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June 7, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

**SAN GABRIEL CHILDREN'S CENTER 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 San Gabriel Children's Center Group Home (the Group Home) in September 2015. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 14 and has three sites 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 develop the strengths within each child by providing a safe nurturing and appropriately challenging environment for behavioral and emotional growth."

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 March 2016, OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home and discussed the results of the QAR. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas; therefore, the Group Home was not required to submit a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

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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Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
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Calvin C. Remington, Interim Probation Chief
Porfirio Rincon, President & CEO, San Gabriel Children's Center Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**SAN GABRIEL CHILDREN'S CENTER GROUP HOME**
**QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW**
**FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of San Gabriel Children's Center Group Home (the Group Home) in September 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, two Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs), one Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Worker (CSW), three Group Home staff members and two service providers.

At the time of the QAR, the Group Home served 15 DCFS placed children and 6 Probation placed youth. The focus children's average number of placements was nine, their overall average length of placement was three months and their average age was 15. 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 | 6 - Optimal Maintenance of Visitation and Connections | Fully effective connections are being excellently maintained 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 | 6 - Optimal Engagement Efforts | To an optimal 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 excellent 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 | 6 - Optimal Supports and Services | An excellent array of supports and services fully matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are substantially 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 | 6 - Optimal Assessment and Understanding | The focus children's functioning and support systems are comprehensively understood. Knowledge necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is continuously 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 | 6 - Optimal Teamwork | The team contains all of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed an excellent, consistent 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 | 6 - Optimal Tracking and Adjustment Process | Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are highly responsive and appropriate to changing conditions. Continuous monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring. |

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the Group Home in November 2014. The Group Home did not require a Quality Improvement Plan, as the Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all focus areas of the QAR. In May 2015, 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 continued to score at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas on their 2015-2016 QAR.

**STATUS INDICATORS**
*(Measured over last 30 days)*

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

In the area of Safety, the Group Home continues to provide a highly safe living environment for the focus children. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 14 placement and provides services to severely emotionally disturbed children that present with a history of behaviors that may cause harm to self or others. To ensure the safety of placed children, the Group Home conducts a thorough intake assessment prior to placement which allows the staff to tailor support and services to meet the needs of placed children. The Group Home staff are also trained in supervision, emergency intervention and other essential topics on a monthly basis. The Group Home staff continues to provide supervision at all times to the placed children. The Group Home staff and assigned clinicians are always available to ensure child safety. When a placed child is considered to be a danger to themselves or others, containment is utilized as a safety method and a Group Home clinician completes a mental health assessment and a safety plan is developed for the placed child.

In the areas of Permanency and Placement Stability, the Group Home continues to provide good quality of services and stability for the focus children. The Group Home assists the focus children in reaching their permanency goals by providing effective counseling services and family therapy when the permanency goal is Family Reunification. The Group Home supports the focus children in reaching their permanency goals for Planned Permanent Living Arrangement by preparing placed children for independence and transitional housing by providing Independent Living Classes, hands-on trainings and linking the placed children to employment assistance agencies in the community. The focus children have established positive relationships with key adult supporters such as the Group Home staff and Group Home therapist. The focus children stated that they were stable in their placements due to the relationships they have built with the Group Home staff and the services they were receiving.

In the area of Visitation, OHCMD found that the Group Home has increased the quality of services provided to the placed children by either the Group Home house manager and/or therapist facilitating the family visits. The Group Home staff transport the placed children to the halfway point between the Group Home and family members' residence to ensure that visits occur. If the family members do not have transportation, the Group Home transports the placed children to the family's residence. When family visits do not occur, the Group

Home house manager and/or therapist call the family members on a weekly basis to encourage visitation. DCFS CSWs, DPOs and focus children state that the Group Home is supportive and works toward maintaining family ties for the focus children. In particular, the Group Home staff make efforts to contact family members to discuss the focus children's progress, schedule family therapy sessions, schedule visitation and to encourage their participation in the monthly treatment meetings. Due to the Group Home's efforts, most placed children have family members actively participating in family therapy sessions and monthly treatment meetings.

**PRACTICE INDICATORS**
*(Measured over last 90 days)*

| Practice Indicators | Engagement | Service Needs | Assessment & Linkages | Teamwork | Tracking & Adjustment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2014-2015 Scores** | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| **2015-2016 Scores** | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages and Teamwork, the Group Home continues to maintain optimal standards to engage the focus children and their key supporters and service providers in the decision-making process regarding treatment goals, intervention strategies and services being provided to the focus children. The Group Home continues to provide the needed services, specifically intense mental health treatment for the focus children. The Group Home facility managers and the Group Home therapists assess the focus children's status on a daily basis. On a monthly basis, the Group Home invites the Group Home staff service providers, DCFS CSW or DPO, the focus children and their family members to participate in team meetings. The team meetings generally include most of the team members. The Group Home also makes teleconference available when a key supporter is not able to attend the monthly treatment meeting in person. Together, the team members discuss the focus child's growth, needs, interventions, visitation, case planning and permanency plan. The DCFS CSW and DPOs continue to report that the Group Home maintains regular contact with them in regard to the progress and adjustment of the focus children's treatment plan.

In the area of Tracking & Adjustment, OHCMD found that the Group Home has increased the quality of services to the placed children. Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are highly responsive and appropriate to changing conditions. The Group Home staff track all adjustments and progress through their daily notes, clinical/psychiatric notes, monthly team treatment meetings, Special Incident Reports and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs). When appropriate, modifications are made to the treatment plan goals. The team as a whole agrees to modifications to interventions, services and treatment plan goals. Also, as needed, modifications are made by the Group Home site managers to address the placed children's presenting behaviors, such as developing a safety plan to maintain the safety of all placed children.

## NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In September 2015, OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirement and Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery. Specifically, technical support was provided on how the Group Home can ensure that special incidents are reported timely, NSPs are developed timely and DCFS CSWs' or DPOs' signatures are obtained timely for the authorization of the NSPs.

In March 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR. The Group Home met the minimum acceptable score in all areas; therefore, a QIP is not required. The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training and consultation, as needed.