



**San Gabriel / Pomona
Regional Center**

March 16, 2022

TO: Sheila James, Interim Board President & Board of Directors
San Gabriel / Pomona Valleys Developmental Services, Inc.

FROM: Anthony Hill, M.A. J.D. Esq.
Executive Director

RE: Executive Director's Report

National Disability Awareness Month

San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center (SG/PRC) welcomes March 2022, as National Disability Awareness Month. On February 26, 1987, President Ronald Reagan officially declared Proclamation 5613 making March, National Disabilities Awareness Month. In March, we take even greater actions through advocacy, observances, and celebrations to support individuals with disabilities' rights, choices, and we continue to do our very best to disassemble structures, systems and policies that sustain inequities. Our shared goal is to raise awareness of disabilities every hour, every day, and every month coalescing a coalition of soul force, protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities, celebrating their contributions to our society, and encouraging their full inclusion in all aspects of community life. Please share your voices to inform, educate, raise awareness, and wear orange clothing. Orange exudes energy and positivity and is the official color for National Disability Awareness Month.

Cesar Chavez Day

On March 31, 2022, SG/PRC welcomes Cesar Chavez Day. March 31st is the Birthday of Cesar Chavez. Cesar Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association, protected the rights and improved working conditions and pay for farm workers. Cesar Chavez was a labor leader and civil rights activist. SG/PRC is closed on March 31, 2022, in observance of Cesar Chavez Day a federal holiday, initiated by President Barack Obama during 2014, in honor of our American labor rights hero.

"The end of all knowledge should be service to others."

-Cesar Chavez

SG/PRC's Critical Business Functions

SG/PRC continues its “abundance of caution” strategy through remote working, weekly COVID-19 testing for all staff, and temperature screening and face mask wearing for all staff and members of the community that visit the SG/PRC office. SG/PRC recognizes itself as a health care setting tethered to the designation from the State Public Health Officer that all regional center employees are healthcare workers.

Since April 2021, all SG/PRC employees are required to participate in the SG/PRC COVID-19 testing clinic weekly, and at a minimum are required to receive both the rapid BinaxNow antigen test, and the PCR test consecutively. Unvaccinated staff are required to test more frequently. As many of you are aware, during August 2021, all SG/PRC employees are required to disclose their vaccination status when engaged in business activities, upon entering homes of individuals served, residential facilities, skilled nursing facilities, supported living arrangements, day programs, schools, jails, and homeless shelters, through relying on our electronic confirmation system, verified through our Human Resource team.

The SG/PRC office has remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Porter cleans and sanitizes our business office daily, supported by other internal health and safety protocols. We are very proud of our distinction of being the **only** regional center throughout the pandemic that has continued to provide in-person intake/eligibility assessments and early intervention clinics. Regarding Individual Program Plan and Individual Family Service Plan meetings, SG/PRC Service Coordinators are conducting these meetings in-person at the discretion of the individual served, their legal guardian or conservator, while practicing health care guidance, in wearing surgical grade masks, and staying within prescribed boundaries for physical distancing.

Every business day we see children and their parents or guardians spending time with us, waiting in our temporary lobby, and thereafter receiving diagnostic counselling, assessments, and intake services. These images have replayed throughout the pandemic, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to advancing our mission and meeting the needs of our community.

We are getting closer to opening the SG/PRC redesigned lobby as a welcoming environment for individuals served and their families. Electrical, flooring, painting, and Information Technology systems are small projects that are scheduled to be completed soon. Our shared vision is that every person that enters the SG/PRC lobby experiences a sense of comfort, conveying that SG/PRC is here to serve them and take care of their needs.

SG/PRC COVID-19 Data

Los Angeles County COVID-19 positivity rate 7-day average last reported was 5.5% percent, and now the positivity rate is 0.81%, as of March 11, 2022, according to Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. A steep decline. The data is encouraging (See Attachment A).

COVID-19 Vaccine Data

As required by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Directive, all regional centers are required to collect COVID-19 vaccine data for individuals served. Regional Centers are collecting the vaccine brand, whether the individual served is fully vaccinated, whether the individual served received a vaccine booster, and whether the individual served demonstrated their choice to decline COVID-19 vaccines. SG/PRC's vaccine data collection efforts remain at the **top** of the list of regional centers according to DDS Data at [www.dds.ca.gov under COVID-19 data](http://www.dds.ca.gov/under/COVID-19/data) updated on March 4, 2022. We have recently established greater emphasis on contacting parents or guardians of individuals served ages 5 through 12, an age range of children recently eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

Healthcare Worker Booster Vaccine Mandate

We are pleased to report that SG/PRC has reached a 100% percent compliance with all eligible employees receiving booster vaccines near March 1, 2022. We are very proud of this accomplishment, and the actions from employees that supported our shared commitment to protect the health and safety of individuals served, service provider staff, each other, and members of our community.

SG/PRC's COVID-19 Testing Clinic

The SG/PRC testing Clinic is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays for individuals served and their families, service provider staff and their families, and SG/PRC staff and their families, and general members of the community. The clinic is held at the SG/PRC office from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We are now offering both BinaxNow Covid-19 Antigen rapid test, and the gold standard PCR test to anyone that participates in our clinic .

We have sufficient testing supplies, and SG/PRC staff volunteers are very proud to do their part in supporting the health and safety of our community. We have developed an electronic survey to gain feedback from our community as a method to identify where we might improve the overall customer service experience. The survey can be found at the SG/PRC website www.sgprc.org.

Please participate in our survey because your voices and feedback are important to us. During April 2022, through our partnership with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH): State of California Testing Task Force, every person tested for a period of six consecutive weeks will receive a \$20 gift card from Target, Lowes, Amazon, Starbucks, Walmart and many other merchants. We are very thankful for our partnerships with CDPH, Valencia Branch Laboratories, and Color Platform (See Attachment B).

Personal Protective Equipment

SG/PRC has sufficient supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our service providers and individuals served and their families. SG/PRC has partnered with Parents' Place to distribute PPE. You can reach Parents' Place at (626) 919-1091. Jaimie Anabalon, Quality Assurance Manager coordinates PPE distributions for service providers and can be reached at PPE@sgprc.org.

Social Recreation Survey

We remain excited through our shared chorus of advocacy delivering restoration of regional center funding for social recreation, camp, and non-medical therapies. SG/PRC is fulfilling this essential change through funding social recreation services, while staff are developing the SG/PRC social recreation funding policy. We have developed an electronic social recreation survey because we need guidance from our community to drive our resource development plan. The survey is located on the SG/PRC website at www.sgprc.org. The Parents' Place and Service Coordinators are ready to support individuals served and their families with completing the survey. The survey is available in five languages including, English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese (See Attachment C).

SG/PRC's Dental Screening Clinic

On March 26, 2022, SG/PRC will host its 6th dental clinic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SG/PRC dental clinic is a collaborative partnership with Western University. The clinic is held within the SG/PRC business office parking lot with the use of canopy tents, while allowing space for physical distancing. Attendees are required to pass a contactless temperature screening monitor, and wear face masks. The purpose of the dental clinic is to support the individual served with securing a permanent dental provider. The dental clinic offers screenings, and implementation of desensitization strategies relying on doctrines of applied behavior analysis. The Service Coordinator is the contact person to access our dental clinic (See Attachment D).

Community Outreach / Compliance Report

The SG/PRC Community Outreach/Compliance Department has issued a report dated March 11, 2022, offering details of SG/PRC's community outreach activities covering the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companions Programs, Cultural Specialists, Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, Educational Specialist, Fair Hearings Specialist, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist, and Equity Partnerships (See Attachment E).

Affordable Connectivity Program

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has officially launched the Affordable Connectivity Program. Enrollment is now open for households with a least one qualifying household member under a list of criteria, including, income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, individuals approved to receive benefits under the free or reduced-price lunch program, individuals that receive Pell Grant funding during current year, individuals that participate in SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC or Lifeline or tribal specific programs. Benefits include a discount up to \$30 dollars a month for internet, and up to \$75 dollars monthly for internet for households on qualifying tribal lands. Also, eligible households can receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 dollars for the purchase of a laptop. Individuals can enroll at www.acpbenefit.org.

Social Security Offices are Re-Opening

The nationwide network of Social Security Administration offices is on track to reopen 1,200 offices on March 30, 2022. The network of Social Security offices was closed for nearly two years, extending back to the start of the pandemic.

National Core Indicators Developmental Disabilities 2020 Staff Stability Survey Results

The National Core Indicators Staff Stability Survey represents 2,987 providers from 27 states. Across all service types, the median hourly wage is \$13.36, where 30% percent of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) had been employed 12 months or less, and those that had separated, 48% percent had been employed 12 months or less. Within 22 states, 38% percent of employers reported implementing as least one wage bonus, 26% percent reported implementing temporary wage increases for all DSPs and 25% percent reported no wage bonus or wage increase. The survey can be found at www.nationalcoreindicators.org/staff-stability-survey/ (See Attachment F).

SG/PRC's Budget Expenditures FY 21/22

SG/PRC's Operations allocation is \$35,207,155 with projected expenditures of \$34,282,135. An OPS allocation reserve is projected. SG/PRC's POS allocation is \$318,032,645, with year-to-date expenditures \$151,322,108, projected expenditures, and late billing reflecting \$156,761,495. A POS reserve is projected.

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

On January 24, 2022, DDS issued a Directive, Extension of Waivers and Modifications and Directives Due to COVID-19 (See Attachment G).

Health and Safety Waiver Exemption

Regional Center Executive Directors' authority to grant adjustments to residential service rates is extended under Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 4681.6, 4689.8 and 4691.9 until April 1, 2022, negating Executive Directors' authority to do so for Service Code 109.

Day Programs

Day Programs service delivery is permissible in person but must be provided in accordance with local public health orders and guidelines issued from the California Department of Public Health. This Directive is extended until April 7, 2022.

In-Home Respite Workers

First Aid and Cardiopulmonary training is amended from being required before In-Home Respite Workers' employment and must be obtained within 30 days of starting work. This Directive is extended until April 4, 2022.

Additional Participant-Directed Services

Additional Participant-Directed Services includes Personal Assistance, Independent Living Services and Supported Employment extended until April 19, 2022.

Residential Facility Payments

Regional Centers shall report all current and approved payments for temporary residential service absences. This Directive is extended until April 5, 2022.

Extension of Early Start Services

Regional Centers may fund Early Start services as a transitional bridge to cross over to Part C Services. This Directive is extended until April 6, 2022.

Half Day Billing

The Half Day Billing requirements are waived, until March 26, 2022.

Self-Determination Program

The requirement that the cost of the financial management service is paid by the Self-Determination Program participant from his or her individual budget as described in Welfare and Institutions Code section 4685.8(c)(1) is waived until April 13, 2022.

Reimbursement Rates for Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF)

On March 3, 2022, DDS issued a Directive applying retroactive ICF rate increases relying on the "Schedule of Maximum Allowances." Regional Centers should process rate adjustments effective August 1, 2021 (See Attachment H).

Tracking COVID-19 Incidence

On March 10, 2022, DDS issued a Directive modifying reporting requirements for COVID-19 including new cases or any death attributed to COVID-19 confirmed through COVID-19 positive testing. Also, Regional Centers are no longer required to report incidences of COVID-19 through the "surveillance tracker" system (See Attachment I).

Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) Updates

The Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) represents the 21 non-profit regional centers that advocate on behalf of and coordinates services for California's over 380,000 people with developmental disabilities. The Association functions as a leader and advocate in promoting the continuing entitlement of individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve their full potential and highest level of self-sufficiency. The Association participates in the development of public legislative policy that impact individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Senate Bill 387 - Support

ARCA supports Senate Bill 387 - Anthony Portantino; requiring local educational agencies to increase staff training to be prepared to manage and be more responsive to behavioral health challenges. This bill would require, on or before January 1, 2025, that local educational agencies certify that 75% of both its classified and certificated employees have received youth behavioral health training (See Attachment J).

Grassroots Day

Grassroots Day is on April 5, 2022, with an orientation meeting occurring on April 4, 2022. Grassroots Day is organized through ARCA, where meetings are arranged between California Lawmakers and delegations including individuals served, their families, service providers, and regional center staff that reside in their Legislative District.

The importance of these meetings is for the delegation to share information, and real-life experiences intended to guide budget, legislative and public policies impacting individuals served encouraging opportunities to further the Lanterman Promise. Yvonne Gratianne, SG/PRC's Public Relations Manager can be contacted at ygratianne@sgprc.org, if you are interested in learning more about Grassroots Day or participating within SG/PRC's coalition.