Department of Public Health, leveraging their messages through LA Care's channels, was highlighted. Future campaigns were being updated to address COVID-19, flu, and other respiratory viruses collectively. Additional interventions were presented, focusing on community centers for boosters, messages in renewal postcards, targeted text messages to unvaccinated members, and website updates. A new public education campaign, involving Star Trek, was in the works, with Dr. Amin expressing enthusiasm for its potential impact on encouraging vaccinations.</p> <p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p>	

Elizabeth Cooper expressed gratitude for Dr. Amin's presentation but shared a heartfelt concern about her developmentally disabled son, an L.A. Care member who has been unwell. She tearfully mentioned her struggle to obtain a COVID-19 shot for him, as his current doctor is unwilling to provide it. Due to her son's seizures, most pharmacies are hesitant to administer the vaccine. Ms. Cooper mentioned her plan to take her son to Kendra, a pharmacy known for its positive approach to such cases. She emphasized the urgency of the situation, seeking guidance on what steps she could take to ensure her son receives the COVID-19 shot.

Dr. Amin responded that he will reach out to the Case Management team to help her.

Andria McFerson expressed gratitude for the updates and shared a positive experience related to a previous discussion about a CPAP machine during the Board of Governors meeting. She highlighted a friend with a mental illness who struggled with expressing himself and obtaining medication coverage for his lung disease. Despite frequent hospitalizations and life-threatening situations, the medical team initially deemed his life over and rendered him unresponsive with anesthesia. Ms. McFerson passionately recounted how she fought for her friend's voice, staying by his side even amid the risk of contracting COVID-19. Eventually, L.A. Care's decision to cover the CPAP machine proved to be life-saving, providing essential oxygen accessibility and demonstrating the crucial impact of coverage decisions on individuals' lives.

Dr. Amin expressed gratitude for the positive comment and acknowledged L.A. Care's ongoing transformational change in health services. He highlighted the dedication to improving healthcare quality and ensuring timely decisions on prior authorizations. Dr. Amin mentioned significant increases in staffing within the utilization management and case management teams to address the specific issues raised. The establishment of a new division for transition of care aims to provide necessary medications and durable medical equipment, including CPAP machines, as members leave the hospital. Dr. Amin emphasized the substantial efforts being made, comparing L.A. Care to a large ocean liner, where changes may not be immediately apparent, but over time, positive movement becomes evident. He expressed optimism about L.A. Care's course and commitment to positive change.

Member Sales expressed concern about a documentary, "Anecdotal," showcased at the Pan African Film Festival, directed by Jennifer Shot. The film highlighted individuals facing health issues after taking the Pfizer vaccine, with some experiencing severe consequences like loss of livelihoods, becoming wheelchair-bound, and deteriorating nervous systems.

	<p>Sales emphasized the struggles depicted, including one woman's mention of contemplating suicide due to overwhelming pain and illness. The concern raised involved these individuals reaching out to medical authorities and facing censorship or being labeled unethical for expressing their health concerns. Sales sought thoughts on these challenges, referencing reactions from medical professionals, political figures, and vaccine advocates. Dr. Amin acknowledged the importance of not silencing voices and recognized the diverse experiences within the medical community. Dr. Amin emphasized that nothing in the world, including medical treatments, is 100% safe, and decisions are based on whether the benefits outweigh the risks. He explained that physicians consider the overall population health and recommend treatments when they believe the majority will benefit, even though individual cases may experience adverse effects. The key criterion is assessing whether the benefits of a treatment outweigh the potential risks on a population scale</p>	
<p>BOARD MEMBERS REPORT</p>	<p>Ms. Vazquez and Ms. Gonzalez gave a Board Members Report.</p> <p>They began by thanking all the ECAC and RCAC members here today. They hope that they all had a happy holiday season and happy New Year. They wish everyone a Happy Lunar New Year, Valentine’s Day and Black History Month. The Board of Governors met on February 1. Approved meeting minutes for previous Board meetings can be obtained by contacting Board Services and meeting materials are available on L.A. Care’s website. The list of motions approved at that board meeting can be obtained from CO&E. Thank you to the RCAC members that joined the Board Meeting in person or virtually. We were happy to see members there and we appreciated hearing their public comments. Public comment gives Board Members the opportunity to hear from members and helps improve services for members. These members attended the Board Meeting in person:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ana Rodriguez (R2) 2. Silvia Poz (R4) 3. Hercilia Salvatorre (R4) 4. Demetria Saffore (R4) 5. Russell Mahler (R4) 6. Joyce Sales (R6) 7. Maritza Lebron (R7) 8. Deaka McClain (R9) 9. Damares O Hernandez de Cordero 10. Lynnea Johnson (R5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In his CEO report, John Baackes gave an update on redetermination-process. He also gave an update on Medi-Cal expansion to undocumented adults 24-49. ○ Cherie Compatore gave an update on current legislation. She stated that the MCO tax is now in the next phase to gather signatures to be placed on the ballot. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Amin gave a Chief Medical Officer report, he encouraged members to get their booster shot to bolster the immune system for COVID-19, the flu, and RSV. He gave an update earlier today. ○ Dr. Brodsky gave a presentation about field medicine and the steps L.A. Care is making in a joint initiative. The collaboration led to identifying key areas of focus and efforts to expand access to longitudinal primary care. ○ Various members gave their comments on how difficult it was to understand the upcoming changes to the RCAC structure and made their wishes known that they would like the RCAC's to continue meeting to have their voices heard. <p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p> <p><i>Ms. Cooper expressed gratitude to the board members for their report. She specifically thanked Layla and the two other board members, appreciating the representation on the board regardless of agreement or disagreement. Ms. Cooper thanked the chair and noted her appreciation for the lollipop, humorously mentioning that it was the only Valentine's gift she received.</i></p> <p><i>Andria McFerson encouraged the Board representatives to attend RCAC meetings and ensure a comfortable environment for members to speak up and make decisions. She emphasized the importance of understanding the Brown Act and Robert's Rule of Order and expressed concerns about feeling reluctant to voice opinions or ask questions during previous sessions. Ms. McFerson highlighted the need for RCAC members to feel respected and encouraged staff to honor their right to speak and vote, sharing her commitment to speaking up for the benefit of all members.</i></p>	
<p>COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS DEPARTMENT</p> <p>Community Engagement Model Discussion and Updates</p>	<p>Francisco Oaxaca, <i>Chief, Communication and Community Relations</i> gave a Community and Community Relations Department update.</p> <p>Mr. Oaxaca began speaking about the scheduling of RCAC (Regional Community Advisory Committee) meetings. These meetings are scheduled to take place at the end of the current month and extend into March and April. Members and their representatives will receive information about the specific dates for these meetings. Mr. Oaxaca mentioned that the RCAC meetings will mostly be held at local community resource centers, similar to previous arrangements. He expressed anticipation in seeing all the members and their representatives at these meetings over the next two months. He concluded his update by opening the floor for any questions, mentioning that he would be available until 12:10 for inquiries.</p> <p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p>	

Elizabeth Cooper expressed gratitude for the information provided during the meeting, particularly about the RCACs and their upcoming activities. She thanked all those involved, including the ECAC, the public, and the leadership, for the efforts in reinstating the RCACs. Ms. Cooper emphasized the importance of these committees in discussing community issues. Despite keeping her comment brief, she conveyed the significance of having a platform for addressing and discussing relevant matters within the community.

Andria McFerson expressed appreciation for Francisco Oaxaca's presence and responsiveness. She raised important questions about the upcoming RCAC meetings, specifically inquiring whether members would have access to the Brown Act and Robert's Rules of Order. Ms. McFerson emphasized the need for RCACs to actively participate in decision-making regarding their future, ensuring access to intercommunication rather than merely having listening sessions. She highlighted concerns about the effectiveness of previous listening sessions and stressed the importance of RCACs having a voice and a role in the decision-making process. Ms. McFerson questioned whether RCACs would be scheduled for the rest of the year and if members would have access to agendas. She also requested dedicated time on the agenda for discussing personal issues, health matters, and member concerns. She advocated for Chairs to have the authority to make agenda decisions, emphasizing the significance of allowing RCAC members to actively contribute to discussions and decisions.

Mr. Oaxaca clarified that the RCAC meetings would adhere to the Brown Act and Robert's Rules of Order, maintaining the same process as in the past. He acknowledged the importance of raising issues, but cautioned against discussing individual personal matters due to privacy concerns. Mr. Oaxaca emphasized that while individual issues might not be suitable for public forums, participants were encouraged to share broader experiences related to their communities and lived experiences. He assured the attendees that the LA Care team is eager to address issues affecting members and communities, urging participants to bring up concerns that could lead to positive changes. Mr. Oaxaca reiterated the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality while discussing health-related matters, emphasizing that the RCAC meetings would continue to provide a platform for addressing broader community issues.

Member Refugio asked Mr. Oaxaca if the Chairs would receive everything in writing so they can share this information with their RCAC members. Mr. Oaxaca responded that staff will be sharing that information.

	<p>Ms. Gonzalez inquired about the possibility of having a representative from the call center present at each RCAC meeting. Her question aimed to explore the option of addressing members' issues promptly during the meetings by having a direct point of contact from the call center available. Mr. Oaxaca responded by explaining the current process, stating that having staff members present at all ECAC meetings is not feasible. However, there is a VIP line available specifically for ECAC members during their advisory meetings. This line serves as a direct connection to members of the customer service center, allowing immediate addressing of any issues raised during the meetings.</p> <p>Member McClain asked for clarification on the assistance available to members during RCAC meetings. She highlighted the effectiveness of having help navigators present during meetings, providing one-on-one support to address concerns. Member McClain emphasized the importance of bringing back help navigators for future meetings, both during temporary situations and regular sessions, to ensure continued support for members in navigating their healthcare needs. Mr. Oaxaca assured Member McClain that moving forward, all RCAC meetings would take place at local community resource centers, each equipped with a full-time customer service center Health Navigator. This arrangement ensures that members attending RCAC meetings will have direct access to on-site customer service representatives for immediate assistance with their healthcare-related inquiries. Ms. De La Torre provided information about a new process implemented during the period when meetings were on hold. Health navigators have established a VIP email address for CO&E, facilitating a streamlined approach for members to address personal issues. Members can contact their assigned field specialist, share relevant information, and have the health navigators connect with them via email. This method ensures a documented record of concerns raised through the advisory committee, offering a more organized approach to addressing member issues. Ms. De La Torre emphasized the ongoing encouragement for members to attend CRCs but highlighted this additional avenue for those seeking assistance or facing challenges.</p>	
<p>MEMBER ISSUES</p>	<p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p> <p><i>Elizabeth Cooper voiced her concerns during the meeting, emphasizing the need for increased focus on developmentally disabled individuals within the L.A. Care membership. As a single parent of an adult with developmental disabilities, she urged the TTECAC members to pay attention to the unique challenges faced by parents and family members of developmentally disabled individuals. Ms. Cooper called for greater advocacy and support for these issues, expressing the expectation that TTECAC members would represent and address the specific needs of this community. She requested that this matter be included on the agenda for future discussions.</i></p>	

Andria McFerson spoke about her personal experience with the pandemic by wearing a shirt that reads "I survived." She emphasized the importance of discussing such issues openly within the public domain and advocated for diverse conversations with LA Care's Outreach and Engagement Department and the RCACs (Regional Community Advisory Committees). Ms. McFerson proposed the idea of LA Care organizing events in each region to celebrate the resilience of the community throughout the pandemic. She stressed the significance of recognizing people's strength and importance regardless of their experiences. Moreover, McFerson emphasized the role of outreach in providing essential medical information, particularly for undocumented individuals who may lack access to such resources. She drew attention to the need for disseminating new information to the undocumented population and highlighted various resources available for the homeless and those dealing with chronic illnesses and mental health issues. McFerson specifically pointed out the challenges faced by the Black community in these aspects. Ms. McFerson expressed her willingness to speak up for important issues, commending the LA Care team for dealing directly with member issues. She reiterated her commitment to advocacy and thanked the team for their efforts.

Demetria Saffore addressed a critical aspect of member issues during her public comment. She expressed concern about the limited size of the provider network, noting that L.A. Care currently has slightly over 5,500 providers to serve nearly 3 million people. Saffore emphasized that this small network poses a significant obstacle to providing adequate care for all members. She highlighted the importance of addressing this issue, asserting that customer service solutions alone would not resolve problems related to access to care. Ms. Saffore concluded by seeking information on L.A. Care's plans to broaden the provider network and alleviate the challenges associated with access to healthcare services.

Silvia Poz raised a concern during the meeting related to Call the Car. She shared an incident involving a member who had an appointment scheduled on a Saturday, but Call the Car indicated a different address. Despite the member confirming the address, there was a discrepancy, leading to confusion. The member had to wait until Monday to contact L.A. Care and inquire about the issue. Additionally, when expressing the desire to file a grievance, the caller card representatives claimed to be unaware of the matter, stating they had no record of the member's concern. Member Poz highlighted this incident as a point of concern regarding the accuracy and effectiveness of the caller card system. Ms. De La Torre

	<p>asked that she reach out to her Field Specialist so they can get assistance with using the VIP member service line.</p> <p>Ms. Vazquez expressed gratitude to LA Care Health Plan for implementing measures to assist members with visual impairments, such as providing cards with larger letters for easier readability. She also commended the plan for distributing new cards to members and emphasized the importance of ensuring that all members receive their LA Care cards promptly. Ms. Vazquez appreciated LA Care's efforts to inform individuals aged 26 to 49 about the various coverage options available for applying for medical insurance. She highlighted the need for effective communication channels, including online platforms, to reach a broader audience within the community. Ms. Vazquez inquired about the availability of special tables for people with disabilities and requested a list of clinics offering such services in the county, seeking information on their locations.</p>	
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OLD BUSINESS

<p>L.A. CARE'S EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING</p>	<p>Rudy Martinez, <i>Safety & Security Program Manager III, Facilities</i>, gave an Emergency Preparedness Training (<i>a copy of the full written presentation can be obtained from CO&E</i>).</p> <p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p> <p><i>Elizabeth Cooper expressed gratitude for the presentation and emphasized the need for attention to her comments. She directed her remarks to Board Chair, Mr. Ballesteros, advocating for each RCAC member to receive funds for emergency kits, particularly for situations like earthquakes. Cooper highlighted the financial constraints faced by many low-income members who may struggle to afford such kits on their own. She requested the board to set aside money under CEO direction to ensure that each RCAC member has access to an emergency kit, contributing to their safety and well-being.</i></p> <p>Mr. Martinez expressed agreement with Mr. Cooper's suggestion regarding emergency kits for RCAC members. He acknowledged that this idea had been raised before and emphasized its importance, particularly given his background in safety and security. Mr. Martinez encouraged immediate action on this proposal, highlighting the limited number of individuals who currently have emergency kits at home. He committed to working on the initiative and, if possible, incorporating it into the budget.</p> <p>Member Salazar asked what staff and members would do if there was an earthquake and bridges collapsed. Mr. Martinez responded by saying everyone may have to pivot and come up with a plan B. The point is they want meet up to ensure everybody is okay and got out of the building, those are the two biggest concerns that everybody is okay and got out of the building.</p>	
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Member Sales suggested expanding the focus beyond earthquake kits and proposed incorporating CPR training and certification for RCAC members upon their return. She acknowledged that this might have been done previously but emphasized the importance of staying current due to expiration dates on completion cards. Additionally, Sales raised a concern about seniors lacking emergency contacts, particularly those without family members or spouses. She sought suggestions for optional emergency contacts in such situations, acknowledging that many of the older population might have lost friends. Mr. Martinez acknowledged the challenge posed by the lack of emergency contacts for some seniors. He highlighted Ms. McFerson's example of assisting a neighbor without an emergency contact. Mr. Martinez encouraged individuals in such situations to consider reaching out to neighbors or contacting resource centers for guidance, expressing the need for further thought on this challenging issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Andria McFerson expressed gratitude for the information provided during the meeting and emphasized the importance of sharing personal stories to improve health outcomes. Despite her reluctance to use the word "I," she encouraged individuals to speak openly. McFerson suggested the implementation of bracelets by LA Care with personal information such as the wearer's name, doctor's details, and emergency contact information. These bracelets would aid in emergencies, especially for individuals with specific health conditions, facilitating communication and assistance. She recommended discussing this idea in the RCAC and incorporating it into the agenda for further consideration.

Member McClain raised concerns about accessibility, highlighting issues with heavy doors that cannot be easily opened and the absence of push-button doors, particularly emphasizing the lack of accessibility features for individuals with disabilities. Ms. McClain urged further investigation into funding sources for installing push-button doors. Additionally, she expressed worry about the need for more wheelchairs in emergencies, especially considering potential challenges posed by a bridge. The member suggested obtaining additional wheelchairs and emphasized the importance of addressing concerns related to evacuation chairs, urging L.A. Care to make them available and ensure staff is trained in their use to enhance safety for people with disabilities and seniors during emergencies.

Rudy Martinez responded to Member McClain's concerns by explaining that all public meetings are now held on the ground floor for accessibility. He assured that the new building is also being designed to prioritize accessibility. Regarding evacuation chairs, Martinez mentioned ongoing discussions, noting that there is currently no code requirement

	for them. He acknowledged concerns about potential litigation issues and emphasized the importance of considering all feedback before making a final decision on implementing evacuation chairs and mandatory training.	
FUTURE AGENDA ITEM IDEAS		
	Member Deaka McClain suggested a future agenda item, proposing that the state representatives visit the RCAC meetings to discuss and address the changes and concerns raised during the meetings. She emphasized the importance of seeking input from the state and determining the best course of action moving forward.	
PUBLIC COMMENTS		
	<p><i>Elizabeth Cooper expressed concern about the lack of reference to public comments made by ECAC members in the discussions. She recommended that ECAC members take note of these public comments and consider incorporating relevant items into future agenda discussions. Ms. Cooper specifically suggested discussing the possibility of inviting representatives from the Department of Managed Care to hear consumer perspectives, emphasizing the importance of state input before implementing changes.</i></p> <p><i>Andria McFerson highlighted the need for TTECAC members to have time for suggesting future agenda items. She emphasized the importance of raising motions and discussing proposals related to the new proposal presented at the RCACs. Ms. McFerson suggested that even if a motion is tabled, it allows for open conversation on the topic. Additionally, she brought attention to the idea of emergency bracelets, proposing various options for discussion, such as velcro patches or phone attachments. Ms. McFerson stressed the importance of open conversations during RCAC meetings to address various suggestions from attendees, including parents and individuals with children.</i></p>	
ADJOURNMENT		
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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

Victor Rodriguez, *Board Specialist II, Board Services*
 Malou Balones, *Board Specialist III, Board Services*
 Linda Merkens, *Senior Manager, Board Services*

APPROVED BY

Ana Rodriguez, ECAC Chair _____
 Date _____

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Ana Rodriguez, *ECAC Chair*

Date

3/13/24

