

SAN GABRIEL/POMONA REGIONAL CENTER

December 1 , 2021

TO: Penelope Fode, 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

Happy Holidays

Dear Self Advocates, parents, families, Service Providers, Community Partners, and San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center (SG/PRC) Board of Directors, on behalf of the SG/PRC staff we wish you a joyful, happy, and wonderful Holiday Season. The currency of love, compassion, and thoughtfulness are the very best gifts. Things that money cannot buy. These gifts are in abundant supply because we create them from our goodwill. Treasures each of us inherit and remain within each of us to share with others. We encourage everyone to reach out to as many family members and friends as possible sharing gifts of love, compassion, kindness, appreciation, and gratitude.

SG/PRC's Critical Business Functions

Given recent public health policy news related to the Omicron COVID-19 variant tethered to our "Abundance of Caution" strategy, effective December 6, 2021, our remote workforce will adjust including Service Coordinators and various classifications that have job duties that require work in other settings; residential facilities, day programs, supported living arrangements, family homes, schools, shelters, jails and other settings to work primarily remote (1 day weekly in the office) with the requirement to continue participating in weekly COVID-19 testing occurring at the SG/PRC business office. All other job classifications are required to work in the office at least 2 days weekly and most falling within 5 days weekly to ensure that critical functions remain at optimal capacity. Service Coordinators increased remote working flexibility does not change their requirement to visit individuals served and their families in-person according to Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Directive.

The SG/PRC office has remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitors and staff are required to wear a face mask and pass a contactless temperature screening device. We have held firm with this practice even though guidance from local public health authorities has varied. 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. Every business day we see children and their parents or guardians spending time with us, receiving essential developmental assessments, and eligibility review services. These outcomes are rewarding and vibrantly illustrates the SG/PRC mission.

Intake/Eligibility Data Ending October 31, 2021

Early Intervention/Intake

899 New referrals
850 Eligibility reviews
27 Reactivations
799 Children found eligible
4 Transfer In

Lanterman/Intake

176 New Referrals
209 Eligibility Reviews
73 Reactivations
142 Found Eligible
237 Exiting EI (Eligibility Reviews)
129 Eligible (/EI transitions)
31 Provisional Eligible

(See Attachment A)

SG/PRC COVID-19 Data

Los Angeles County COVID-19 positivity rate 7-day average reported on November 28, 2021, is 1.03% (See Attachment B). On November 26, 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) designated the variant B. 1.1.529 a variant of concern, named Omicron. The WHO decision was based on evidence presented to the Technical Advisory Group on Virus Evolution that Omicron has several mutations that impact on how it behaves, on how easily it spreads and severity of illness (Source World Health Organization).

COVID-19 Vaccine Data

As required by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Directive, SG/PRC is collecting COVID-19 vaccine data for individuals served. We are collecting the vaccine brand, whether the individual served is fully vaccinated, 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](#).

SG/PRC's COVID-19 Testing Clinic

Our 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. The clinic is held at the SG/PRC office from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Effective November 29, 2021, we have begun offering BynaxNow Covid-19 Antigen test, a rapid testing option as an additional layer of protection against the spread of COVID-19 and its known variants including Omicron. The rate accuracy for BynaxNow Covid-19 Antigen test for known positive cases is 84.6% and an average of 98.5% for known negative samples. This rapid test is available for individuals at least 2 years in age or greater (See Attachment C). All SG/PRC employees are required to be tested at least (1) time weekly or more often under specific circumstances.

SG/PRC Self-Determination Program Meet & Greet

On December 11, 2021, SG/PRC will host a meet and greet via Zoom with Financial Management Services Providers (FMS) from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. A parent advocate, during our weekly Community Meeting, made this recommendation for all of us, and we prudently implemented her recommendation as an opportunity to further support self advocates and their parents as we partner our shared learning experiences (See Attachment D).

Supervisor Hilda Solis/Operation Gobble Gobble Turkey Giveaway Event

On November 10, 2021, Supervisor Hilda Solis held her annual Operation Gobble Gobble Turkey Giveaway Event and allocated 14 turkeys and food boxes to SG/PRC for individuals served and their families. The SG/PRC Community Outreach team ensured that allocated turkeys and food boxes were delivered to needy families (See Attachment E).

SG/PRC's Expenditures FY 21/22

According to the C-1 Amendment SG/PRC's Operations allocation is \$34,724,969 with year-to-date expenditures \$8,000,277 with projected remaining expenditures of \$25,144,595. The Purchase of Service Allocation is \$318,032,645 with year-to-date expenditures of \$60,319,106 and a projected surplus of \$5,795,901 yearend.

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

July 2021 Trailer Bill Language Affecting Regional Centers

On October 19, 2021, DDS issued guidance on Trailer Bills that impact regional centers.

Key policy items are provisional regional center eligibility for children with adaptive skill deficits in two (2) of five (5) areas of major life activity, expansion of Self- Determination Program for all individuals served, restoration of social recreation and camp services, continuation of remote services, remote Individual Family Service Plan and Individual Program Plan meetings, termination of Uniformed Holiday Schedule, creation of the SDP Ombudsperson Office, regional center contract amendment increasing the frequency of caseload ratio reporting to DDS, regional center and service provider performance indicator (measures), Direct Support Professional (DSP) training, DSP pay differential, and the Community Navigator Program. The above does not cover all public policy initiatives. There are twenty-four (24) initiatives signaling major changes occurring and forthcoming within the regional center system of care (See Attachment F).

COVID-19 Booster Shot Update

On October 25, 2021, DDS issued guidance detailing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup recommendations related to COVID-19 Booster shots incorporating the Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and Pfizer-BioNtech vaccines (See Attachment G).

COVID-19 Vaccines for Children

On November 3, 2021, DDS issued guidance detailing Centers for Disease Prevention and Control and the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup recommendations related to COVID-19 vaccines for children ages 5 through 11 (See Attachment H).

Service Provider Rate Adjustment Implementation

On November 3, 2021, DDS conducted a Zoom presentation for all stakeholder groups summarizing major components of the service provider rate adjustment schedule. In the most simplistic explanation, the rate model will be phased in over time with adjustments occurring on April 1, 2022, at 25% percent difference between current rate, and applicable rate model, on July 1, 2023, at 50% percent difference between current rate and applicable rate model, and on July 1, 2025, full implementation of the full rate model base rate 90% percent of rate model with 10% percent available contingent upon performance outcomes. The rate model is only inclusive of specific service codes you will find in (Attachment I). Regional Center Fiscal Departments will have a heavy lift because rate changes are not automated, requiring manual process and crosswalk data sharing flowing between service providers, regional centers, and Health Management Associates.

Participant Choice Specialists

On November 4, 2021, DDS issued guidance regarding investments to support the expansion of SDP throughout the regional center system. SG/PRC received an Operations Budget allocation to hire two Participant Choice Specialists. SG/PRC has hired two staff competitively recruited that formally served as SDP Coaches, forward looking positions that SG/PRC created at its own initiative to support families that have decided to transition from traditional Individual Program Plan service delivery. Of note, the Participant Choice Specialists will support individuals served, their families, SG/PRC staff and service providers with both participant-directed services and SDP as subject matter experts. The 2021 Budget Act included \$7.2 million dollars to fund these positions over a three-year term (Attachment J).

California Electronic Visit Verification Program

On November 30, 2021, DDS hosted a Zoom webinar from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. that provided training, and information regarding the Electronic Visit Verification Program. Service Providers can opt out of the free program offered by the State of California, if their third-party system conforms with the 21st Century Cures Act. Implementation of Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) is effective on January 1, 2022, for specific service codes listed within (Attachment K). All service providers included in the category defined as Personal Care Services (PCS) must self-register in the EVV electronic portal.

Department Directive; Extension of Waivers, Modifications and Directives Due to COVID-19

On November 23, 2021, DDS issued extensions for waivers or modifications to existing statute. All health and safety adjustments are important, while key waivers include the extension of the Regional Center Directors' health and safety waiver exemptions for rate adjustments for residential or supplemental services in residential settings, half-day billing for day program services, extension of Early Start services, and waiver of SDP budget restrictions for Financial Management Services (See Attachment L).

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 350,000 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.

Governor Newsom Announces Judicial Appointments

Edwin P. Chau, of Arcadia, State Assemblymember representing the 49th District since 2012 was recently appointed to serve as a Judge in the Los Angeles County Superior Court. Assemblymember Chau would have termed out in 2024. After, Assemblymember Chau resigns, Governor Newsom will presumably call a special election to fill the vacant seat.