



## INCLUSION OF VDC MEMBERS FROM CONCENTRATED GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

*From 12.12.22 Executive Committee Minutes*

Including Santa Barbara's cluster of potential VDC members raises a number of issues requiring Executive Committee clarification. All agree we want to encourage/support new energy/ideas, while also ensuring we function as whole, inclusive group. They've asked us to include them – how do we guide this inclusion such that we are also included and function as a whole entity?

### PARAMETERS FOR GEOGRAPHIC INDEPENDENCE

Exec Committee discussion & conclusions:

#### VDC's RELATIONSHIP TO LACFLA

1. We must be careful to remain a collaborative practice group – not an umbrella group. We want to ensure we don't compete with LACFLA (a So. Cal umbrella group). Their basic trainings feed our membership & we provide their graduates a collaborative home by being an open group.
2. Must also consider exceptions LACFLA's made for VDC to be considered a whole-group LACFLA member, while exempting VDC members without offices in LA from having to join LACFLA, unless more than half of us end up *not* having offices in LA.
3. If we function/ behave as umbrella organization – which we are not – risk unintentionally becoming a problem for LACFLA – reasonable if they were to challenge this.
4. LACFLA likely to take issue with geographic subset of VDC members referring to selves as a "VDC pod." Need to avoid this kind of language. "Pod" is word LACFLA historically uses to describe collaborative groups under *its* umbrella. (Same with SB or SLO "Chapter" – both terms imply separate identities.)

#### SEPARATE IDENTITIES OF GEOGRAPHIC CLUSTERS OF VDC MEMBERS

After much discussion, VDC can't support geographic clusters of its members forming separate identities under VDC's "umbrella," as a number of challenges arise:

1. No separate website for geographic clusters, unless they're a *totally separate collaborative practice group*, with some members also being VDC members. Many if not most VDC members belong to other collab. groups. Nutshell: They can form their own separate collab. group and also be VDC members – or they are simply VDC Members.
2. If some individ. VDC members want their own in-person DO that's fine. VDC would help market. VDC logo would need to appear on materials because of VDC certification/license with CPCal. We may add additional DO's to accommodate new members ready to present.
3. Considered a VDC website page clustering professionals geographically. Challenges raised regarding this idea/option:
  - a. VDC Website educates clients that we're accessible from anywhere in CA.
  - b. Given we can all practice virtually anywhere in CA, highlighting certain geographic locations for certain VDC Members delimits a prospective client's focus to exclude other VDC professionals on website.

- c. If VDC members wish, individual bios can specify their locations.
- d. If geographic clusters of VDC Members were to have own separate identities, this also presents competition for existing geographically-identified collaborative groups (e.g. Sacramento, Pasadena).
- e. While some clients may prefer professionals in geographic proximity, we nevertheless identify as a virtual group. Our locations are already on our bios/website links.
- f. One advantage of client-professional geographic proximity is nearness to courts for filing purposes - but filing for mediation/collaborative cases very limited. VDC's attorneys responsible for knowing local court rules regarding in-person/e- filing.