

**BEFORE THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

In the Matter of:

CLAIMANT

and

**NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL CENTER, Service
Agency.**

DDS No. CS0027085

OAH No. 2025060136

PROPOSED DECISION

H. Stuart Waxman, Administrative Law Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings, State of California, heard this matter on January 14, 2026, and March 26, 2026, via videoconference.

The Service Agency was represented by Karin Ahdoot, Due Process Officer.

Claimant was represented by his mother and conservator.

Oral and documentary evidence was received. The record was closed, and the matter was submitted for decision on March 26, 2026.

ISSUES

The parties identify the issues to be determined as follows:

Should the Service Agency fund for:

1. caregiver and consumer health insurance under day care services;
2. caregiver stipend that includes transportation for the caregiver to travel while Claimant is in the day program, meals, and caregiver activities at the time of programming;
3. funding for Patricia Camarillo's service material;
4. funding for the specialty vision itinerant program?

EVIDENCE RELIED ON

Documentary: Claimant's Exhibits A-E; Service Agency's Exhibits 1-31.

Testimonial: For Claimant: Claimant's mother and conservator;

For Service Agency: Jose Rodriguez, Candace Carillo, Sernanda Zavalva, Mayra Alvarado, Sylvia Haro.

FACTUAL FINDINGS

1. Claimant is a 28-year-old conserved male who qualifies for regional center supports and services by virtue of mild intellectual disability and autism

diagnoses. He has been diagnosed with Norrie Syndrome, a condition that has resulted in visual and auditory deficits.

2. Claimant is in the process of transitioning into the Self-Determination Program (SDP). That process is not yet complete.

3. Claimant was initially enrolled in vision itinerant services with Sonja Biggs Educational Services (SBES). Those services were approved as an exception in June 2024. The exception was based on such criteria as program design, accreditation, business structure, service parameters, service model, and SBES's professional website. After some confusion, including an error by Service Agency personnel, the budget draft for \$199,696 was signed, and the services were funded. However, in September 2025, due to differences between SBES and Claimant's mother, SBES no longer provided services to Claimant, and Claimant's mother chose Patricia Camarillo (Ms. Camarillo), a non-authorized, non-vendored service, to provide them in place of SBES.

4. SDP rules did not permit services to be carried over to another service provider without the new service provider being assessed and vetted. Therefore, the Service Agency sought from Ms. Camarillo the kind of documentation that SBES had provided. However, the documentation Ms. Camarillo submitted to the Service Agency was brief and lacking in the kind of detail necessary for approval as a service provider, and her quote looked identical to that provided by SBES. (Exhibit 18, page 190-192.) The information provided was insufficient for the Service Agency to determine if Ms. Camarillo would be able to meet Claimant's goals, needs, and objectives. Without more detailed individualized vendor information, the Service Agency was unable to approve Ms. Camarillo as a service provider. Additional information followed by a new assessment was required before the approval could be granted.

5. In addition to vision itinerant services, Claimant requests additional supports and services including caregiver and consumer health insurance, a caregiver stipend that includes transportation for the caregiver to travel while Claimant is in the day program, including meals, activities, and Ms. Camarillo's service materials. The Service Agency declined that request on grounds that, by statute, such supports and services could not be approved, and that the Service Agency was to fund the program rather than the individual.

6. After the Service Agency determined that Ms. Camarillo's service could not be approved absent additional documentation and a new assessment, it offered Claimant a variety of alternatives to provide supports and services and to move the SDP transition process along. None of those alternatives had been accepted as of the date of the fair hearing. The Service Agency is prepared to move forward in the SDP transition process while the approval of a service provider for the vision program is pending.

7. Claimant argues that the service offered by Ms. Camarillo is more like a specialized college than a day program, and that the program is staffed with a team that is prepared to begin rendering services. Ms. Camarillo is also fully familiar with the program and is ready to begin, but the Service agency did not even have Ms. Camarillo go through the vetting process. According to Claimant, the Service Agency had approved funding over \$199,000 for the program but then withdrew it without serving Claimant with a Notice of Action.

8. Claimant argues that his request for health insurance should be granted because it is intended to be in effect during the three major trips he takes annually, in case his Medi-Cal coverage is not accepted.

9. Claimant argues that the Service Agency should grant his request for a stipend because it is part of the program's core curriculum. Therefore, he must pay for materials in Ms. Camarillo's program as he would in a school. The stipend funds would be used for him to learn independence to overcome his vision impairment, a condition made more challenging by his autism.

10. During her testimony in the fair hearing, Claimant's mother made several claims of wrongdoing by Service Agency personnel, and she accused the Service Agency of having violated Claimant's civil rights. Those issues lie outside this tribunal's jurisdiction. Therefore, no findings are made in regard to them.

LEGAL CONCLUSIONS

1. The regional center is not required to fund for the specialty vision itinerant program until the service provider chosen to operate the program has been fully assessed and vetted.

2. The regional center is not required to fund health insurance, a stipend, and/or Ms. Camarillo's service materials.

3. Claimant bears the burden of proof in this case. (*Lindsay v. San Diego Retirement Bd.* (1964) 231 Cal.App.2d 156, 161.) The standard of proof is a preponderance of the evidence. (Evid. Code § 115.)

4. Welfare and Institutions Code section 4648, subdivision (a) states in relevant part:

(3) A regional center may, pursuant to vendorization or a contract, purchase services or supports for a consumer from

an individual or agency that the regional center and consumer or, if appropriate, the consumer's parents, legal guardian, or conservator, or authorized representative, determines will best accomplish all or part of that consumer's program plan.

(A) Vendorization or contracting is the process for identification, selection, and utilization of service vendors or contractors, based on the qualifications and other requirements necessary in order to provide the service.

[¶] . . . [¶]

(6) The regional center and the consumer, or if appropriate, the consumer's parents, legal guardian, conservator, or authorized representative, including those appointed pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 4541, subdivision (b) of Section 4701.6, or subdivision (e) of Section 4705, shall, pursuant to the individual program plan, consider all of the following when selecting a provider of consumer services and supports:

(A) A provider's ability to deliver quality services or supports that can accomplish all or part of the consumer's individual program plan.

(B) A provider's success in achieving the objectives set forth in the individual program plan.

(C) If appropriate, the existence of licensing, accreditation, or professional certification.

5. Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4648, subdivision (a), the Service Agency was obligated to assess and vet Ms. Camarillo's qualifications to execute the specialty vision itinerant program for Claimant. The documentation Ms. Camarillo provided to the Service Agency was not only insufficient, it was almost identical to that provided by SBES. That made it impossible for the Service Agency to specifically assess Ms. Camarillo's qualifications, and it was forced to deny Ms. Camarillo's application. At that point, the Service Agency offered alternatives to Claimant to enable him to move forward with the SDP transition process. That offer is still pending.

6. Welfare and Institutions Code section 4646.4, subdivision (a) states in pertinent part:

Regional centers shall ensure, at the time of development, scheduled review, or modification of a consumer's individual program plan developed pursuant to Sections 4646 and 4646.5, or of an individualized family service plan pursuant to Section 95020 of the Government Code, the establishment of an internal process. This internal process shall ensure adherence with federal and state law and regulation, and if purchasing services and supports, shall ensure all of the following: [¶] . . . [¶]

(4) Consideration of the family's responsibility for providing similar services and supports for a minor child without

disabilities in identifying the consumer's service and support needs as provided in the least restrictive and most appropriate setting. In this determination, regional centers shall take into account the consumer's need for extraordinary care, services, supports and supervision, and the need for timely access to this care.

7. Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4646.4, subdivision (a), the Lanterman Act does not permit public funds to be expended for supports and services that are normally provided by families of children who do not have a disability. Items such as insurance, school supplies, and travel expenses are generally considered family expenses. Claimant did not make a showing of a need for extraordinary care, services, supports or supervision in that regard. (See also Welf. & Inst. Code §4659, subd. (c).) The evidence in this case did not establish a need to deviate from the policy referenced in Welfare and Institutions Code section 4646.4, subdivision (a).

ORDER

1. Within 30 days of the effective date of this Decision, Claimant shall provide to the Service Agency the name(s) and contact information of one or more individuals or businesses he proposes to serve as the director of his specialty vision itinerant program, together with qualifying information sufficient to the Service Agency for it to assess that entity's qualifications for the position pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4648, subdivision (a)(6). The Service agency shall assess the applicant's qualifications and timely notify Claimant of the results.

2. In the alternative, at Claimant's discretion, Claimant may choose among the alternatives previously offered to him by the Service Agency.

3. Claimant's request for the Service Agency to fund health insurance, a caregiver stipend, and service material, is denied.

DATE:

H. STUART WAXMAN

Administrative Law Judge

Office of Administrative Hearings

BEFORE THE
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of:

Claimant

OAH Case No. 2025060136

Vs.

DECISION BY THE DIRECTOR

North Los Angeles County Regional Center

Respondent.

ORDER OF DECISION

On March 30, 2026, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) at the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) issued a Proposed Decision in this matter. The Proposed Decision is adopted by the Department of Developmental Services as its Decision in this matter except as follows:

The language "Within 30 days of the effective date of this Decision," on page 8, paragraph 1 of the Proposed Decision is stricken.

The Order of Decision, together with the Proposed Decision, constitute the Decision in this matter.

This is the final administrative Decision. Each party is bound by this Decision. Either party may request a reconsideration pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4712.5, subdivision (a)(1), within 15 days of receiving the Decision or appeal the Decision to a court of competent jurisdiction within 180 days of receiving the final Decision.

Attached is a fact sheet with information about what to do and expect after you receive this decision, and where to get help.

IT IS SO ORDERED on this day April 14, 2026.

Original signed by

Katie Hornberger, Deputy Director
Division of Community Assistance and Resolutions