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August 5, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

MARYVALE GROUP HOME QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Maryvale Group Home (the Group Home) in August 2015. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 12 and has one site located in the First Supervisorial District. The Group Home provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children and Probation youth. According to the Group Home's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to create a healthy, therapeutic milieu in which each individual child is able to grow physically, emotionally, educationally and spiritually."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency, and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the Group Home's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In December 2015, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer discussed the results of the QAR with the Group Home. The Group Home did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), as the Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas of the QAR.

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:KR
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Attachment

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
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MARYVALE GROUP HOME
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Maryvale Group Home (the Group Home) in August 2015. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the Group Home's service delivery and to ensure that the Group Home is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the Group Home's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs) and three Group Home staff members.

At the time of the QAR, the Group Home served 39 DCFS placed children and three Probation youth. The focus children's average number of placements was eight, their overall average length of placement was 15 months and their average age was 17. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The Group Home received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the Group Home staff, caregivers, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	5 - Good Status	The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, Group Home staff and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.
Placement Stability - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	5 - Good Stability	The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 30 days.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Visitation - The degree to which the Group Home staff support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	5 - Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation and Connections	Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the Group Home staff working with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	5 - Good Engagement Efforts	To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable) and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent efforts are being used.
Service Needs - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5 - Good Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is frequently updated.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	5 - Good Teamwork	The team contains most of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a good, dependable working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5 - Good Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the Group Home in September 2014, and noted opportunities for improvement in the areas of Safety and Teamwork. In January 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR. Based on the information below, it appears that the Group Home showed improvements in the areas of Safety and Teamwork on their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	5	5

In the area of Safety, the OHCMD found that the Group Home implemented their 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to enhance safety to placed children. Specifically, the Group Home addressed special incidents and decreased runaway incidents by establishing a new procedure requiring a second level of review of special incidents. Due to the new procedure, special incidents are now being reported timely and accurately. As for decreasing runaway incidents, the Group Home developed Runaway Debrief Guidelines to assist staff with discussing the underlying reasons why placed children runaway, as well as to prevent future incidents. The Group Home provides their staff with ongoing trainings addressing Group Home protocols and procedures to ensure adherence. The focus children stated that the Group Home staff make them feel safe and comfortable in the Group Home. The DCFS CSWs reported that there were no safety concerns regarding the Group Home.

In the areas of Permanency, Placement Stability, and Visitation, the Group Home continues to provide a good quality of services and stability to the focus children. The Group Home continues to provide family therapy, individual counseling services, and invites the placed children's family to attend Group Home's events. Two of the focus children are receiving Planned Permanent Living Arrangement services. The Group Home referred these two focus children to their Life Program to prepare them for independence and self-sufficiency. One of the focus children reported that she has a bank account, California Identification card, and she also knows how to write a personal check. Another focus child reported that the Group Home staff encourage her to attend school to improve her grades and her coping skills. The third focus child is receiving Family Reunification services and the Group Home staff utilize the restorative approach to assist her to focus on building a more positive relationship with her mother. The focus child reported that the Group Home assists her with reunification services by providing her individual and family therapy in order for her to improve her relation with her mother. When the permanency goal is Family Reunification, the Group Home staff will monitor visits and transport the focus children's family members to the Group Home to facilitate visitation. The Group Home refers placed children that do not have family visits or connections with a significant person to the Group Home's mentor coordinator to identify a mentor or a special friend.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	4	5
2015-2016 Scores	5	5	5	5	5

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment, the Group Home continues to maintain regular contact with the DCFS CSWs and also contacts the family members of the focus children to attend Group Home events and support groups. The Group Home provides support and mental health services to assist the focus children in making progress towards their case plan goals. Specifically, the placed children receive therapeutic services, behavior modification, social support, crisis intervention, vocational support, and social skills building to assist them in achieving their case plan goals. The focus children stated that they were satisfied with the services provided by the Group Home. The focus children receive tutoring services to assist them in making academic improvement. The focus children also participate in extracurricular activities. One focus child reported that she participated in a six-week horse camp program. Another focus child reported that she was enrolled in piano lessons and participated in the Group Home's volleyball team. The third focus child reported that she was enrolled in dance classes.

The Group Home generally understood the focus children's functioning and support systems. The Group Home staff and focus children meet on a weekly basis to discuss the focus children's case plan goals to ensure that all services provided to them are meeting their needs and that they are making progress toward their goals. The Group Home continues to utilize their communication log to track the focus children's behaviors and well-being in the Group Home. This log is also used to share the focus children's information with other Group Home staff. The Group Home therapist continues to monitor and track the focus children's status daily to ensure that the focus children are progressing towards their case plan goals.

In the area of Teamwork, the OHCMD found that the Group Home implemented their 2014-2015 QIP by putting into place an internal Multidisciplinary Mental Health Treatment Team approach wherein, they review the focus children's needs and services and make an evaluation to provide integrated treatment for the focus children and their family/NREFMs. All team members are contacted by the Group Home Social Workers within the first week of placement and are invited to attend the first team meeting. DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home invites them to attend team meetings to discuss and address the mental health needs of the focus children.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In December 2015, the OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the area of Facility and Environment. Technical support was provided on how the Group Home can ensure the proper storage of refrigerated food.

In December 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas; therefore a QIP was not required. However, the OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation as needed.