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September 11, 2008

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

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Acting Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **ROSEMARY CHILDREN'S SERVICES CONTRACT REVIEW - A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY SERVICE PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Rosemary Children's Services (Rosemary or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency (FFA) service provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with Rosemary, 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.

Rosemary is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of 40 certified foster homes in which 108 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Rosemary's FFA headquarters is in the Fifth District.

DCFS paid Rosemary a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on the child's age, Rosemary received between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency paid the foster parents between $624 and

$790 per month, per child and a total of approximately $1,935,000 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Rosemary was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed the Agency's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from Rosemary generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, the five foster homes we visited were well maintained and in compliance with CDSS Title 22 safety regulations.

Rosemary needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans (NSPs), Quarterly Reports, case files, and staff are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

- Six of the nine children taking psychotropic medication did not have monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician documented in the children's case files.
- Three of the 12 case files reviewed indicated that the children could benefit from receiving tutoring. However, the case files did not contain documentation that the Agency attempted to arrange tutoring services.
- Three of the 12 NSPs reviewed were not individualized to the children.
- Three of the 12 NSPs reviewed were not approved by the DCFS social worker.
- Ten of the 12 Quarterly Reports reviewed did not include a specific assessment of the children's unmet needs and efforts made to meet those needs.
- Three Agency social workers carried more cases than allowed by CDSS Title 22 regulations.
- One supervising social worker did not possess the work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

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

Review of Report

On May 13, 2008, we discussed our report with Rosemary's management who was in general agreement with the findings. In their attached response, Rosemary management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Rosemary 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.

WLW:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Karen Drew, Chairperson, Rosemary Children's Services, Board of Directors
Greg H. Wessels, Executive Director, Rosemary Children's Services FFA
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
ROSEMARY CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Rosemary Children's Services Foster Family Agency (Rosemary or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited five of the 40 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Rosemary billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in March and April 2007. We also interviewed six of the nine foster parents and 11 of the 16 foster children placed in the five homes. In addition, we reviewed the case files for nine foster parents and twelve children and reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The five foster homes we visited were well maintained and in compliance with CDSS Title 22 safety regulations. In addition, the foster parents stated that the services they received from Rosemary generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

Rosemary needs to ensure that children taking psychotropic medication are seen monthly by their prescribing physician. Rosemary also needs to ensure that case files, Needs and Services Plans (NSPs), and Quarterly Reports contain all the required information. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Parent Certification

- Two (40%) of five foster parent pre-certification health screenings were not conducted within the timeframes specified in the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The two pre-certification health screenings were conducted nine months and 37 months late, respectively.

Medical Services

- Six (67%) of the nine children taking psychotropic medication did not have monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician documented in the children's case files as required by the County contract.

Children's Case Files

- Three (25%) of the 12 case files reviewed indicated the children could benefit from receiving tutoring. However, the case files did not contain documentation that the Agency attempted to arrange tutoring services to improve the children's basic skills as required by the County contract.

- Five (42%) of the 12 case files did not contain documentation of the Agency's efforts to implement the children's permanency plan as required by the County contract.

Needs and Service Plans and Quarterly Reports

- Three (25%) of 12 NSPs reviewed were not individualized to the children as required. The three NSPs contained almost identical goals/objectives for the children.

- Three (25%) of 12 NSPs reviewed were not approved by the DCFS social worker as required. For the remaining nine that were approved, seven were approved between two to five months after the NSPs had been implemented.

Our prior audit review also noted that Rosemary did not always ensure that NSPs contained all the required information and were approved by the children's DCFS social worker.

- Ten (83%) of 12 Quarterly Reports reviewed did not include a specific assessment of the children's unmet needs and efforts made to meet those needs.

Recommendations

Rosemary management ensure:

1. **Foster parent pre-certification health screenings are conducted within the timeframes specified in the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

2. **Children taking psychotropic medication are seen monthly by their prescribing physician.**

3. **Tutoring services are arranged to improve children's basic skills when necessary.**

4. **Efforts to implement children's permanency plans are made and documented.**

5. **NSPs are individualized to the children and are approved by the children's DCFS social worker.**

6. **Quarterly Reports include assessments of the children's unmet needs and efforts made to meet those needs.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Rosemary billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed 11 children placed in five Rosemary certified foster homes and interviewed six foster parents to confirm the services Rosemary billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Rosemary social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and 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 Rosemary's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

The Agency's three supervising social workers supervised an average of three social workers. However, three of Rosemary's social workers carried more than 15 cases during one of the two months reviewed. The three social workers carried an average caseload of 19 cases during this month. In addition, 12 children were not assigned a permanent social worker.

Recommendations

Rosemary management ensure:

7. **Social workers do not maintain more cases than allowed by CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

8. **Children are assigned a permanent social worker.**

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

Objective

Determine whether Rosemary staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training and performance evaluations to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Rosemary's administrator and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

Rosemary's administrator and social workers possessed the education and work experience required. In addition, Rosemary conducted the required hiring clearances and provided annual performance evaluations for staff working on the County contract. However, one (34%) of the three supervising social workers did not possess the work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Recommendation

9. **Rosemary management ensure that staff working on the County contract possess the work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Objective

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior monitoring review completed by the Auditor-Controller.

Verification

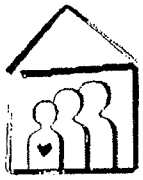
We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on October 27, 2005.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained four outstanding recommendations. Rosemary fully implemented three of the four recommendations. As indicated earlier, Rosemary did not always ensure that NSPs were individualized to the children and were approved by the children's DCFS social worker (Recommendation 5). Rosemary management indicated they implemented the prior recommendation in August 2007.

Recommendation

10. Rosemary management implement the outstanding recommendation from the prior monitoring report.



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May 27, 2008

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

From: Erin Ellis, Foster Care Director, Rosemary Children's Services FFA

Subject: Rosemary Children's Services Contract Review-A Department of Children and Family Services Foster Family Agency Service Provider

The following is Rosemary Children's Services (RCS) FFA's response to each recommendation outlined in the Auditor-Controller's review:

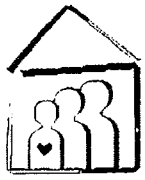
Billed Services

1) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Foster parent pre-certification health screenings are conducted within timeframes specified in the County and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

RCS Response: The current policy for RCS is that all pre-certification health screenings must be done within the year prior to the certification date. If it takes over a year to certify a family then all of the paperwork that is over a year old must be redone. Of the two families cited in the A-C report, one of the families had the initial screening prior to their certification in 1996. However, the paperwork had been lost, and thus they redid their health screening 3 years later in 1999. RCS has a policy as of February 1, 2008 is that all certified foster parents are required to get annual physicals as part of their recertification. The Foster Care Director will not approve a new family's certification if the pre-certification health screening is over one year old.

2) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Children taking psychotropic medication are seen monthly by their prescribing physician.

RCS Response: It is RCS policy for the foster parents to take all foster children who are on psychotropic medication to their monthly psychiatric appointments. It is the assigned Foster Care Social Worker's (FCSW) responsibility to collect the documentation verifying these appointments occurred from the foster parents, and also to ensure that it is filed in the foster child's file. If the foster parent is unable to take the foster child to the appointment then it is the FCSW's responsibility to transport the child to the psychiatrist. This was reviewed with the RCS staff during the All Staff Meeting on September 19, 2007 and also at the meeting on January 22, 2008. In order to further ensure that the documentation of the monthly psychiatric appointments is obtained the Supervising Foster Care Social Workers (SFCSW) maintain a list of the current foster children on psychotropic



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medication for their respective office. The SFCSWs collect the documentation of these children's monthly psychiatric appointments from the FCSWs prior to filing.

3) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Tutoring services are arranged to improve children's basic skills when necessary.

RCS Response: RCS feels that the foster children's education is of the utmost importance. Our foster parents and FCSWs attend parent-teacher conferences, SSTs, and IEPs. If a foster child is struggling with any subject in school they are referred for tutoring services either through their school, if available, or through outside sources. As of February 7, 2007 the contact note template that the FCSWs use for their weekly home visits includes a section regarding if the child is receiving tutoring, and also what the dates of the tutoring were for the last week. If the foster child needs tutoring but is not currently receiving it, then it is the FCSWs responsibility to arrange the tutoring for the foster child to help ensure their school success. At the All Staff meeting on May 24, 2007 the staff was retrained on the importance of securing tutoring in cases where the child's academics are below grade level. This information is also included in the foster child's NSP/Quarterly Report.

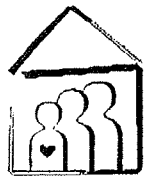
4) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Efforts to implement children's permanency plans are made and documented.

RCS Response: The foster children's permanency plans, and efforts to implement those plans are required to be included as part of the Los Angeles County Needs and Services Plan/Quarterly Report template which RCS has been using since March 19, 2007. During the All Staff Meeting on February 21, 2008 the FCSWs were retrained on the Needs and Services Plan/Quarterly Report. It was emphasized that all areas of the report must be complete and accurate. Since that date that the Supervising Foster Care Social Worker (SFCSW) will not sign off on a report unless all areas of the report are complete, including the efforts to implement the foster child's permanency plan.

5) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** NSPs are individualized to the children and are approved by the children's DCFS social worker.

RCS Response: The FCSWs have received training that emphasized the importance of individualizing Needs and Services Plans for each foster child. The FCSWs were taught that each foster child should have goals which are specific to their individual needs and should include measurable short and long term goals. Also the SFCSWs will not sign off on a report until all the sections are completed thoroughly, which includes reporting outcome goals and developing measurable, individualized goals.

Once the NSP/Quarterly Report has been approved by the SFCSW it is mailed to the assigned County Social Worker (CSW) for approval. If the report is not



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signed and returned by the County Social Worker within two weeks, then the FCSW contacts the CSW. If after another two weeks the CSW still has not returned the approved NSP then the Supervising County Social Worker is contacted. Each attempt to obtain the approved NSP is documented on the Needs and Services Plan Log in the foster child's file. The NSP/Quarterly Report and the documentation of attempts to obtain approval of the NSP will also be reviewed again during the FFA All Staff training on June 10, 2008 by the Quality Improvement Director.

6) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Quarterly Reports include assessments of the children's unmet needs and efforts to meet those needs.

RCS Response: The Foster Care Director and the SFCSWs trained all staff on the NSP/Quarterly Report and emphasized the importance of the reports being thorough and specific to each foster child's unmet needs and efforts/progress towards meeting those needs. The FCSWs were trained to gather information from everyone involved in the foster child's life (i.e. therapists, psychiatrists, teachers, mentors, etc.) and include this information in the report in order to accurately show the foster child's progress. As mentioned earlier, the SFCSWs will not sign off on a report until all the sections are completed thoroughly, which includes specifying issues and discussing progress. This will also be reviewed again during the FFA All Staff training on June 10, 2008 by the Quality Improvement Director.

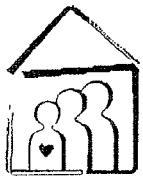
Staffing/Caseload Levels

7) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Social Workers do not maintain more cases than allowed by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

RCS Response: RCS understands that Title 22 regulations state that the foster child to Foster Care Social Worker ratio is 15 to 1. RCS usually maintains this ratio at all times. At the time of the A-C review RCS had just lost several staff members in a short period of time, and had not yet been successful in hiring new workers; thus some FCSWs carried additional cases for a temporary period of time. RCS consistently advertises and interviews in order to be prepared to hire new FCSWs whenever necessary. This includes staff unexpectedly leaving, and increases in the FFA population.

8) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Children are assigned a permanent. social worker.

RCS Response: As mentioned earlier at the time of the A-C review several staff members had just left RCS in a short period of time leading to a shortage of FCSWs. Currently, RCS ensures that all foster children are assigned a FCSW at placement, and we have safeguards in place if a FCSW



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unexpectedly leaves the agency or the FFA population increases quickly. For example, if necessary the Foster Care Director will supervise FCSWs, so that the SFCSW could be assigned foster child cases.

Staffing Qualifications

9) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Rosemary management ensure that staff working on the County contract possess the work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

RCS Response: RCS follows Title 22 regulations in regards to hiring new staff and promoting staff. If a prospective employee or current employee does not meet all of the requirements then an exception is applied for through Community Care Licensing (CCL). RCS waits until the exception is approved or denied prior to making a job offer or promoting staff. At the time of the A-C review one employee did not have the required two years foster care/adoption experience prior to being promoted to her position, and no exception was found on file. Since the review an exception was requested from Community Care Licensing, and the employee now has the required experience.

Prior Year Follow-Up

10) **Auditor-Controller Recommendation:** Rosemary management implement the outstanding recommendation from the prior monitoring report.

RCS Response: The recommendation number 3 from the 2005 A-C report has been implemented. Please refer to response number 5 in this report.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (626) 533-9802.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Ellis, MA

Erin Ellis, MA
Foster Care Director