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STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

January 21, 2016

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 16-05

TO: ALL GROUP HOME PROVIDERS
ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES
ALL FOSTER FAMILY AGENCIES
ALL COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY ADOPTION DISTRICT OFFICERS
ALL CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM MANAGERS
ALL TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT
COORDINATORS
ALL LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ACCREDITATION AGENCIES
IDENTIFIED BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES (CDSS) TO BE USED FOR
ACCREDITATION BY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCIES AND
SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS
(STRTCs)

REFERENCE: ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 403 (CHAPTER 773, STATUTES
OF 2015); FAMILY CODE 7911.1(c)(3);
HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE (HSC) SECTIONS 1506.1;
1520.1; 1525.5; 1562.01;
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE (WIC) SECTIONS
11402; 11460(c)(2); 11461.1; 11461.2; 11462; 11463; 11467;
SENATE BILL (SB) 1013 (CHAPTER 35, STATUTES OF 2012)

REASON FOR THIS
TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to notify counties, Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), group homes (GHs) that will be transitioning to the new STRTC category and out-of-state certified group homes of the three nationally recognized accreditation agencies that have been identified by the CDSS in order to meet the requirements of AB 403.

Background

In 2012 pursuant to SB 1013, CDSS developed a comprehensive framework that would change practice in a manner that provides core services, supports and improved outcomes for children and youth placed in congregate care and FFA settings. Using a robust stakeholder process, CDSS worked in collaboration with other state and county departments, FFAs, GHs, probation, foster youth, parent partners, advocates and other stakeholders to develop key recommendations to the Legislature. In January of 2015 these recommendations were captured in the *Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Report* to the Legislature. On October 11, 2015, the Legislature passed AB 403 which provides the authority to implement the CCR.

AB 403 articulates several changes which include, but are not limited to, providing core services and supports by FFAs and STRTCs, reducing the reliance on congregate care and increasing placements into home-based family settings, monitoring provider performance, and adding new training topics and staff qualifications. Accreditation will be a licensing requirement for both FFAs and STRTCs. However, pending completion of the accreditation process, a provider may be given a provisional license as specified in HSC sections 1506.1(b), 1520.1, 1525.5 and 1562.01(b). Out-of-state group homes, unless granted an extension from the department, must meet the national accreditation requirement in order to get reimbursement for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care rate. (Family Code 7911.1(c)(3); WIC 11460(c)(2).)

Accreditation

Accreditation is a process whereby an organization undergoes an in-depth review of the organization's business model, infrastructure, quality of care and operations. There is a positive correlation between accreditation and improving the quality of care, services and programs. The accreditation process also provides an independent qualified transparent endorsement that the organization conforms to specific service standards as set forth in the Federal and State regulations. Accreditation will provide CDSS and child placing agencies with an independent review of a provider organization in areas that include, but are not limited to, governance, types of programs, staff training and qualifications. The accreditation process can take 12 to 18 months to complete. CDSS may extend the term of a provisional license granted by Community Care Licensing to an FFA or STRTC, not to exceed two years, if it determines that this additional time is required to secure accreditation. CDSS will accept accreditation from the following agencies:

- The Council on Accreditation: www.COAnet.org.
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities : www.CARF.org and
- The Joint Commission (TJC): www.jointcommission.org.

There is helpful information on each agency's website. In addition, CDSS has actively engaged accreditation agencies in discussions regarding the level of technical support available to organizations and counties regarding the process, cost and time commitment. The accreditation agencies attended all of the CCR provider overviews conducted by CDSS throughout the state and heard from providers regarding their needs and concerns. All three agencies have the ability to provide specialized technical assistance to any provider including small organizations. Fee structures vary across accrediting agencies and often consider organization size and budget. Providers need to be accredited by one of the three accrediting agencies and are encouraged to start the accreditation process as soon as possible. CDSS is available to assist with additional technical supports. Please email the CCR Branch with your questions to CCR@dss.ca.gov or contact your Foster Care Rates Consultant at (916) 651-9152.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

GREGORY E. ROSE
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division