



To the Inland Regional Center Vendor Community:

First, we want to thank you all and take a moment to recognize the amazing efforts you have all put in to meet the needs of our mutual clients, especially in these unprecedented times. The system as we know it has radically changed and will continue to need layers of change in order to get back to more normalcy. We want to take a moment and speak to the re-engagement of more typical service provision. Re-engagement or reopening of more typical services will look different for each service type. Respite and early start services may and can look very different than day programming and transportation with different variables that will have to be worked through to provide a safe environment.

We do not know when we will have to take on the actual challenge of face to face service provision, but it is something each of you should already be planning for and training on. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will be taking the lead on providing guidance on how to re-engage/reopen service provision. Their guidance can be found on their website and is currently in draft form, but that should not preclude you from starting to review and work on it. Once it is formalized, we will disperse it to our vendor community to work on and submit to IRC, prior to your formal reopening.

The State of Emergency retainer funding for absences related to COVID 19 has been extended to July 31, 2020. At this time, it will be up to DDS to inform us on any additional extensions. IRC is requesting that vendors do not provide face to face service until they have a plan based on the final DDS guidance and it is shared with IRC. Opening up now will only endanger the clients. For those very rare and specific circumstances when the client, their circle of support (parents or residential facility), the vendor and the vendor's direct staff have an Inter-disciplinary Team Meeting to discuss safe service provision that must be face to face and when all parties are in agreement that the service can be provided in the safest manner, can face to face service be provided. These situations have been extremely rare and usually are done only because a client is an essential employee in the community.

What has happened since the Mid-March Stay at Home order is frustrating to all of us. Up until June, the system did an amazing job in securing the safety of the clients and the direct service staff. There were very few people testing positive for the virus. The month of June has been a different story and reports of direct vendor staff and clients becoming positive have more than doubled and our system is starting to become stressed. With the projections in both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, it does not look like the curve will decrease and flatten anytime soon. Most alarming though has been that for at least 80% of the clients who have become positive for the virus, it has been because of a vendor's staff who has infected the client. We must stop the spike in our community and provide safer care.

We understand that it is difficult to monitor what your staff are doing in the community, but we are at the point where we must mandate that you as an IRC vendor make a pledge to do everything you can for our mutual clients by provide a safe environment to stop this spread and spike. Your staff must have face covering that are properly worn, at all times, if they are working face to face with clients. You must ensure that you have a proper hand washing/sanitizing program throughout the day, as well as a plan to continuously clean and disinfect the physical plant. As much as possible have staff only work in a singular environment to stop cross contamination of sites (this has become a real problem). Above all, go to the CDC and your County Department of Public Health websites and educate your staff as to what is critical to stop this spread. Constantly monitor and train the direct care staff to be part of a safe environment.

Thank you all for what you do and please ensure that you are doing everything to keep our clients and your staff and environment safe and virus free.