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July 27, 2016

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

GARCES RESIDENTIAL CARE 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 Garces Residential Care Group Home (the Group Home) in February 2016. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 8 and has one site located in the First Supervisorial District. The Group Home provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the Group Home's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to provide services to court dependent developmentally disabled children."

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 April 2016, OHCMD 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 areas; therefore, a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was not required.

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
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Carlos Garces, Executive Director, Garces Residential Care Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

GARCES RESIDENTIAL CARE 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 Garces Residential Care Group Home (the Group Home) in February 2016. 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 six DCFS placed children. The focus children's average number of placements was 11, their overall average length of placement was nine 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	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 March 2015. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 areas. In August 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the Group Home with technical support to address methods to maintain the level of service.

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	5

In the areas of Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, and Visitation, the Group Home has upheld good levels of support for the focus children. The focus children stated that staff is always available to assist them and this makes them feel safe in the Group Home. The Group Home staff ensures each placed child is welcomed in their facility and they work to address each concern that the placed children may have about their agency. The Group Home administrator stated that they contract with an outside agency that provides training on safety to the Group Home staff on a monthly basis. This training includes identifying behaviors of the placed children to avoid conduct that could possibly lead to unsafe actions. One Group Home staff member stated that they teach the placed children how to take protective action by going to their rooms and keeping away from any behavioral occurrences that the Group Home staff has to mediate. The Group Home works to link the placed children with services that are court ordered and in accordance with their permanent plans. The Group Home continues to assist the focus children in attaining their permanency goals by offering counseling services and family therapy, and ensuring that court ordered visitation is provided. The Group Home also supports the focus children in reaching their permanency goals for Planned Permanent Living Arrangement by providing them with independent living skills training such as, teaching them to cook, shop, and do their laundry. The Group Home staff and DCFS CSW worked closely to ensure a focus child was provided with resources such as, career counseling and transitional housing to achieve his permanency goal of living independently. The Group Home staff, DCFS CSW, and Wraparound CSW worked together to stabilize the placement for another focus child who has been in 19 placements. Due to their efforts, this focus child's placement has remained stable in the Group Home. This focus child stated that this Group Home is the best placement he has lived in compared to the other 18 placements. The focus child further stated that in this Group Home he did not feel like a "prisoner" and that they listened to him and allowed him to make choices about his life. The Group Home ensures that the focus children have visitation and communication in adherence with the court orders. The Group Home staff monitors phone contact for one focus child and his parent, per the court order. Another focus child did not want to have contact with his family, but the Group Home staff counseled this focus child and encouraged him to re-establish contact and visitation with his family members/NREFMs. The Group Home staff assisted this focus child in examining his options if he made contact with his family and the possibility of a positive outcome. After agreeing to participate in several visits with his family members/NREFMs, this focus child is now considering reuniting with his adoptive parent.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

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

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment, the Group Home continues to make good efforts at engaging the focus children and key people in decisions that are being made on their behalf. The Group Home staff meet each week with the placed children to discuss their concerns and progress toward their case plans. The focus children stated that they feel heard and supported by the Group Home staff. One focus child stated the staff is very supportive and helpful as he prepares to emancipate. Another focus child stated that he able to talk with the staff each day and feels supported by them. The Group Home staff speaks with each placed child daily when they return to the Group Home from school. The Group Home staff stated this is done in order to develop a genuine relationship with each placed child. The Group Home staff then communicates the needs and concerns of each placed child to their therapist, Group Home Social Worker and DCFS CSWs via weekly phone calls and e-mails. The Group Home staff stated that they invite the DCFS CSWs to team meetings. The Group Home staff worked diligently on behalf of one focus child who had difficulty in transitioning to their facility after 19 previous placements. The Group Home staff, DCFS CSW, Wraparound team, and psychologist continually assessed and linked the focus child to services to address his behavioral needs and his placement is now stable. The Group Home has linked two focus children to community services as counseling and tutoring. Moreover, the Group Home staff teaches independent living skills to all of the placed children. The focus children have been taught how to budget, cook basic meals, shop for food and personal hygiene care maintenance. One of the methods that the specific needs of the placed children is communicated via the Group Home's daily log. The Group Home staff use the information on this log to determine what particular skill a placed child may need assistance with. Additionally, intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) match the services being provided to the focus children. The Group Home's internal weekly team meetings allow them to assess the focus children's needs and to discuss mediation tactics to address the focus children's daily behaviors that may require intervention. Each of the DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home communicates with them in regards to the progress and adjustments made to the focus children's treatment and case plans.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In April 2016, OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements; Maintenance of Required Documentation; and Personnel Records. Technical assistance was provided on how the Group Home can develop a monitoring system to

ensure all special incidents are documented and cross-reported timely; set up a routine building maintenance schedule to ensure timely repairs; develop monitoring system to track and document contact with DCFS CSWs; establish routine personnel records review to ensure all employee documents are signed and all personnel have completed required medical check-ups.

In May 2016, 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 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.