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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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February 9, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

FUTURO INFANTIL HISPANO FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY 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 Futuro Infantil Hispano Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in January 2015. The FFA has two licensed offices, one located in the First Supervisorial District and another in San Bernardino County. The offices provide services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS foster children and youth. According to the FFA's program statement, its stated mission is, "The primary purpose of the foster family agency is to achieve the placement agency's overall goals of safety, permanency and well-being. The primary goals of the FFA program are: to ensure children are provided with a safe and healthful living environment; a continuity of care, nurturance and services that will meet their individualized problems, needs and situation; to work with their families to achieve reunification; or to achieve other designated legal permanency plans such as adoption, legal guardianship or a permanent planned living arrangement for children when family reunification is not possible."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in 8 of 9 focus areas: Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment. OHCMD noted opportunities for improved performance in the focus area of Safety.

The FFA provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing the recommendations noted in this report. In November 2015, OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in the area of Safety.

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

PLB:EM:KR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Oma Velasco-Rodriguez, Executive Officer, Futuro Infantil Hispano FFA
Lajuanna Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

FUTURO INFANTIL HISPANO FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Futuro Infantil Hispano Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in January 2015. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA 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 reviewer focuses on the child's functioning during the most recent 30 day period and for Practice Indicators, the reviewer focuses on the FFA'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), three certified foster parents, two FFA social workers, and one FFA administrator.

At the time of the QAR, the focus children's average number of placements was two, their overall average length of placement was five months and their average age was ten. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The FFA 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 FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the FFA ensures that the child is free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	5	**Good Safety Status** - The focus children are generally and substantially avoiding behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or the community and are generally free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or intimidation in placement.
Permanency - The degree to which the child is living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the child reaches adulthood, or the child is in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the child, the FFA staff, caregivers and CSW, support the plan.	5	5	**Good Status** – The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the children, FFA staff, caregivers, caseworker, and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA ensures that the child's daily living, learning, and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions and known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruption.	5	5	**Good Stability** - The focus children have optimal stability in placement settings and enjoy positive and enduring relationships with primary caregivers, key adult supporters, and peers.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff support important connections being maintained through appropriate visitation.	5	6	**Optimal Maintenance of Visitation & Connections** - Fully effective connections are being excellently maintained for all significant family/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff working with the child, biological family, extended family and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to focus on the child's strengths and needs.	5	6	**Optimal Engagement Efforts** - To an optimal degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSW, certified foster parents and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that excellent efforts are being used by the FFA staff as necessary to find and engage the focus children, caregivers and other key people.
Service Needs - The degree to which the FFA staff involved with the child, work toward ensuring the child's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the child's unique needs.	5	6	**Optimal Supports & Services** - An excellent array of supports and services fully matches intervention strategies identified in the case plan. The services are substantially helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff involved with the child and family understand the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and underlying issues and services are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5	**Good Assessment and Understanding** - The focus children are functioning and support systems are generally understood. Knowledge necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs, and preferences is frequently updated. Present strengths, risks, and underlying needs requiring intervention or supports are recognized and well understood.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the child and family have formed a working team that meets, talks, and makes plans together.	5	6	**Optimal Teamwork** - The team contains all of the important supporters and decision makers in the focus children's life, including informal supports. The team has formed an excellent, consistent working system that meets, talks, and plans together.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the FFA staff who is involved with the child and family is carefully tracking the progress that the child is 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 ongoing monitoring, tracking, and communication of the children's status and service results to them are occurring. Timely and smart adjustments are being made.

STATUS INDICATORS

(Measured over last 30 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Permanency (5 Good Status)

Permanency Overview: The FFA is providing good permanence for the focus children. The FFA works with the focus children, their certified foster parents, and their DCFS CSWs to assist in the development and determination of the most appropriate permanent plan for the focus children. All three certified foster homes provide a family setting for the focus children resulting in the focus children feeling a sense of belonging. The FFA and the certified foster parents are supportive of the relationships the focus children have with their family members. The certified foster parents for each of the focus children stated that they are willing to continue caring for the focus children as long as needed.

The permanency plan for the first and second focus child is family reunification and their concurrent plan is adoption. The certified foster parents for the focus children stated that they discuss the permanency plan with the focus children. They take the time to reassure them that their placement in out-of-home care is temporary and that they are working with the FFA social worker and DCFS CSW to comply with their family reunification plan. The FFA stated that this discussion is important especially if the placed children are very young because their sense of time has not been fully developed.

The permanency plan for the third focus child is Permanent Planned Living Arrangement with a concurrent plan of adoption. The focus child informed her DCFS CSW that she does not want to reunify with her adoptive mother. The focus child also stated that she is not interested in being adopted since her first adoption failed. The focus child reported that she likes living with her certified foster mother and wants to remain with her.

The DCFS CSWs stated that they provide the FFA social workers with the most recent court reports of the focus children so everyone is aware of the permanent plans and visitation orders.

Placement Stability (5 Good Stability)

Placement Stability Overview: The FFA provided good stability for the focus children. The focus children's placements have been stable with no disruptions in the last 30 days. The FFA intake worker engages the DCFS CSWs in a discussion to assess each child's needs prior to placement to ensure a good match with the certified foster parents. One of the strategies utilized by the FFA to enhance the stability of placed children is early clinical intervention. The FFA's clinical intervention services are designed to address issues between the certified foster parents, focus children, biological parents, and DCFS CSWs in order to resolve potential placement issues. The FFA social workers also have weekly family team meetings with their certified foster parents. The FFA administrator stated these meetings are therapeutic and allows the FFA social worker to address potential concerns that have been raised by certified foster parents or placed children. In addition, the FFA provides the certified foster parents with support groups and ongoing training to assist them in aiding the focus children to adjust to the placement.

The first focus child stated that she feels that she is a part of her certified foster parent's family. She stated that she liked being able to live with her two siblings. Her certified foster parents stated that the focus child and her siblings are nice children and they are a pleasure to care for. The DCFS CSW stated the placement has been a good match for the focus child and her siblings because their certified foster parents treat the focus child and her siblings like grandchildren. The focus child refers to her certified foster parents as "grandparents".

The second focus child stated that his relationship with his certified foster parent is good and that he gets along well with his certified foster parent's son. The certified foster parents stated that things are going well with the placement and that the focus child is feeling like a part of their family. The FFA social worker stated that the placement is stable. The DCFS CSW stated that this was a great foster home for the focus child in that they accepted the focus child in spite of his family's history.

The third focus child reported that her certified foster home is peaceful and she feels that it offers her and her sister, who also resides in the home, a new start in life. The certified foster parents stated the focus child is quiet and gets along well with her sister. The FFA social worker stated the placement is stable and they are continuing to provide clinical intervention services as needed to address disclosures of prior maltreatment reported by the focus child. The DCFS CSW stated this placement has been a good home for the focus child and her sister and they have expressed that they trust their certified foster parent.

Visitation (6 Optimal Maintenance of Visitation & Connections)

Visitation Overview: The FFA has established and maintained excellent family connections for the focus children. The certified foster parents transport the focus children to their weekly visits. The FFA and certified foster parents encourage the focus children to maintain regular contact with their families. The FFA social workers or the certified foster parents monitor the visits as needed. The FFA ensures that the arranged visits are convenient for the birth family and Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs). The FFA also makes certain that family visitation is occurring regularly for the focus children. All three focus children have weekly visits with their family members and/or

NREFMs. If the focus children do not wish to have visitation, the FFA, certified foster parents and DCFS CSWs encourage and support the focus children in maintaining connections with their family members and NREFMs. The FFA follows the court ordered visitation plans and engages in discussions of the focus children's visitation plan with DCFS CSWs, focus children, and certified foster parents on a regular basis. The FFA keeps logs regarding visitation, and if visits are missed, the visits are rescheduled in a timely manner. The DCFS CSWs and foster parents indicated that the FFA makes great efforts to ensure the focus children's visits are successful.

The first focus child stated she looks forward to the visits with her mother. Her certified foster parents provide transportation for the focus child and her siblings weekly for their monitored visits. The certified foster parents and the FFA social worker stated that the focus child reported that the visits are good with her mother and that she and her siblings have fun together.

The second focus child stated that he enjoys the visits with his parents and sister who resides in another certified foster home within the FFA. His certified foster parents transport the focus child and his brother to their bi-weekly monitored visits. The certified foster parents monitor the visits and stated that the visits did not go well in the beginning but after informing the FFA social worker of the issue, things have been worked out. The FFA social workers stated that the visits are occurring without incident. The focus child stated that he and his sibling like the visits with his parents and sister.

The third focus child and her sister reside in the same certified foster home. She also has two siblings who reside together in another certified foster home within the FFA. The focus child and her siblings had two visits with their adoptive mother and requested that the visits be stopped. The FFA social worker informed the focus child's DCFS CSW and she ordered the visits stopped per the focus child's request. The focus child and her siblings have requested that they no longer have contact with their adoptive mother. The focus child and her siblings now have monitored weekly visits with their former babysitter. The certified foster parent transports the focus child and her sibling for the visits. The focus child stated that she and all of her siblings enjoy visits with their former babysitter.

The DCFS CSWs reported that the certified foster parents are very committed and work collaboratively when it comes to ensuring the focus children's visits take place. The FFA social worker stated that the certified foster parents coordinate transportation to ensure the focus children and their siblings who reside in separate certified foster homes, have weekly visits with each other.

What's Not Working Now and Why (Score/Narrative of Opportunities for Improvement)

Safety (5 Good Safety Status)

Safety Overview: The FFA's safety status was good for the focus children. The focus children reported feeling safe at all times while in their current certified foster homes. The focus children are free from harm in their placements and other daily settings, including at school and in the community.

None of the focus children reported any safety concerns in their certified foster home. The first and second focus child shared that they are a part of their certified foster parent's families. The third focus child stated that her certified foster home was a safe place for her and her sister to live.

All three certified foster parents stated the FFA stresses safety first and provides ongoing training. The certified foster parents also stated the FFA social workers reminds them at each home visit that the FFA will provide clinical interventions for any issues they feel they need assistance with.

The DCFS CSWs reported no concerns regarding the focus children's safety in their certified foster homes. Based on the QAR, the protective strategies used by the FFA were adequate in reducing risks of harm to focus children.

Although protective strategies were in place for the focus children, the FFA submitted 14 Special Incident Reports (SIRs) via the I-Track database in the last 30 days. None of the SIRs were related to the focus children. However, there were two SIRs that posed an immediate child safety risk. The first incident involved assaultive behavior, child to child; a young child hitting his sibling. The FFA social workers took the appropriate action and discussed alternatives to engaging in aggressive behavior towards others with the placed child involved. The FFA social worker also discussed with the certified foster parents methods for preventing children from harming themselves or others. The second incident that posed an imminent child safety concern involved a child placed in respite care where the certified foster mother's daughter engaged in smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol in the presence of the placed child. The FFA removed the placed child and the home was placed on an Indefinite Hold. The FFA decertified the certified foster parent for lack of supervision.

The Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section (OHCIS) reported that there were three referrals of physical abuse for the FFA during the last 30 days. Two referrals were closed as unfounded. The third referral was closed as inconclusive. The FFA submitted a Corrective Action Plan to OHCIS for the three referrals.

PRACTICE INDICATORS

(Measured over last 90 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Engagement (6 Good Engagement Efforts)

Engagement Overview: The FFA makes consistent and good efforts to engage the focus children and the key people in decisions that are being made for the focus children. The FFA social workers have team meetings during their visits to the certified foster homes with the focus children, certified foster parents, clinical consultant, and at times with the DCFS CSWs. The FFAs clinical consultant has an important role in the engagement process and in supporting the FFA social workers in a number of ways such as case consultation; mediating team meetings with placed children, biological parents, FFA social workers, and DCFS CSWs.

The DCFS CSWs reported that everyone works together and communicates what is needed for the focus children, and that there is constant communication via email, telephone, and through the Needs and Services Plan (NSPs). Additionally, the therapist for the focus children reported providing the FFA social workers with quarterly reports and that they use email and phone to communicate with the FFA social workers and DCFS CSWs.

All parties interviewed agree that the team members make engagement efforts consistently, and reasonable efforts have been made by the FFA to engage all team members.

Service Needs (6 Optimal Supports & Services)

Service Needs Overview: The FFA provides the focus children with an array of supports and services to assist the focus children toward making progress toward their case plan. The FFA social workers and the FFA supervisors stated that they meet weekly to review the services of each focus child in order to ensure their needs are being met. The FFA social workers stated they meet with the focus children's therapist to track their progress. The FFA social workers, in collaboration with the focus children, certified foster parents, and DCFS CSWs review and modify the services as necessary.

The focus children receive weekly therapeutic services to address their mental health needs. The focus children are also enrolled in after school programs which provide an array of services from homework assistance to participating on a sports team. The first and second focus child are receiving tutoring to assist them in improving academically. The FFA's social workers stated that they attend the focus children's school conferences to ensure academic progress.

The certified foster parents reported that they are included in discussion of service needs for the focus children and that discussions take place during the FFA social worker's home visit to the certified foster homes.

The focus children's DCFS CSWs report that they are contacted by the FFA social workers and are asked to provide input in regards to the service needs of the focus children.

All of the focus children reported that their needs are being met and they enjoy therapy. The first focus child added that she participates in an after school program where she completes her homework and has joined a basketball team. She stated that she likes having her certified foster parents come to watch her play basketball.

Assessment & Linkages (5 Good Assessments and Understanding)

Assessment & Linkages Overview: The FFA has a good understanding of the focus children's functioning and support systems. Formal and informal techniques are used to determine the strengths and the underlying needs of the focus children and their certified foster parents. The FFA social workers stated that team meetings are held with the clinical consultant to assess how the focus children and certified foster parents are functioning in their home setting. The team develops a case plan to address the concerns, such as tutoring or counseling.

The focus children's therapist reported that they conduct initial therapeutic assessments to identify service needs of the focus children.

The certified foster parents engage the focus children through dialog and observation to gain an understanding of their strengths and needs; they stated that they provide their input to the team members during the team meeting.

The DCFS CSWs stated that the FFA social workers provide them with continuous updates on the focus children's progress toward their treatment plan goals. The DCFS CSWs also reported that they receive the focus children's NSPs quarterly.

Teamwork (6 Good Teamwork)

Teamwork Overview: The team contains most of the important supporters and decision makers in the focus children's lives, including the focus children, biological parents, NREFM, certified foster parents, FFA social workers, DCFS CSWs, service providers, such as the therapist, teachers, and tutors. The FFA supervisor stated that the DCFS CSWs are invited to the team meetings held by the FFA on behalf of the focus children. The FFA also invited the focus children's family members to Children and Family Team (CFT) meetings and clinical intervention meetings.

The FFA supervisor stated they believe in team meetings so they invite everyone to discuss any issues. The FFA supervisor stated that their FFA social workers along with the certified foster parents will also attend school meetings and Wraparound meetings, if the placed child has these services, to ensure they have all the information to assist each placed child with the services they need to progress toward their case plan goals.

The certified foster parents stated that they receive training from the FFA social workers and that they meet regularly. The certified foster parents also reported attending team meetings with the DCFS CSW and other team members to discuss the progress of the foster children.

The DCFS CSWs reported maintaining regular monthly contact with the certified foster parents, the FFA social workers, and the focus children. Additionally, that the FFA does a great job working as part of the team, by meeting regularly with the certified foster parents and focus children during their home visits, or more often if necessary to address the focus children's and certified foster parents' concerns and needs. The DCFS CSWs added that they continuously team with the FFA social workers in order to meet the best needs of the focus children. Two DCFS CSWs stated that they have attended clinical interventions, CFT meetings at the FFA, and met with the FFA social workers. The focus children reported that they are not afraid to talk with the team members and that they are included as part of the team.

Tracking & Adjustment (6 Optimal Tracking & Adjustment Process)

Tracking & Adjustment Overview: Intervention strategies, supports, and services provided to the focus children and their families are highly responsive and appropriate to changing conditions. Continuous monitoring, tracking, and communication of the focus children's status and service results to the team are occurring. The FFA social workers ensure that barriers encountered and any strategies modified are communicated with all the key members of the team. Adjustments are promptly made by the FFA social workers and certified foster parents when it is determined that specific services are not producing the desired results. The FFA uses NSPs to fully document and monitor each focus child's progress toward their treatment goals. The FFA tracks each focus child's progress through weekly meetings between the FFA supervisors and the FFA social workers; the frequency of the meetings are dependent upon the focus child's needs. The FFA is highly responsive and appropriate to changing conditions for each of the focus children. The team ensures the resources in place are helping the focus children achieve treatment goals, and when progress is not made, the team modifies the goals. The FFA social workers are responsible for tracking how the

focus children are doing; they coordinate, and communicate with all of the other key people for the focus children.

The DCFS CSWs reported that they have developed an excellent rapport with the FFA social workers who they collaborate with, to ensure that all the appropriate resources are in place for the focus children. The DCFS CSWs also maintain regular contact with the FFA social workers and the focus children to ensure any necessary adjustments to the NSP goals are made, the treatment resources and supports for the focus children are in place, and that they are involved in making any modifications to the NSPs and case plans. For example, when the third focus child expressed that she did not want visits with her adoptive mother, the FFA social worker informed her DCFS CSW who immediately addressed the issue and made the necessary changes to the focus child's case plan.

The FFA social workers stated that they have weekly meetings with the FFA supervisors to review contact notes and visits. The FFA social workers share with the DCFS CSWs the progress of the focus children's school and visitation weekly.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In August 2015, OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the findings indicated in the 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review, which consisted of the following: discussion of late submission of SIRs; reducing Community Care Licensing complaints; developing comprehensive updated NSPs; allowing age-appropriate children to participate in selecting their clothing; providing placed children with adequate personal care items; and ensuring criminal clearances are obtained prior to the employee's hire date.

In November 2015, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR, and to provide the FFA with technical support addressing methods on improving in the area of Safety. The FFA submitted the attached Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). OHCMD quality assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the FFA in implementing their QIP.

FUTURO INFANTIL HISPANO
Foster Family Agency

January 11, 2016

LA County, DCFS-OHCMD
Thomas Manning, Quality Assurance Reviewer
9320 Telstar Avenue, Suite 216
El Monte, CA 91731

FIH FFA Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for Quality Assurance Review

Dear Mr. Manning:

In November 2015, the FFA met with the agency Quality Assurance Reviewer and discussed the results of the QAR. The following is Futuro Infantil Hispano FFA's (FIH) Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the Quality Assurance Review (QAR). This plan will address methods for improvement in the focus area of Safety for which the agency received a QAR score of 5.

The QIP in the focus area of Safety relating to Special Incident Reports (SIRs) will consist of:
1. FIH FFA will conduct an upcoming training scheduled on 2-13-2016 for certified foster parents in the area of "Personal Rights." This training will include a review of Personal Rights to ensure that all children are free from harm in their placements and other daily settings. In turn, this is an effort to reduce and avoid SIRs. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring children are generally and substantially free form abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The FFA Administrator will be responsible for ensuring the training is completed as indicated by certificates of completion for attendees.

2. FIH FFA will conduct unannounced, face to face visits with children effective 1-11-16 for a minimum of three months and longer as deemed necessary to ensure they are safe and comfortable in their certified foster homes. The purpose of the unannounced visits is to ensure the children's safety and well-being. The FFA foster care social worker is responsible for the visits and documentation of said visits to the children. Further, the documentation will be reviewed and monitored by the FFA Foster Care Supervisor.

This QIP addresses the focus area of Safety as discussed with the Quality Assurance Reviewer. It is anticipated that implementation of this improvement plan will give this FFA a QAR rating of the minimum acceptable score of 6 for the next review period.

If you need additional information or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at our Ontario office at 909-460-1138.

Sincerely,

Teri Amirkhan, MA
Deputy Administrator

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