

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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April 21, 2021

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE 01-042121: IN-PERSON MONITORING VISITS

Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code section 4639.6 authorizes the Director of the Department of Developmental Services (Department) to issue directives to regional centers as the Director deems necessary to protect consumer rights, health, safety, or welfare, or in accordance with W&I Code section 4434. Regional centers must comply with any directive issued by the Director pursuant to this section.

The Department acknowledges the vital work of regional centers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional centers have adapted service delivery in order to protect consumers and limit the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19. In response to the pandemic, regional centers continued to conduct monitoring visits using remote electronic communications. While moving to remote monitoring was necessary, it is not intended to be a long-term strategy considering the significant benefit of face-to-face monitoring. With availability of vaccinations and continued use of safety measures (personal protective equipment, etc.) it is important to return to in-person monitoring visits.

On January 13, 2021, the Department issued a letter confirming that employees of California's regional centers who conduct certain activities to ensure the welfare of consumers are "health care workers" pursuant to the State of California's Vaccination Plan, and thus are prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination within Phase 1A. While there is no requirement that regional center staff conducting in-person monitoring be vaccinated, this prioritization for vaccination may support regional centers in being able to carry out essential in-person monitoring activities for consumers residing in settings outside of the family home.

Pursuant to W&I Code section 4639.6, to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of consumers living outside of the family home, the Department is directing regional centers to resume conducting, at least quarterly, face-to-face monitoring visits for consumers living in licensed residential facilities, Family Home Agency settings, and Supported Living/Independent Living arrangements as required by Article IX, Section 1(b) of the Department's contracts with regional centers. Regional centers may conduct additional

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face-to-face quality assurance monitoring visits, but these visits do not replace the face-to-face visits required by contract language. Recognizing the number of visits to be scheduled, regional centers should develop a strategy to begin visits no later than 30 days from the date of this Directive, that prioritizes visits to consumers with the most high-risk needs first.

When conducting in-person monitoring visits, staff should follow the most restrictive local, state and federal guidelines for COVID-19 safety in effect at the time. Regional centers should establish risk mitigation protocols for these visits, and proactively advise individuals, families, staff and others, as necessary, of precautionary measures involved in upcoming visits. Regional centers should contact the Department if additional personal protective equipment, such as masks, gloves or hand sanitizer, is needed to safely conduct in-person visits.

Consumers, family members or providers should contact their local regional center with questions regarding this Directive. Questions from regional centers should be directed to DDSC19Directives@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

NANCY BARGMANN
Director

cc: Regional Center Board Presidents
Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies