

SAN GABRIEL/POMONA REGIONAL CENTER

May 19, 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

Celebrating Our Service Providers and Community Partners

The new CDC guidance pertaining to vaccinated persons is exciting. Over the course of the past 60 days, we have received a wave of positive news regarding the COVID-19 positivity rate within Los Angeles County. We are at the lowest tier. Most business activities are allowed to commence, streams of commerce are opening up and we are encouraged that a sense of normalcy is around the corner. All of us have done a great job together as a community. Our medical community, and Dr. Ferrer and her team with Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) have demonstrated strong leadership through implementing prudent public health policy.

Exceedingly, we admire, and recognize the commitment and resilience of our service providers. Every day, every hour, every minute, and every second they stood tall against COVID-19. They delivered residential and non-residential services, helping individuals served recover from COVID-19, offering support and guidance with ensuring that individuals served stay the course with wearing mask, physical distancing, hand washing while balancing their need to keep their staff, staff's families, and themselves safe. SG/PRC service providers, courtesy service providers, and our community partners, we thank-you for your kindness, compassion, care and prompt responses. We are inspired by all of you. We applaud all of you!

SG/PRC's Critical Business Functions

We are pleased to report that all critical functions including Intake/Eligibility, Client Services, Fiscal, Clinical, Human Resources, Quality Assurance and Information Technology are at optimal levels. Our remote workforce is at 80 percent. Ninety three percent (93%) of our employees are fully vaccinated.

Effective May 7, 2021, we began implementing a gradual reduction of our remote workforce across job classifications ending during September 2021. Our plan is framed with an “abundance of caution”, and is deliberately slow to account for potential COVID-19 positivity spikes connected with Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day. SG/PRC staff are being tested randomly weekly. Our internal testing efforts will expand incrementally as we increase the amount of staff that perform their work in the office.

The SG/PRC business office remains open to the public on an appointment only basis. We are preparing for full re-opening within the next 90 days as a moving time frame. 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. We have recently, increased the volume of appointments for our onsite intake/eligibility and early intervention clinics.

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

Early Intervention/Intake

1483 New Referrals
1268 Eligibility Reviews
63 Reactivations
1195 children found eligible

Lanterman/Intake

278 New Referrals
921 Eligibility Reviews
133 Reactivations
514 Eligible (Plus/EI transitions)

As required by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Directive, SG/PRC is conducting in-person visits with individuals served that receive residential services, family home agency services, that live in skilled nursing facilities or receive supported living or independent living services (See Attachment B)

LA County COVID-19 Positivity Data

On May 17, 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 0.6% percent and the case rate is 1.4 per 100,000 individuals. 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 is on a steady downward trend (See Attachment C).

SG/PRC's COVID-19 Testing Clinic

Our COVID-19 testing clinic is open every Wednesday 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 11a.m.

SG/PRC has a contract with the California Department of Public Health, and Partnership with Color and Valencia Laboratories through August 31, 2021. We are exploring the feasibility of extending our contract (See Attachment D).

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

On May 6th, 2021, we held our second vaccine clinic at our business office in partnership with Mercy Pharmacy. The clinic featured the Pfizer vaccine. Our next clinic date is scheduled on May 27th, 2021 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. On May 6, 2021, 80 people were vaccinated including individuals served and their families, service providers and their staff, SG/PRC staff and their families, and members of the general public. Our partners are LACDPH, Western University, Mercy Pharmacy, Albertsons, and Phillips Ranch Pharmacy. An uplifting memory etched in our minds on May 6th, 2021 is that we vaccinated an individual served that was on a gurney in a medical transport vehicle (See Attachment E).

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. We are collecting the vaccine brand, whether or not the individual served is fully vaccinated, and whether or not the individual served demonstrated their choice to decline COVID-19 vaccines. SG/PRC's vaccine data collection efforts on a proportional basis rest at the top of the list of regional centers according to DDS Data, "COVID-19 Vaccination Data for Regional Center Consumers aged 16 and Up" at [www.dds.ca.gov/under COVID-19 data](http://www.dds.ca.gov/under-COVID-19-data).

SG/PRC's Dental Clinic May 22, 2021

On May 22, 2021, SG/PRC will hold our third dental clinic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SG/PRC dental clinic is a collaborative partnership with Western University.

The clinic will be held within the SG/PRC parking lot with the use of canopy tents, 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 (See Attachment F).

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 purchase internet service. We are pleased to announce that DDS has recently approved SG/PRC's request to modify SG/PRC's Community Placement Plan (CPP) securing an allocation of \$50,000 supporting Parents' Place Technology Lending Library. We anticipate release of the CPP allocation before June 1, 2021.

Director of Community Outreach and Compliance

We are pleased to introduce Mr. Salvador Gonzalez as our Director of Community Outreach and Compliance. Mr. Gonzalez' new leadership role is effective May 24, 2021.

Mr. Gonzalez will have oversight of the Community Outreach and Compliance programs and team, including the South & North Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Programs, Cultural Specialists, Educational Specialist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and Fair Hearings Specialist supported by an Executive Assistant.

Mr. Gonzalez will support our forward-thinking strategy intended to expand the awareness of services and supports throughout our service area. His responsibilities will include ensuring accountability and efficient administration of our disparity programs, performance contract, National Core Indicator response and reporting, and supporting our Executive Management team with updating SG/PRC's emergency management and response systems.

Mr. Gonzalez, began serving individuals with developmental disabilities when he was a high school student. On his own initiative, Mr. Gonzalez advocated against the school's policy to separate students with disabilities from other students.

Professionally, Mr. Gonzalez has over 20 years of experience. He has served in the roles of Special Education Teacher, Service Coordinator, and (15) years as a Client Services Manager. Mr. Gonzalez is complementing his professional experience with a Masters of Organizational Leadership Degree that he will obtain within the next 5 months.

Mr. Gonzalez is a grassroots community leader who has developed programs that encourage the physical development and academic progress of teenage boys. Many of those he has reached have attended college and are successful in their chosen field of study. The passion for serving our community is clearly illuminated through Mr. Gonzalez' unwavering commitment to support choice, inclusion and equity for individuals with developmental disabilities.

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 \$31,848,071 at the end of the fiscal year. Current month expenditures are \$1,479,614 and year to date expenditures are \$22,330,693.

SG/PRC's POS allocation is \$271,307,068. Current month claims are \$24,168,936. Year to date expenditures estimates \$194,248,931. We are projecting a deficit reflecting \$6,343,853 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.

COVID-19 Related Tax Credits/American Rescue Plan

The Internal Revenue Service and the Treasury Department announced further details related to tax credits available under the American Rescue Plan. Under the new law, businesses could take dollar for dollar tax credits equal to qualified sick leave wages if they offered paid leave to employees who were unable to work or telework due to COVID-19 (See Attachment G).

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

May 5, 2021- Extension of Waivers, Modifications and Directives Due to COVID-19 (See Attachment H)

DDS extended the following directives:

- Department Directive on Requirements Waived due to COVID-19- 3/12/2020(See Attachment I)
 - a. Early start in-person meetings are waived if approved by the parent or legal guardian
 - b. Early start remote services are allowable if approved by the parent or legal guardian
 - c. Lanterman Act in-person meetings are waived if approved by the individual served or legal representative
 - d. Executive Director health & safety authority
- Department Directive on Requirements Waived due to COVID-19 additional guidance 3/18/2020 (See Attachment J)
 - a. Lanterman Act remote services or alternative locations are allowable if approved by the individual served or their legal representative
 - b. Supplemental Staffing for residential providers is allowable
 - c. Day Program service delivery (DDS-guidance) must comply with CDPH guidance
 - d. Public meetings requirement is waived
 - e. WIC § 4731 Complaint 20-day working day response rule is waived
- Department Directive Extension of Early Start Services 6/15/2020 (See Attachment K)
 - a. Early Intervention services may continue after the child reaches age three to support a smooth transition to PART B services.
- Department Directive Waiver or Self-Determination Program Budget Restrictions for Financial Management Services 11/19/2020 (See Attachment L)
 - a. The Financial Management Service is waived from being funded through the participant's budget.

The above is an overview of recently extended DDS Directives that have substantial impact on regional centers' and service providers' operations due to modifications to either the Lanterman Act or Title 17 California Code of Regulations. The remaining DDS Directives that were extended or modified that were not highlighted above can be found at www.dds.ca.gov.

Department of Developmental Services Proposed Budget FY 21/22

In May, the Department of Finance submits revised revenue and expenditure estimates for current and budget years to the Legislature. This updated process is referred to as the May Revise. Finance also prepares monthly economic and cash revenue updates during the fiscal year. The May Revise is an essential budget process that creates a window of opportunity for Governor Newsom to adjust his initial budget proposal relying on revised estimates of revenues that will impact budget expenditures policy.

The below is a high-level overview of the May Revise. Additional details can be found in "Department of Developmental Services 2021 May Revision Highlights (See Attachment M).

- \$1.2M to assist with Early Start to special education transition;
- Elimination of sunsets for Prop 56, provider rates, Uniform Holiday;
- Increased funding for START mobile crisis teams;
- \$10M for reduced caseloads (1:40) for those in underserved communities with low or no POS;
- \$24M to address frozen rates for ICFs and pediatric sub-acute facilities;
- \$4M GF Performance Incentive Program for regional centers, increasing to \$61M in FY 2022-23
- \$2.9M GF for development of a training and certification program for DSPs tied to wage differentials;
- \$2.2M GF for bilingual differentials for DSPs, increasing to \$6.5M GF in FY 2023-24;
- \$6.8M to improve onboarding into SDP, including "participant choice specialists, intensive transition support services, and regional center training," which would reduce to \$2.2M GF ongoing in FY 2024-25;
- A proposal for Lanterman Act Provisional Eligibility Ages 3 and 4 for 3-and 4-year-old children who have disabilities which result in significant functional limitations in major life activities but currently do not meet Lanterman Act eligibility criteria";
- Additional resources for individuals who are Deaf; (DDS and regional center funding of \$2.6 million TF, \$1.8 million GF): Spring Finance Letter proposes funding for a DDS position to provide statewide leadership and subject matter expertise on the provision of services and supports for individuals who are deaf and have intellectual or developmental disabilities;

- Funding for 21 regional center deaf services specialists to support the expansion of deaf service resources, provide training and expertise to regional center staff, and coordinate with the Department on statewide efforts.

Procedurally, negotiations will occur within the State Assembly, State Senate and Governor Newsom's office. Compromise will likely emerge before the California Constitutional deadline for passage of the state budget. Aptly, the May Revise is not the final budget, but creates reasonable insight on where the budget might land on key proposals.

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 Concurrent Resolution

ACR-41

On March 8, 2021, Assembly Member Chris Holden introduced an Assembly Concurrent Resolution regarding COVID-19 recognizing Direct Support Professionals. The measure recognizes the skills and dedication of Direct Support Professionals who have faithfully served Californians with developmental disabilities during the COVID-19 health crisis. We are excited about this overdue recognition. Our service providers have protected the health and safety of individuals served and their families, and encouraged their continued development and emotional wellbeing before, during and indeed they will continue to do so after the health crisis is behind us. We value our service providers, and we admire their goodwill immensely (See Attachment N).

May 6, 2021 ARCA Press Release

On May 6th, 2021 ARCA released a statement supporting the need to increase funding to hire additional staff to ensure delivery of core services. The statement draws attention to the positive state budget outlook compared to drastically underfunded Service Coordinator salaries statewide. Creating a call for action for California Lawmakers to update the antiquated core staffing methodology that has fixed Service Coordinator Salaries slightly above \$34,000 annually representing 52 percent of the actual cost. ARCA is asking for 60 million dollars annually to fill the gap need for additional regional center staffing (See Attachment O).

May 16, 2021-ARCA Response to May Revise 2021-22

Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman, Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #1 on Health and Human Services; Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, Chair Assembly Committee on Budget, Subcommittee #1 on Health and Human Services

ARCA expresses support and appreciation for budget proposals creating an end to sunseting service provider rate reductions in the form of Uniformed Holidays, expansion of crisis mobile services, pay differentials for Direct Support Professionals with enhanced credentials, trainings and bilingual skill sets, enhancements to the Paid Internship Programs, investments in Self-Determination, Early Start outreach, service delivery for individuals served that are deaf, and the development of the performance improvement program.

ARCA focuses our attention to the sturdy California budget and the need to not lose sight on the opportunity to begin comprehensive rate reform through meaningful investments in service provider rates (See Attachment P).