

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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January 29, 2021

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE 01-012921: CONTACTING CONSUMERS AND PLANNING FOR COVID-19 ACTIVITIES

Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code section 4639.6 authorizes the Director of the Department of Developmental Services (Department) to issue directives to regional centers as the Director deems necessary to protect consumer rights, health, safety, or welfare, or in accordance with W&I Code section 4434. Regional centers must comply with any directive issued by the Director pursuant to this section.

The Department acknowledges the extraordinary and crucial work of regional centers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The actions you have taken and continue to take every day to protect consumers, families and providers and to mitigate risk has contributed to saving lives. Now, with the tremendous increase in positive cases throughout the state, we must remain vigilant and increase our efforts. Consumers and families are in need now more than ever and it is critical that regional centers remain informed, in contact and increase case management activities where necessary. Pursuant to W&I Code section 4639.6, the Department is directing regional centers to take the actions stated in this Directive.

Consumer and Family Contacts

The Department is requiring regional centers to contact each consumer and family it serves within the next 30 days, unless contact has been made since January 1, 2021, and additional contact is not warranted or the consumer or family has expressed an interest in less contact. The purpose of the contact is to inquire about the health, safety and well-being of the consumer and family, and to obtain information regarding testing and vaccinations and any outstanding needs, such as services and supports and personal protective equipment (PPE). Regional centers should plan recurring follow-up contacts and increase contacts on an individual basis unless the consumer, family or authorized representative requests less frequency. For consumers residing in licensed residential facilities, the regional center may contact the home administrator or owner to establish contact with the consumer, or to obtain information, for this purpose. These contacts do not replace quality assurance and other monitoring activities required by law.

Hospital Contacts

The Department is requiring regional centers to establish and maintain contact with hospitals, families, residential service providers, or other caregivers regarding the status of any consumer who is in a hospital as a result of COVID-19. The purpose of the contacts is to obtain information that will assist the regional center in planning for discharges (e.g., identifying placement needs, additional services and support needs, etc.). Regional centers must report to the Department as soon as possible regarding any consumer who may

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potentially need to be discharged to the Fairview Developmental Center or Porterville Developmental Center surge sites and must be prepared to discuss the consumer's status in detail. Enclosed is the Department's December 15, 2020 email with information on referrals to the surge sites.

Testing and Vaccination Plan

Each regional center must develop or include in an existing plan, the regional center's plan for COVID-19 testing and vaccinations. The plan should be brief and must address how the regional center will work with consumers, families, service providers and local entities in these efforts, with particular focus on communication to consumers, families and providers regarding plan implementation. The plan must be submitted to the Department along with information on any tangible issues related to testing and vaccinations within 30 days of the date of this Directive, to DDSC19Directives@dds.ca.gov.

Regional Center Relief

The Department is working with regional centers on statewide prioritization of workload and relief that may be granted to allow regional centers more time to focus on consumer health and safety. The Department may issue additional directives as needed. Individual regional centers may propose or request additional items that would provide relief to that regional center to assist in available resources to comply with this Directive. Proposals and requests should be submitted to DDSC19Directives@dds.ca.gov.

This Directive is effective immediately and remains in effect until further notice. Consumers, family members or providers should contact their local regional center with questions regarding this Directive. Questions from regional centers should be directed to DDSC19Directives@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

NANCY BARGMANN
Director

Enclosure

cc: Regional Center Board Presidents
Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies