NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

SUBJECT
On or after January 1, 2017, Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), Short-term Residential Therapeutic Centers (STRTC), Community Treatment Facilities, and out of state programs must be accredited by a national accrediting body as a condition of licensure and in order to receive a foster care rate.

BACKGROUND
The Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) embodies a comprehensive framework to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and youth in foster care. In order to promote the most effective services and practices the Department, in consultation with expert stakeholders, recommended that providers obtain accreditation through a national accrediting organization. This recommendation became law through Assembly Bill 403 (Chapter 773, Statutes of 2015).

BENEFITS
- Improves staff professionalism and service delivery through training; evaluates ongoing effectiveness through provider reports and unannounced site reviews.
- Establishes best practices and promotes continuous quality improvement; provides tools to enhance performance, accountability, and transparency.

PROCESS
- The provider submits an application for accreditation and conducts a self-study.
- The provider undergoes onsite review of business and service practices.
- Upon approval, the provider receives a qualified public certificate.
- The accreditation process takes approximately 12-18 months.
- Accreditation is maintained via annual reporting and unannounced site reviews.
- A provisional license may be extended, if needed, to secure accreditation.
- A group home and/or FFA may request a rate extension up to December 31, 2018, if needed, to maintain operation while working to obtain accreditation.

APPROVED ACCREDITING AGENCIES
The Department, in consultation with stakeholders, has identified the following three national accrediting agencies:
- Council of Accreditation (COA)
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- The Joint Commission
A chart at the following link compares the three agencies: Accreditating Process Comparison

COST
Fee structures vary across accrediting agencies and often consider agency size and budget.

MORE INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS
- For additional information or questions, please contact: CCR@dss.ca.gov.