INLAND REGIONAL CENTER

Enhancing Lives

...valuing independence, inclusion and empowerment

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June 2, 2017

Rachel Long
Dept of Developmental Services
1600 Ninth Street, Room 320 (MS 3-9)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Long:

Inland Regional Center (IRC) is submitting this correspondence in response to a letter from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) dated April 26, 2017. That letter informed IRC that based on caseload ratio data IRC submitted to the Department on March 1, 2017, IRC did not meet the required caseload ratios for: 1) consumers enrolled in the Home and Community-Based Services Waiver; 2) consumers who have not moved from the developmental centers to the community since April 14, 1993, and who are not under the age of three nor on the Home and Community-Based Services Waiver. These ratios are mandated by the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 4640.6 subd. (c). A copy of this letter is enclosed for your reference. This is the IRC plan of correction as required in Section 4640.6 (f) of the WIC.

On May 19, 2017 IRC updated our website and posted a notice to consumers, families, staff and community members soliciting input on how to bring caseloads into compliance. It was also posted on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. IRC staff also received a Constant Contact email on May 19, 2017. The notification was also emailed to the State Council On Developmental Disabilities (SCDD), Office of the Client's Rights Advocate (OCRA), Inland Empire Autism Society and the IRC Vendor Advisory Committee (VAC) members. Recipients of the notification were given the option to submit opinions via email, fax or regular mail. They were also given the option of attending one of two Public Meetings to be held on May 30, 2017. The first of these meetings was in conjunction with the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting held at In-Roads Creative Programs in Colton, CA. The other meeting was held at the Molina Healthcare offices in San Bernardino, CA . The topic was also brought up at the May 22, 2017 meeting of the IRC Staff Joint-Input Committee. During this meeting, representatives of the various IRC programs and units meet with IRC upper management to discuss issues of concern.

The caseload ratio for IRC in the March 2017 data for consumers enrolled in the Home and Community-Based Services Waiver was 1 to 72.5 (the required caseload ratio is 1 to 62) and the caseload ratio for consumers who have not moved from the Developmental centers since April 14, 1993 was 1 to 75.6 (the required ratio is 1 to 66).

As of the date of this correspondence, IRC has not yet received its operations allocation for fiscal year 2017-2018 which makes it very difficult to develop a specific plan of correction. However current estimates would indicate that IRC would need to hire approximately 44 more CSCs to meet required staffing ratios. That would not take into account any further growth or the loss of any current CSCs. Obviously the addition of that many CSCs would also require additional equipment, management staff and support staff.

Frankly, there was not very much input or participation from the community during our outreach on this topic. Two people, a parent and a vendor, attended the public hearings and there were several email responses. Primarily, comments were made to the effect that we should do as much as we can to prevent the loss of currently employed case managers and that we should continue to hire to all kinds of case management positions. Feedback was that high caseloads are not only stressful for casemanagers but they also potentially delay service delivery.

It should be noted that IRC's staff turnover rate is less than 7% and that we have continued to advertise and hire throughout the past year. In fact since last year's report we have grown from an agency of 646 employees (413 doing case management) to an agency of 720 employees (478 doing case management). This is a net gain of 74 employees, including 65 who were assigned case management responsibilities. However, during the past year we have continued to show tremendous growth. Specifically have received 1947 new cases and have gone from an agency with 31,470 consumers to one with 33,417. This means that even at 1 to 66, we needed 30 more case managers just to keep pace. Since these are new positions and not simply replacements, we also needed to account for additional furniture, equipment, office space and support personnel (including managers). Even with those challenges we were able to slightly improve our ratios. In the coming year it is our intention to continue to advertise and hire as well as make every effort to retain existing employees. Obviously this will be influenced by budgetary constraints.

Finally, as we stated last year, IRC would like to express a concern brought about by the implementation of (AB)X2 1. This bill required that the Department allocate additional funding for regional center staff and administrative costs. However, it also stipulated that most of this funding be used for salary *increases,* benefit *increases*, or both, for regional center staff. Although this is very beneficial to our effort to retain employees, it also can serve as a deterrant to hiring new employees. Adjustments to current employee salary ranges and benefit packages also necessarily benefited unknown numbers of future employees. Therefore a regional center like IRC that is growing rapidly is more negatively impacted than those centers with less growth and more predictable future costs.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me at (909) 890-3401.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Urtz
Associate Executive Director

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