

SAN GABRIEL/POMONA REGIONAL CENTER

April 21, 2021

TO: Dr. Gisele Ragusa, 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

Recognition & Awareness

Recognizing and raising the awareness of all developmental disabilities is important for all of us. The Autism Society beginning April 1, 2021 shines the spotlight on "Autism Awareness" month. The purpose of this campaign is to promote awareness of autism and diagnosing young children to provide them and their families with needed services and resources. Another campaign goal is to encourage people to learn more about autism.

Every calendar year, Wednesday of the last full week in April is National Administrative Professional Day. April 21, 2021 is National Administrative Professional Day. Please on this day send a message of goodwill, uplifting our Administrative Professionals for all of their efforts in keeping offices, agencies and organizations supporting individuals with developmental disabilities running and operating smoothly. Their efforts have been critical with supporting SG/PRC's mission, remote workforce, slowing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting SG/PRC's critical functions infrastructure.

SG/PRC's Critical Business Functions

We are pleased to report that all critical functions including Intake/Eligibility, Fiscal, Clinical, Human Resources, Quality Assurance and Information Technology are at optimal levels. Our remote workforce fluctuates between 80-90 percent.

The SG/PRC business office remains open to the public on an appointment only basis. All visitors are required to wear a face mask and pass a contactless electronic temperature screening device. Our porter sanitizes and disinfects our office space during business hours. SG/PRC is the **only regional center throughout the pandemic** that has continued to safely provide in-person intake and eligibility services and early intervention service clinics.

We are pleased to report that throughout the pandemic, children and their parents continue to spend time with us, being greeted by SG/PRC staff, waiting in our lobby, and thereafter receiving diagnostic, counselling, clinical, early intervention and intake services.

The following reflects intake and eligibility data ending March 2021 (See Attachment A).

Early Intervention/Intake	Lanterman/Intake
1287 New Referrals	241 New Referrals
1147 Eligibility Reviews	824 Eligibility Reviews
56 Reactivations	118 Reactivations
1089 children found eligible	465 Eligible (Plus/EI transitions)

In response to COVID-19, SG/PRC changed its Quality Assurance residential facility monitoring activities to primarily a remote format for annual monitoring visits, while investigation practices including visits to the physical site, and in-person meetings with Facility Administrators occurred with minor adjustments to protect against the spread of COVID-19. Effective April, 1, 2021, SG/PRC's Quality Assurance monitoring activities required through Title 17 California Code of Regulations has shifted to a hybrid format, including in-person monitoring (facility inspections) with substantial reliance on teleconferencing formats and other methods to perform record reviews.

COVID-19 LA County Surge / SG/PRC Risk Mitigation Efforts

The past 13 months have been challenging for all of us. We are grateful and thankful for the collective efforts of residents of Los Angeles County through practicing physical distancing, handwashing, wearing face mask and accepting vaccines.

On April 19, 2021, according to Los Angeles County Department of Public Health statistics archived within its dashboard, the COVID-19 positivity rate within Los Angeles County is between 1.2% - 1.4% percent and the case rate is 3.2 -3.9 per 100,000 individuals keeping Los Angeles County in the orange tier (moderate) relaxing restrictions on certain business activities (See Attachment B). In conformity with Los Angeles County data, SG/PRC's COVID-19 positive test results for individuals served, service provider staff, and SG/PRC staff has remained on a downward trajectory (See Attachment C).

SG/PRC's COVID-19 Testing Clinic

On April 7, 2021, SG/PRC held it first COVID-19 testing clinic at SG/PRC's business office in partnership with the California Department of Public Health, Valencia Branch Laboratories, Color, and Aveanna Healthcare. SG/PRC's COVID-19 testing clinic is available to perform COVID-19 testing for individuals served, their family members, service providers and their staff and SG/PRC staff and their family members every Wednesday from 9 a.m. -11 a.m. through August 31, 2021 (See Attachment D).

SG/PRC's COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic & Partnerships

On April 8, 2021, SG/PRC in partnership with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and Care Ambulance held SG/PRC's first COVID-19 vaccine clinic at the SG/PRC business office. It was a walk in clinic offering vaccines for individuals served and their family members, service provider staff and their family members, and SG/PRC staff and their family members. Two-Hundred and Fifty Seven (257) people received vaccinations (See Attachment E).

On May 6th, 2021, SG/PRC in partnership with Mercy Pharmacy will hold another COVID-19 vaccine clinic for individuals served, their family members, service provider staff and their family members, and SG/PRC staff and their family members. Priority will be given to individuals served and their family members. Individuals served and their family members should contact their Service Coordinator for information and to register for this event. Interested service providers and their staff should contact SG/PRC's Community Service Department. We anticipate that we will be allocated at least 250 vaccine dosages.

SG/PRC is simply thankful for our partnerships with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Care Ambulance, Western University, Mercy Pharmacy, Albertsons Pharmacy, and Phillips Ranch Pharmacy for supporting our community.

COVID-19 Vaccine Data

As required by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Directive, SG/PRC is collecting COVID-19 vaccine data. We are gathering vaccine data for individuals served. According to our analysis based on individuals served that are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines, we do not have vaccine information for at least 3000 individuals. SG/PRC Service Coordinators are helping individuals served and their families schedule vaccination appointments.

FEMA-COVID-19 Funeral Expense/ Financial Assistance

In early April 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began providing financial assistance for COVID-19 funeral expenses that occurred after January 20, 2020. The applicant must be a U.S. Citizen or a qualified person. An applicant can apply for multiple deceased individuals with a maximum of \$9,000 per funeral with a maximum of \$35,000 per application. The death must have occurred in the United States, including U.S. territories and the District of Columbia (See Attachment F).

SG/PRC's Dental Clinic

On March 26, 2021, SG/PRC held its second dental clinic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SG/PRC dental clinic is a collaborative partnership with Western University (See Attachment G).

The clinic was held within the SG/PRC parking lot with the use of canopy tents, allowing space for physical distancing. Attendees were 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 SG/PRC Dental Coordinator, Clinical Director, and Client Services Director through a team approach with Dr. Banner and Western University dental students served at least 70 individuals. SG/PRC will host a dental clinic on May 22, 2021.

Parents' Place Technology Lending Library

SG/PRC was the first regional center to create a technology lending library through allocating 250 iPads to Parents' Place, and allocating funds from a resulting trust to pay for internet service. We are pleased to announce that DDS recently approved SG/PRC's request to modify the SG/PRC's Community Placement Plan securing an allocation of \$50,000 toward Parents' Place Technology Lending Library. Recently, City National Bank has expressed interest in supporting Parents' Place technology lending library (See Attachment H).

University of Southern California (USC) Autism Research Partnership

SG/PRC has agreed to renew its partnership with Dr. Amber Angell PhD, OTR/L, Assistant Professor with the University of Southern California (USC). Dr. Angell, in the past has conducted research studies focusing on "Latinx Families Experiences of Autism Diagnosis and Services."

Dr. Angell's current research study involves investigating disparities in the diagnosis of autism with a focus on Latina girls (Autism Trajectories of Girls). This study will gather data through semi-structured interviews with parents of girls with autism. Also, a companion research study will be conducted investigating "Parental Attitudes and Decision-Making About Autism Services and Treatments Among Latinx populations."

We are excited about our partnership with Dr. Angell and USC, and we look forward to outcomes that might help us better serve children diagnosed with autism. Research study groups will be designed through voluntary participation (See Attachment I).

SG/PRC's Budget FY 20/21 as of March 18, 2021

SG/PRC's OPS allocation for FY 20/21 is \$32,144,211 projecting at \$31,928,344 at the end of the fiscal year. Current month expenditures are \$2,578,585 and year to date expenditures are \$20,851,079.

SG/PRC's POS allocation is \$271,307,068. Current month claims are \$22,421,425. Year to date expenditures are \$170,080,353. We anticipate a deficit reflecting \$6,580,586 derived from COVID-19 Health and Safety Exemption expenditures. All regional centers are required to track COVID-19 expenditures and report those specific costs to DDS. Anticipated future allocations related to COVID-19 expenditures will yield a balanced year end budget outcome.

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

March 23, 2021 Home and Community-Based Services Final Rule: Virtual Assessments

The California Statewide Transition Plan is California's plan to achieve compliance with the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Final Rule.

DDS has contracted with the Public Consulting Group to conduct a randomized, statistically valid sample of 1,200 HCBS providers among the 21 regional centers. Virtual assessments are underway and are designed to offer a forum for discussion regarding how services are being provided, both currently and prior to the COVID-19 State of Emergency. California's compliance with the HCBS Final Rule has been extended one more year to March 17, 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (See Attachment J).

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

The Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) is a telephone and computer-based method that electronically verifies in-home service visits. All states are required to implement EVV. The EVV system is required to verify; (1) type of service performed, (2) individual receiving service, (3) date of service, (4) location service delivered, (5) individual providing service and (6) the time the service begins and ends. Regional Center services are included in Phase II implementation and are expected to go live January 2022. EVV is required for respite, supported living services, personal assistance, and homemaker services (See Attachment K).

March 29, 2021- Provider Attestation for Absence Payments for Nonresidential Services during COVID-19 State of Emergency

This DDS Directive requires non-residential service providers to make an attestation that claims for payment from regional centers were reduced by the same level as the reduction in payroll, if the provider received COVID-19 relief funding such as Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency Advance Program or any similar federal or state funds and when repayment was waived or forgiven. Also, if the provider received funding for any state or federal program, and such funding was forgiven, the provider is required to attest that funds were not received for the same expense reimbursed by the regional center (See Attachment L).

March 29, 2021- Guidance Regarding Reimbursement for Group Supported Employment for Alternative Nonresidential Services

Beginning April 1, 2021 group supported employment service providers will be reimbursed for Alternative Services using a monthly rate that is unique to each vendor. If an individual receives a combination of traditional and Alternative Services within the same month, the monthly Alternative Services rate is applied (See Attachment M).

March 29, 2021- Guidance Regarding Reimbursement for Transportation Services for Alternative Non-Residential Services

Beginning April 1, 2021 transportation service providers will use a monthly unit rate to calculate reimbursement for Alternative Services up to a vendor monthly maximum. If an individual receives Alternative Services, the monthly unit rate is applicable. This Directive includes methodology for calculating the amount of monthly reimbursement, and allows for reimbursement for fuel expenses to be claimed separately (See Attachment N).

Department of Social Services April 15, 2021- Provider Information Notice 21-21-ASC

The Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) under the Department of Social Services has authority and jurisdiction over approval and licensure of Adult Day Programs. Provider Information Notices (PINS) are guidance issued by CCLD related to both operations and delivery of Adult Day Program Services. PIN 21-21-ASC is recently published guidance for "Adult Day Program Operations and Vaccinations During the COVID-19 Pandemic."

PIN 21-21-ASC notifies the general public that CCLD has not issued guidance prohibiting Adult Day Programs (ADPs) from remaining open during the COVID-19 pandemic as long as CCLD COVID-19 prevention practices are implemented. Additionally, this PIN affirms personal rights of program participants in their right to refuse vaccinations and if that right is exercised, the program participant cannot be denied participation solely for that reason. Also, according to this PIN, CCLD is not requiring vaccinations for licensees, volunteers and facility staff (See Attachment O).

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.

Assembly & Senate Bills

(AB)-445 - Support/Sponsor

On March 25, 2021 SG/PRC issued a letter supporting AB-445. Assemblymember Calderon's bill proposes to modify language within the Lanterman Act terminating regional center's requirement to collect certain information within the eligibility review procedure (See Attachment P).

(SB)-639- ARCA- Comments

Senator Durazo, through SB-639 proposes transitioning employees with disabilities from sub-minimum wage to integrated competitive employment requiring the legal minimum wage effective January 1, 2024. ARCA raises concerns regarding ambitious timelines established for full implementation, the lack of additional funding, and implementation costs that further destabilizes an already underfunded regional center system of care (See Attachment Q).

Department of Developmental Services (4300) –

ARCA's Response to 2021-22 Preliminary Budget Hearings- (Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman, Chair Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services & (Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, Chair Assembly Committee #1 on Health and Human Services)

On April 2, 2021 ARCA issued its response to Governor Newsom's proposed budget. ARCA commends the status quo budget, vaccine prioritization, value of DDS Directives supporting individuals served creating flexible service delivery options, and the need to continue funding for grant programs to address equity and access to services.

ARCA proposes policy changes and funding investments to support implementation of Self-Determination on a broader scale as intended. Including clear regional center authorization to purchase Person-Centered Plans, lower caseload ratios, accounting infrastructure improvements, revisions to the individual budget methodology, and guardrails around program rules to achieve greater consistency statewide. Additionally, ARCA suggests more than to simply monitor the erosion of sustainable provider rates, but to implement existing recommendations to stabilize California's community based service delivery system.

With regard to Proposed Trailer Bill Language, ARCA supports funding for the Community Navigator program, Stabilization, Training, Assistance and Reintegration (STAR) Homes, Community Crisis (CCH) Homes, Residential Facilities for Special Health Care Needs, ending the Unformed Holiday Schedule policy, and permanent removal of sunset provisions tethered to supplemental provider rate increases (See Attachment R).