



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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J. TYLER McCAULEY  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

October 27, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **HUDSON LYNDSEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Hudson Lyndsey Foster Family Agency (Hudson Lyndsey or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider. The review was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division.

**Background**

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Hudson Lyndsey, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Hudson Lyndsey is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. During our review, Hudson Lyndsey oversaw a total of 20 certified foster homes in which 42 DCFS children were placed. Hudson Lyndsey is located in the Second District.

DCFS pays Hudson Lyndsey a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, Hudson Lyndsey receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these amounts, the Agency pays the foster parents

between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2004-05, DCFS paid Hudson Lyndsey approximately \$886,000.

### **Purpose/Methodology**

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Hudson Lyndsey was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated the Agency's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether Hudson Lyndsey received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed Hudson Lyndsey staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a sample of certified foster homes.

### **Results of Review**

Generally, Hudson Lyndsey provided the services required by the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency meet their expectations and the children indicated that they enjoy living with their foster parents. In addition, Hudson Lyndsey maintained the appropriate staffing levels and their social worker caseloads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Hudson Lyndsey needs to improve their oversight of the foster homes to ensure that foster parents comply with the provisions of Title 22 and the County contract. For example, two children on psychotropic medication did not receive monthly evaluations from their prescribing physicians as required by the County contract. In addition, one of the two children did not have a current court authorization for the psychotropic medication. Subsequently, Hudson Lyndsey obtained the required authorization. Hudson Lyndsey also needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Termination Reports contain all required information and are prepared within the timeframes specified in the County contract.

The details of our review, along with recommendation for corrective action, are attached.

### **Review of Report**

On September 26, 2005, we discussed our report with Hudson Lyndsey who agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Hudson Lyndsey management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations contained in the report. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

Board of Supervisors

October 27, 2005

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We thank Hudson Lyndsey for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, Department of Children and Family Services  
Cynthia Powell, Director, Hudson Lyndsey Foster Family Agency  
Colleen Anderson, Community Care Licensing  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION  
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM  
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006  
HUDSON LYNDSEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

**PROGRAM SERVICES**

**Objective**

To determine whether Hudson Lyndsey Foster Family Agency (Hudson Lyndsey or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

**Verification**

We visited three of the 20 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Hudson Lyndsey billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for in January and February 2005 and interviewed the three foster parents and five children placed in the three homes. We also reviewed the documentation in the case files for the five children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

**Results**

Generally, Hudson Lyndsey provided the services required in the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations and the children indicated that they enjoy living with their foster parents. The foster parents were certified and given appropriate training by Hudson Lyndsey as required by the County contract.

Although Hudson Lyndsey provided most of the services required by the County contract, the Agency needs to improve their oversight of the foster homes to ensure that the foster homes are complying with all the provisions of the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency needs to ensure that all required reports are prepared in a timely manner and contain all information required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. We specifically noted the following:

**Foster Home Visitations**

- For one (33%) of three homes visited, one child's bedroom window was missing a screen. In addition, a large mirror and a television were stored on a child's bedroom balcony. Both items were potential safety hazards.
- For one (33%) of three homes visited, the foster parent indicated that she did not provide between meal snacks to the foster children. The County contract requires

Agencies to monitor to ensure that foster parents provide a balanced diet in sufficient quantities including between meal nourishment or snacks.

### Medical Services

- For two children on psychotropic medication, the children did not receive their monthly evaluations from the prescribing physicians as required by the County contract. In addition, one (50%) of the children did not have a current court authorization for the psychotropic medication. Subsequently, the Agency obtained the required authorization for this child.
- For one (50%) of the two children using psychotropic medication, the Needs and Services Plan and Quarterly Reports did not include clear plans for the duration of psychotropic medication, diagnosis or instructions from the prescribing physician as required by the County contract.

### Children's Records

- Three (60%) of five children's case files did not contain signed copies of the Agency's policies and procedures. The County contract requires Agencies to provide each child a comprehensive overview of the Agency's policies and procedures and have the child or the child's authorized representative sign an acknowledgement of completion and receipt of the policies and procedures orientation.

### Reporting Requirements

- For two (40%) of five children, their Needs and Services Plans were completed over 60 days after the children were placed in the home. The County contract requires that Needs and Services Plans be completed within 30 days of placement.
- For four (100%) of four children whose placement ended during January and February 2005, Hudson Lyndsey did not prepare the children's termination reports. The County contract requires Agencies to prepare and submit a termination report to the child's social worker within 30 days from the date the child's placement was terminated.

Hudson Lyndsey management needs to ensure that staff monitor foster homes to ensure the homes comply with the County contract and Title 22 regulations. Hudson Lyndsey also needs to ensure that children using psychotropic medication receive monthly evaluations from their prescribing physicians and that current court authorizations are maintained in the children's case files. In addition, Hudson Lyndsey needs to ensure that foster children or their authorized representative sign the Agency's policies and procedures at the end of orientation and that Needs and Services Plans and Termination Reports contain all required information and are prepared within the timeframes specified in the County contract.

**Recommendations**

Hudson Lyndsey management:

1. Ensure that foster homes are free of unsafe conditions and that children are provided snacks when appropriate.
2. Ensure that children using psychotropic medication receive monthly evaluations from their prescribing psychiatrists and that current court authorizations are maintained in the children’s case files.
3. Ensure that foster children or their authorized representative sign the Agency’s policies and procedures at the end of their orientation.
4. Ensure that the Needs and Services Plans and Termination Reports contain all required information and are prepared within the timeframes specified in the County contract.

**CLIENT VERIFICATION**

**Objective**

To determine whether the program participants actually received the services that Hudson Lyndsey billed DCFS.

**Verification**

We interviewed five children placed in three certified foster homes and three foster parents to confirm the services Hudson Lyndsey billed to DCFS.

**Results**

The program participants interviewed stated that the services they received from Hudson Lyndsey meet their expectation and their assigned social worker visits them regularly.

**Recommendation**

There are no recommendations for this section.

**STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**

**Objective**

Determine whether Hudson Lyndsey contracted social workers’ case loads do not exceed 15 placements and whether they appropriately signed a written declaration stating their total caseload from all contracting agencies does not exceed 15 placed

children. In addition, determine whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

### **Verification**

We interviewed Hudson Lyndsey's two supervising social workers and six contract social workers and reviewed their personnel files. We also reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for January and February 2005.

### **Results**

The two supervising social workers supervised an average of three social workers. The six contract social workers maintained an average of seven cases from Hudson Lyndsey during the months of January and February 2005. However, Hudson Lyndsey did not obtain a written declaration from their six contract social workers stating their total caseload from all contracting agencies does not exceed 15 placed children. The County contract requires Agencies to obtain signed written declarations from all contract social workers stating that the social workers' total contracted caseload with all contracting agencies does not exceed 15 placed children.

### **Recommendation**

- 5. Hudson Lyndsey management obtain signed written declarations from all contract social workers stating that the social workers' total contracted caseload with all contracting agencies does not exceed 15 placed children.**

## **STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Objective**

Determine whether Hudson Lyndsey's staff meets the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether Hudson Lyndsey conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

### **Verification**

We interviewed Hudson Lyndsey's administrator, supervising social worker and six social workers. In addition, we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

**Results**

Hudson Lyndsey's administrator, supervising social worker and social workers possess the required education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, Hudson Lyndsey completed hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract.

**Recommendation**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

*Hudson Lyndsey Foster Family Agency  
Psych Med, Inc.*

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September 21, 2005

TO: J. Tyler McCauley  
Auditor-Controller

c: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Cynthia Powell Ph.D., FFA Director

Subject: Hudson Lyndsey Foster Family Agency Contract Review

Pursuant to your review, this letter is in response to the audit recommendations stated in your findings. Your review had 5 recommendations for the agency. Listed below is each of those items followed by our corrective action plan.

Recommendations and Responses:

1. Ensure that foster homes are free of unsafe conditions and that children are provided snacks when appropriate.

Corrective Action Plan: Social Worker verified the large mirror and television were removed from the bedroom balcony. Regarding this same home the agency social worker addressed the snack issue with the foster parent and the agency will monitor that snacks are provided in this home.

2. Ensure that children using psychotropic medication receive monthly evaluations from their prescribing psychiatrists and that current court authorizations are maintained in the children's case files.

Corrective Action Plan: Monthly evaluations for clients on psychotropic medication is our practice and we will ensure that our agency social worker's monitor the foster parents for compliance by using a log that records the frequency of the medication taken as well as the dosage and the time it is taken. The form is kept in the child's file and reviewed by the social worker at the time of their visit.

The current procedure does not allow us the control (as it did in the past) of when the doctor submits the paperwork to the court. We will make continual efforts as we have in the past to encourage the doctor to submit documents for court approval in a more timely fashion.

3. Ensure that foster children or their authorized representative sign the Agency's policies and procedures at the end of their orientation.

Corrective Action Plan: It is our policy to have documents signed upon placement when minors are too young to sign the documents we send the form to their DCFS worker and ask them to sign and return the document in a timely manner. We will have proof of mailing the document to DCFS in client's chart.

4. Ensure that the Needs Services Plans and Termination Reports contain all required information and are prepared within timeframes specified in the County contract.

Corrective Action Plan: The practice of having the Needs Services Plans and Termination Reports contain all required information and are prepared within the timeframes has been implemented.

5. Hudson Lyndsey management obtain signed written declarations from all contract social workers stating that the social worker's total contracted caseload with all contracting agencies does not exceed 15 placed children.

Corrective Action Plan: This document was developed and signed by all social workers during the time of the audit.

We appreciate the staff of the Auditor Controller on this review who were positive in their approach and helpful to us in maintaining a high quality of service to the children and families we serve.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Powell Ph.D.  
FFA Director