



April 1, 2015

Nancy Bargmann, Deputy Director
Community Services Division
Department of Developmental Services
1600 Ninth Street, Room 320, MS 3-9
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Expenditure and Demographic Data per W&I Code §4519.5 and DDS/Regional Center Contract

Dear Ms. Bargmann:

In December, 2014, Harbor Regional Center posted a report, "Purchase of Services Expenditure and Demographic Data: Fiscal Year 2013-14," on our website as required pursuant to W&I Code §4519.5 as well as our contract with DDS. This report includes data related to purchase of service authorization, utilization, and expenditures, with respect to age, race and ethnicity, language, living arrangement and disability. Two public meetings were scheduled to be held on March 24, 2015, regarding the data.

At the monthly HRC Board meetings in January, February and March, the scheduled date for the public meetings was announced. Notification of these meetings was posted in January, February and March on Harbor Regional Center's website and notice was also sent several times during these months to: the nearly 8,000 clients, families, service providers and other subscribers to the HRC electronic news bulletin; members of all Harbor Regional Center committees including the Client Advisory Committee, Service Provider Advisory Committee, Client Services Committee, Planning Committee, Community and Financial Development Committee, Audit Committee; the HRC parent-to-parent mentors and HRC parent support groups.

On March 24, 2015 two public meetings were held as scheduled (one at the HRC Torrance Office and the other at the HRC Long Beach site) and the demographic and expenditure information were presented. A Spanish language interpreter provided translation at both meetings. In addition to the HRC staff and Board members in attendance at the meetings there was a combined total of twenty-seven (27) others present: twenty (20) HRC parents; one (1) service provider; one (1) representative from the State DD Council; three (3) representatives from Disability Rights California; and, two (2) parents of a client served by a different regional center.

English and Spanish copies of the presentation from our public meetings are posted on our website at www.harborrc.org. A summary of the data presented is as follows:

- The ethnic makeup of HRC's client population is substantially similar to that of the population living in the HRC service area;

- The ethnic makeup of HRC's staff is substantially similar to that of the HRC client population
- The HRC staff language capacity is sufficient to enable communication with virtually all HRC clients;
- Hispanics do not utilize as many of the services which are authorized for them as do Asians, Whites and African Americans;
- Asians have the highest authorized services for children while Whites have the highest authorized services for adult clients;
- Expenditures are more than 10 times as much for clients who live in licensed homes and more than twice as much for clients who live in supported living than for clients who live with their families;
- 93% of Hispanic clients live with their families while only 68% of White clients live with their families

At our meetings we responded to a few questions related to the demographic or expenditure data but most questions were asked by parents in the audience who were concerned about their individual services and supports. One parent asked questions about how services are authorized. Some expressed their belief that they are not receiving needed services and some indicated they are not getting timely responses from the regional center. Others had questions about specific services such as respite, IHSS, Medi-Cal and ABA. One parent expressed concern about resources available for adults, especially including day program resources and affordable housing.

Recommendations:

- The regional center system has severe data limitations which restrict the depth of analysis which can be done using the data available. The Department of Developmental Services should make the matter of upgrading regional center hardware and software a priority as it is apparent to us that data limitations constitute a barrier to our understanding of the dynamics of expenditure differences.
- The Association of Regional Center Agencies is planning to engage assistance in further analysis of the expenditure data statewide. Understanding differences in expenditures is essential going forward and DDS support, including financial support, for such a pursuit would help to accelerate this effort.
- The Department of Developmental Services needs to provide necessary financial support for regional centers to ensure that they are in a position to recruit, train and retain qualified staff, especially case management staff. It is vital that caseloads are as low as possible for English as a second language or non-English speakers so that sufficient attention can be given to those who need more support than others in navigating generic service systems as well as in helping to understand the regional center constellation of services and supports.
- The Department of Developmental Services should consider reversing the damaging changes to the Lanterman Act that were put into place during the Great Recession and that disproportionately impact families who care for their developmentally disabled family members at home.

- The Department of Developmental Services needs to recognize that resource development for *all* clients is essential (not just clients residing in state developmental centers or those who are specified as “difficult to serve”). There must be a portion of each annual budget provided to regional centers for this purpose in order for there to be sufficient ongoing resources to meet the demand for such going forward. Attention to affordable housing issues is critical.
- Harbor Regional Center has heard from families that the reasons for the differences in expenditures among the various ethnic groups may be related to certain specified access problems. Based upon the input that we have received we are offering child care at more of our training and other service venues and we are making transportation services available if needed to ensure that access issues will not interfere with participation.
- Harbor Regional Center will continue to maintain parent groups that are specific to ethnicity and disability and to seek input from those who participate about purchase of service access issues. We also plan to reach out to some parent groups that are not affiliated with HRC in order to gather input from a wider base.
- Harbor Regional Center will continue to maintain a multi-cultural, multi-lingual staff and will continue to provide them, and our service providers, with cultural competency training on a regular basis to the end that both HRC staff and service providers will remain accessible by language and sensitive to cultural differences.

We hope this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,



Patricia Del Monico
Executive Director