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September 16, 2016

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

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

Brandon Nichols

WEST COVINA 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 West Covina Group Home (the Group Home) in March 2016. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 11 and has one site located in San Bernardino County. 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 help youths develop the skills and self-esteem which will enable them to become self-sufficient and productive persons in society."

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 8 of 9 focus areas: Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Teamwork, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment. The OHCMD noted an opportunity for improved performance in the focus area of Safety.

In May 2016, the OHCMD 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 for improvement in the area of Safety. The Group Home provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing the recommendations noted in this report.

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

PLB:KR
KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Hardip Gill, Executive Director, West Covina Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**WEST COVINA 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 West Covina Group Home (the Group Home) in March 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, two 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 seven, their overall average length of placement was 13 months and their average age was 14. 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
<p>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.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>5 - Good Safety Status</p>	<p>The focus children have a generally and substantially safe living situation with reliable and competent caregivers who protect the focus children well under usual daily conditions. Protective strategies are generally operative and dependable.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>5 - Good Status</p>	<p>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.</p>

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
<p>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.</p>	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.
<p>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.</p>	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.
<p>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.</p>	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.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
<p>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.</p>	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.
<p>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.</p>	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.
<p>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.</p>	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.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
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.

The OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the Group Home in May 2015, and noted an opportunity for improvement in the focus areas of Safety and Teamwork. In July 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 for improvement in these two areas. Based on the information below, it appears that the Group Home showed an improvement in the area of Teamwork on its 2015-2016 QAR. However, the OHCMD noted a continued need for improved performance in the area of Safety.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

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

The Group Home continued to fall below the minimum acceptable score in the area of Safety on their 2015-2016 QAR, as the Group Home did not fully implement its 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). During the last QAR, there were child safety concerns related to the placed children running away from the Group Home and contraband being brought into the facility. To address the concerns, in its 2014-2015 QIP, the Group Home stated it would provide required training to its entire staff, including 20 hours of Professional Assault Crisis Training, Special Incident Reporting, Community Crisis Response Team (CCRT), Mandated Reporter, Resident's Rights and Role-play. However, the Group Home did not provide Community Crisis Response Team (CCRT), Mandated Reporter, Resident's Rights and Role-play training. The Group Home acknowledged that it had not fully implemented its QIP and stated that trainings would be completed by July 2016. The OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss child safety, how to work together to

implement the Safety QIP, as well as modify or develop strategies that would be successful for the Group Home. Based on the OHCMMD's recent QAR interviews with the focus children, the DCFS CSWs and the Group Home staff, there were no reported child safety concerns. One focus child reported feeling safe at the Group Home because the Group Home staff constantly supervises all placed children. One DCFS CSW reported making regular announced and unannounced monthly visits to the Group Home. The DCFS CSW also shared that the focus child informed her that he feels safe and protected by the Group Home staff.

In the areas of Permanency, Placement Stability, and Visitation, the Group Home continues to provide good quality of service and stability to the focus children. The permanency goals that are established by the DCFS CSWs are supported by the Group Home through its efforts to maintain and improve connections between the placed children and their respective family members/NREFMs through regular phone calls, the utilization of technology, such as social media and visitation. All three focus children have a permanency plan of Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA). One of the focus children participates in a Transitional Independent Living Program while the second focus child participates in an Independent Living Program (ILP). The Group Home continues to assist the focus children in reaching their permanency goals by encouraging them to participate in activities that promote self-reliance, such as shopping, meal preparation, and budgeting. One focus child, who has turned 18 and graduated from high school in June 2016, will remain placed at the Group Home through extended foster care. In the Fall of 2016, the focus child will transfer into the State university on-campus housing. The focus children reported having established positive relationships with key adult supporters, such as the Group Home staff and the Group Home therapist. The Group staff members have received training to identify the focus children's needs and to assist them in establishing positive relationships with their peers and key adult supporters. The DCFS CSWs for the focus children reported having regular communication with the Group Home staff to discuss and quickly address any issues or concerns, to ensure stable placements for the focus children. None of the focus children has experienced any recent placement disruptions at school, at the Group Home or in the community. The Group Home staff supports court ordered visitation for on and off-site visits. All focus children have visitation with their family members/NREFMs. One of the focus children has also paired with a mentor.

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 area of Engagement, the Group Home administration appears to have an open dialogue with the Group Home staff, the placed children, and the DCFS CSWs. The Group

Home regularly utilizes e-mails, teleconferences and face-to-face meetings to engage with the focus children, the DCFS CSWs, significant family members/NREFMs, and service providers. Two DCFS CSWs reported that they have good relationships with the Group Home administrator and the Group Home facility managers, whom regularly updated them on the focus children's progress towards achieving their respective case plan goals. The focus children reported they feel listened to and respected by the Group Home staff, and they are assisted in resolving their concerns.

In the area of Service Needs, the Group Home continues to make good efforts to assess the focus children's needs and provide appropriate interventions for them to function effectively in their daily settings. The Group Home utilizes an in-home therapist to provide all placed children with individual therapeutic services two times a week and contracts with a licensed therapist to provide weekly group therapy. Topics generally explored during the group therapy include anger management, sexuality, and development of social skills. The Group Home maintains and administers the placed children's psychotropic medications as well as arranges for regular visits with their psychiatrist. One focus child is prescribed psychotropic medication and receives regular psychiatric monitoring. The Group Home also provides in-home independent living skills training to all placed children. The Group Home utilizes tutoring services provided by the local school district to help the placed children improve their academic performance. The Group Home provides transportation to and from off-site services and activities. One focus child reported that he has anger management issues which are often expressed as verbal aggression toward staff and that he is often able to manage his temper after talking to the Group Home therapist, who is always available to discuss the presenting situation.

In the areas of Assessment & Linkages and Tracking & Adjustment, the Group Home continues to make good efforts. The Group Home staff reported that they work together to assess the needs of the placed children through observation, careful documentation, collaboration and consultation with the Group Home therapist, the Group Home administrator, and the DCFS CSWs. The Group Home staff, therapist and administrator review the placed children's status and track their progress on a daily basis, using the Group Home's daily shift logs. The Group Home makes efforts to track each placed child's progress and includes the child in modifying treatment and/or case plan goals. For example, one focus child reported that he enjoys weekend visits with siblings and that the Group Home encourages him to maintain good behavior while at the Group Home, at school, and on outings. The Group Home staff monitors and documents his behavior and compliance with the Group Home rules so that he can successfully earn a community pass. One DCFS CSW reported that she is often apprised of the focus child's progress during her monthly contacts with the Group Home and that the Group Home staff appears to be keenly aware of the focus child's progress towards his Needs and Services Plan goals, as well as any new developments.

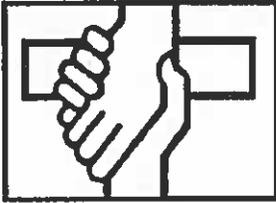
In the area of Teamwork, the OHCMD found that the Group Home implemented their 2014-2015 QIP. During the last QAR, the focus children reported that they were not participating in team meetings that included a majority of the key people in their lives. The OHCMD also found that the Group Home did not make telephone contacts with the focus children's family members/NREFMs, occasional face-to-face contact with family members/NREFMs would occur when children were transported to meet their respective

family members and DCFS CSWs were not participating in team meetings. To address this, the Group Home now initiates e-mails and telephone calls to team members to inform them of new developments and to invite them to team meetings. During the current QAR, the OHCMD found that the Group Home has been conducting quarterly team meetings. DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home regularly includes the Group Home staff, the therapist, the focus children and the DCFS CSWs in team meetings. The DCFS CSWs also reported that they are alerted ahead of time of upcoming team meetings and that they are apprised of any new developments in a timely manner. The focus children were able to identify key members of their team and reported that their respective family members/NREFMs are included in team meetings.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In May 2016, the 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 and Maintenance of Required Documentation/Service Delivery. Technical support was provided on how the Group Home can ensure timely cross-reporting and submittal of Special Incident Reports and obtain required signatures on NSPs.

In May of 2016, 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 addressing methods on improving in the area of Safety. The Group Home submitted the attached approved QIP. The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the Group Home in implementing their QIP.



WEST COVINA GROUP CORPORATION

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June 24, 2016

Manyahlhal Adenow, CSA I
OHCMD QAR
9320 Telstar Avenue Suite 216
El Monte, CA 91731

Subject: Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
West Covina Group Home

Dear Mr. Adenow,

The following Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) serves as the foundation for the commitment of West Covina Group Home to continuously improve the quality of the treatment and services the Group Home provides.

Area of Recommended Improvement:

Safety:

Item 1: The Group Home has not yet fully implemented the 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Quality Improvement Plan:

To ensure the quality of care and safety provided to the placed children, the Group Home will complete training its staff by July 1, 2016 in the following areas:

- 4 hours of Mandated Reported Training
- 2 hours of Training on Residential rights and role plays.
- 1 hour of Community Crisis Response Team Training (CCRT)

West Covina Group Home has also implemented the following protocol in 2015:

All new Group Home staff will be required to complete the following trainings within the first 40 hours of employment: 4 hours of Mandated Reporter Training, 2 hours of Residential rights and role plays and Community Crisis Response Team Trainings. After the first year of employment all Group Home staff will be re-trained on a yearly basis. West Covina Group Home plans to start re-training all Group Home staff in January 2017.

Sincerely,

Tonya Alexander

Tonya Alexander
Administrator