



AB 637 Proposal and Notice of Public Meeting

AB 637 –San Andreas Regional Center proposes the ability to negotiate with contracted Speech and Language Vendors and Early Intervention Programs to utilize Speech and Language Pathologists with Required Professional Experience Temporary License (SLP-RPE); and Speech and Language Pathology Assistance (SLPAs), to provide direct speech and language services to the 15-36 month population in their family homes or Natural Environment (NE). As we strive to lessen disparity and increase access to Early Start services for all our families, an appropriate network of service providers is crucial, and the use of certified assistants, supervised in a manner required from their respective board, as described in the California Business and Professions Code, will help ameliorate the challenges of securing services for individuals and families.

Summary

The regional center is unable to use a vendor with SLPA's and SLP-RPE to provide direct speech and language service to the infant and toddler population of 15-36 months. This proposal will provide the regional center the authority and flexibility to provide the required services, when the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) has determined that speech is a required service. SLPA's and SLP-RPEs will be utilized prudently, when a regional center contracted agency's licensed speech therapists are at capacity and are unable to meet the needs of a consumer.

Impact on San Andreas Regional Center individuals served under the proposal

When a child has been determined eligible for early start services, the regional center is required to begin the service within 45 days of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) being signed. For the past year, San Andreas Regional Center has been unable to meet this timeline due to lack of therapists who are ready to serve this population. This has had a very negative impact and has forced San Andreas Regional Center to issue Notices of Action (NOA's), and generate waitlists for children, which is not allowed in early start.

Children who are monolingual are the most affected as the available pool of licensed therapist is short. The average wait for a child to receive speech services is 3-4 months, and for a child who requires speech in Spanish or Vietnamese, the wait time is 6-8 months.

Regulations that will be waived under the proposal

Title 17 Section 54342(a)(75)(A), California Code of Regulations (CCR) (75) Speech Pathology - Service Code 707. A regional center shall classify a vendor as a provider of speech pathology services if the vendor is:

- (A) A speech pathologist who is validly licensed as a speech pathologist by the Speech Pathology and Audiology Examining Committee of the Medical Board of California; and provides: Preventative and corrective therapy for persons with speech or language disorders.*

The Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) recently developed and posted on the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) website a guideline for the use of licensed speech therapy assistants. The ICC strongly supports the use of therapy assistants to meet the needs of children within the Early Start Program. San Andreas Regional Center would utilize those ICC guidelines to ensure that all 805 and 707 vendors meet the Early Start requirements as qualified personnel for the provision of required Early Intervention Services.

The waiving of these requirements under the AB 637 proposal will:

1. Increase availability of qualified and culturally appropriate providers to determine eligibility for Early Start and to provide ongoing specialized therapeutic services.
2. Decrease disparity by increasing the variety and diversity of providers.
3. Increase compliance with state and federal timelines for determining eligibility and for starting of required services
4. Be implemented within our current budget allocation

Regional Center Budgetary Impact

The services have already been factored into our budget, San Andreas Regional Center

This information was made available via our social media sites and posted on the San Andreas Website. A Public Meeting for the comments on this proposal will be held during the San Andreas Regional Center Board of Directors meeting on:

May 18, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.
San Andreas Regional Center
300 Orchard City Drive, Suite 170, Campbell, CA 95008