April 7, 2017

California Department of Social Services  
County Welfare Directors Association

RE: 2017 SCI Plan Updates

We respectfully submit the following information regarding our SCI program. Our SCI rates, in addition to the FC Base Rate, are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIER 1</th>
<th>TIER 2</th>
<th>TIER 3</th>
<th>TIER 4</th>
<th>TIER 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+$200</td>
<td>+$400</td>
<td>+$600</td>
<td>+$800</td>
<td>+$1000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

We utilize what we refer to as a Triangular Approval Process. We receive input regarding the needs of the child from three sources: The foster parent, the assigned social worker/case manager, and the Public Health Nurse. If the three parties agree to the needs of the child, then the rate is determined based upon the level of enhanced care and supervision required by the provider to meet those needs. If the parties do not agree, we meet together to discuss and resolve. Our SCI workers, who coordinate the input from all three individuals and document the determinations, are Bachelor level social workers.

Please let me know if any addition information is needed.

juliet Halverson  
Foster Care Eligibility Acting Program Manager  
P.O. Box 7988  
San Francisco, Ca. 94120
**City and County of San Francisco Special Care Increment (SCI) System**

**Manageable Medical, Mental Health or Behavioral Challenges — Determination Worksheet**

Progression between tiers is based upon the level of intervention and treatment requiring enhanced care and supervision. The descriptions (mild, moderate, etc.) do not reflect the severity of the condition.

**NAME OF CHILD OR YOUTH:** ____________________________  **DOB:** ____________________________  **CHECK ALL THAT APPLY REGARDLESS OF TIERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIER ONE MILD</th>
<th>TIER TWO MODERATE</th>
<th>TIER THREE EXCEPTIONAL</th>
<th>TIER FOUR ADVANCED</th>
<th>TIER FIVE SEVERE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**SCI Entry Level**

**PRIMARY SCI REQUIREMENT**

- Under MONTHLY care of a physician, mental health or developmental professional (Refer to page 2)
- At least one qualifying factor that is beyond age appropriateness:
  - Pre/Post surgery care (Qualifies for a maximum of 60 days pre and post surgery)
  - Lack of bowel control - smearing
  - Bed-Wetting on incontinence
  - Tantrums or self-injury
  - Separation anxiety or nightmares
  - Developmental delays
  - Attachment disorder
  - Mood or depression disorder
  - Bi-polar
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Sexually acting out
  - Defiant disorder or hyperactivity
  - Anger challenges
  - Other medical, emotional or physical challenges requiring professional intervention:
    - Describe ____________________________

SCI may begin at Tier 2 if all below are checked.

If the care and supervision listed below is not being provided by the care provider, the SCI level cannot exceed Tier 1.

**ALL must apply:**

- Criteria in “A” met
- Challenges are not transient in nature and require ongoing monthly treatment or intervention
- Care provider agrees to complete Bi-annual (6 month) re-evaluations.
- Care provider signs and agrees to comply with Tier Two agreement
- Care provider agrees to provide transportation to visitation and appointments
- All CHDP checks are kept up to date
- Care provider remains current and cooperative with all licensing or home approval requirements (i.e. investigations and visits)

**TIER THREE EXCEPTIONAL**

- Has met the criteria in Tier 3 for a minimum of 3 consecutive months
- Care provider has completed additional training beyond PRIDE training or has experience with specific needs of the foster youth though successful prior placements – Must be verified by licensing and FC nurse (not currently required for Relative/NREFM placement)

**TIER FOUR ADVANCED**

- Has met the criteria in Tier 4 for a minimum of 3 consecutive months
- Care provider signs and agrees to comply with Tier Four agreement
- Child or youth has an assessment completed through the educational system (IEP), Regional Center or Early Start (IFSP), Mental Health (CANS), or other assessment completed by a medical, mental health, or developmental professional (copy of assessments must be provided)
- Infant requires constant swaddling and/or does not sleep through the night

And at least one of the following:

- Child or youth needs the care provider to physically participate in monthly therapy, medical sessions or the therapeutic process
- Difficulty in stabilizing medication; administers daily injections, breathing or physical therapy OR child or youth in drug or alcohol treatment OR child or youth was previously in residential treatment
- Unable to care for additional children or youth in the home due to the extreme needs of a child or youth in care. This may be due to the fragile health or health vulnerability of the child or youth or may be due to violent, sexual or aggressive behaviors (must be verified by FCS placement)

**TIER FIVE SEVERE**

- Has met the criteria in Tier 5 for a minimum of 3 consecutive months
- Meets criteria in either section A or B below

***Criteria A***

- Care provider must provide line of sight supervision

**Or:**

- Care provider unable to take respite due to lack of qualified care provider to fill in

***Criteria B***

- Care provider providing in-home modeling and supervision to reunifying parent or new provider as needed to maintain child or youth stability and continuity of care

**Or:**

- Care provider is preparing to adopt the child or youth, which requires additional cooperation, travel, court appointments, social worker visits, and support to the child or youth during the transition

**All children or youth receiving care and supervision from Tier 3 or above will have an assigned foster care nurse**
UNDER THE CARE AND SUPERVISION OF A PHYSICIAN, MENTAL HEALTH, OR DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

To receive any SCI payment, the child or youth in care must be receiving a minimum of monthly care and oversight from a medical, mental health, or developmental professional. Any child or youth with a qualifying medical or mental health challenge must be receiving regular treatment. The purpose of the SCI payment is to provide additional monetary support for the increased care and supervision of children or youth who have medical or mental health challenges that are not transient or occasional in nature. Enhanced care and supervision includes the care provider seeking treatment providers, connecting children and youth to community support and services, ensuring participation in treatment, monitoring support in the home that compliments the treatment plan and transporting to appointments.

MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

A medical and mental health professional may include: a physician, nurse, physical/speech therapist, counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist, occupational therapist, school counselor or therapist or regional center case manager. Monthly requirement may be a combination of any supportive services. Monthly requirements should be written in the bi-annual re-evaluation. ALL CHDP exams must be kept up to date.

SCI RATES FOR MANAGEABLE TIER LEVELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier Level</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier One - Mild</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier Two - Moderate</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier Three - Exceptional</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier Four - Advanced</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier Five - Severe</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SCI Rate is added to the Basic Rate. The Basic Rate is determined by the Eligibility Unit.

MONITORING/OBSERVATION REQUIREMENTS

Each Tier is assigned a Monitoring/Observation requirement. Eligibility to a Tier cannot be processed or approved until the time requirement is met and rates will not be retroactive. Monitoring and observation requirements are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier Level</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1 - Mild</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2 - Moderate</td>
<td>Up to 30 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3 - Exceptional</td>
<td>Minimum of 3 consecutive months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 4 - Advanced</td>
<td>Minimum of 6 consecutive months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 5 - Severe</td>
<td>Minimum of 9 consecutive months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the Monitoring/Observation period is: 1) To ensure the child/youth has full access to resources 2) To align rate progression with increased knowledge of meeting the unique needs of the child or youth in care 3) to document the non-transient nature of the higher level of care 4) To document the care providers compliance with the case plan for the specific child or youth which addresses the care and supervision requirements

REQUESTING AN SCI

At placement, all foster care rates (for children or youth placed in San Francisco) will start at the BASIC RATE. If the child or youth has a manageable medical, mental health or behavioral challenge, the care provider can request an SCI assessment. SCI assessments can take up to 45 days. SCI rates can be made effective from the date of placement, if appropriate. SCI Tiers are sequential – Initial rates may begin at Tier One or Tier Two. Subsequent increases require a minimum of 3 months in each Tier. For information or to request an SCI assessment – call 415-557-5929, 557-5681, or 557-5870. Or complete this form and mail to: FCS – SCI Unit, PO Box 7988, SF, 94120-7988 ATTN: SCI 170 Otis/6th Floor. Bi-annual re-evaluations are required to continue to receive an SCI payment of Tier 1 or higher.

APPEALS PROCESS

If the SCI rate you are requesting is denied and you wish to appeal the decision, you can contact the SCI Manager at 415-557-5146. You may also contact the Foster Care Ombudsman at 415-558-2828. The Foster Care Ombudsman can explain your appeals options. Complaints regarding discrimination should be made to the HSA Office of Civil Rights, PO Box 7988, SF, 94120.

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES

Care provider – Print Name: __________________________ Date: ______________ Social Worker – Print Name: __________________________ # __________________

Care provider – Signature: __________________________ Telephone #: ______________ Social Worker – Signature: __________________________
What is an SCI?

An SCI is a Special Care Increment payment. These increments are paid in addition to the basic rate, based on the age of the child or youth, for children or youth in care who have a medical, mental health or behavioral challenge. Not all children or youth are eligible for these increments.

The SCI program is different in each county. Each county creates their own plan and rates then submits them to the State for approval. Upon approval, counties may administer their individual SCI program.

San Francisco received approval from the State to begin a new SCI program effective August 1, 2008.

The new SCI program applies to placements in San Francisco County only.

Q: I live outside of San Francisco, but I am interested in participating in this program. Can I?
A: Because SCI programs are different in each county, the regulations require that the rates within the county of residence must be issued. Therefore, at this time, the SF SCI system can only be used for placements within SF County.

Q: Will I receive a notice regarding the SCI decision?
A: Yes. You will receive a notice from the SCI unit. The SCI unit will also notify the eligibility unit who will follow up with an official Notice of Action regarding the established rate.

Q: Is there an appeals process?
A: Yes. Upon receiving a notice, you can contact the SCI supervisor at 415-557-5929 or contact the FCS Ombudsman at 415-558-2828.
The following answers are based on general circumstances. If you believe a situation or special condition may need to be taken into consideration, do not hesitate to contact the SCI unit directly.

All the following Q&A’s assume that an SCI is being requested and that a qualifying medical mental health or behavioral condition exists. For specific information on qualifying factors, please refer to Form 1156 or 1157 SCI determination worksheet.

Q: I know that this child/youth has a qualifying condition, do I still have to start at the “basic rate” for 30 days?
A: Yes. All cases will start at the “basic rate” while the SCI processing takes place. There are many situations where verification is immediately available and processing can take place in only a few days.

Q: Can a social worker placing the child/youth promise an SCI rate if they know the child/youth will be eligible for an SCI?
A: No. SCI decisions are coordinated and documented through the SCI unit. The placement social worker does not set the rate but, they are involved in the documentation process of the child’s or youth’s needs.

Q: I cared for this same child/youth before, can’t I just receive the same rate I had then and not have to go through this SCI process?
A: No. Effective August 1, 2008 all new placements or changes in placement are required to be processed through the SCI unit.

Q: I am a licensed Small Family Home, do I have to participate in this program also?
A: Yes. If vendorized, a dual agency Regional Center child or youth placed in your home would receive the rate established for your facility by the Regional Center if the child or youth qualifies for that level or you may receive the Regional Center dual agency rate, whichever is higher. If the child or youth is not a Regional Center child, the rate would be assessed through the SCI unit.

Q: What is the Regional Center, dual agency rate?
A: $2,328 for over 3 years old. $1,041 for 3 years and under. Dual agency children or youth may receive these rates once approved and accepted by the Regional Center following their evaluation.

Q: I am not comfortable with waiting 30 days to know what the rate will be. Is there any way to know up front?
A: You can review the SCI determination rate sheet (Forms 1156 & 1157) that include requirements and rate levels for qualifying conditions. The SCI unit uses the same rate sheet to determine the rate. There are no hidden requirements or unstated rules.

The processing period is a requirement of the SCI program. The rate may be established earlier than 45 days, however, depending upon the SCI unit work load, it may take up to 45 days.

Once an initial SCI rate is established for new placements, the SCI may be retroactive to the date of placement if all verifications are submitted timely. For placement other than initial, the SCI rate can be established up to 30 days retroactive from the date of the SCI request.

Q: Can I start at Tier 3 or 4?
A: All approved SCI’s will begin at Tier 1 or 2 for manageable medical and level 4 for lifetime medical. After the initial approved tier you may be approved for a tier increase after 3 consecutive months (based on applicable requirements). For more information refer to forms 1156 and 1157.
### SCI System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manageable</th>
<th>Lifetime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manageable, medical, mental health or behavioral challenges, which through therapy, commitment, support, adequate care, medication or behavioral modification the child or youth has the potential to avoid decline, cope or otherwise improve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical or mental health challenges including severe and chronic illnesses that are expected to result in dependence to medical equipment, lifetime medical or mental impairment that cannot improve through medication, support or behavioral modification, inability to administer personal care, permanent loss of mobility or continuous supervision beyond age appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Manageable Tier 1
- Basic Rate + $200

#### Manageable Tier 2
- Basic Rate + $400

#### Manageable Tier 3
- Basic Rate + $600

#### Manageable Tier 4
- Basic Rate + $800

#### Manageable Tier 5
- Basic Rate + $1000

#### Lifetime Tier 1
- Basic Rate + $200

#### Lifetime Tier 2
- Basic Rate + $400

#### Lifetime Tier 3
- Basic Rate + $600

#### Lifetime Tier 4
- Basic Rate + $800

#### Lifetime Tier 5
- Basic Rate + $1000

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The SCI program is currently available for placements in San Francisco County.

Participation in the Special Care Increment Rate program is voluntary.

Care providers wishing to participate in the rate program — and who are caring for a child or youth in foster care who has a medical, mental health or behavioral challenge — may request a rate assessment.

Rate assessments are completed within 30 days of request, if all necessary information is provided and/or available.

All children and youth in foster care are initially placed at the State approved foster care basic rate — pending request and completion of an assessment period.

For more information, care providers are encouraged to discuss with the assigned social worker at 415-557-5870 or 415-557-5681.

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Refer to SCI Worksheets—Form 1156 and Form 1157 for detailed information.

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City B County of San Francisco Human Services Agency Family and Children’s Services Division

SAN FRANCISCO HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
Family & Children’s Services Division
PO Box 7988
San Francisco, CA 94120

415-557-5000 General Information
415-557-5929 SCI Program Information
PUB 1319 (RV –04/17)
**IMPROVEMENT FOCUSED SYSTEM**

On August 1, 2008, San Francisco implemented a new improvement focused Special Care Increment (SCI) program for all children and youth under the jurisdiction of the county and placed within San Francisco County.

The program enables special care increments to increase over time as the following is documented by the care provider and the county:

- Transportation and attendance at all medical, mental health and dental appointments.
- Care provider supervision and transportation to support visitation.
- Care provider participation in school meetings, team decision making meetings (TDM) & family meetings.
- Care provider participation in additional training.
- Care provider connecting to community resources on behalf of the child or youth.
- Care provider participation and engagement in placement transitions and permanency outcomes.

To participate in the Special Care Increment program, care providers must team with the county in creating detailed documentation of interventions, treatment, support and services provided.

**FOSTER CARE RATE STRUCTURES**

**Basic Rate Payments**

Basic rates are established by the State of California through cost parameters set forth by the Federal government.

Basic rates take into account the costs of providing necessary:
- Food
- Clothing
- Housing
- Transportation
- Incidents

Counties pay basic rates through a combination of sharing ratios combining Federal and/or State and local county funds.

**SPECIAL CARE INCREMENTS**

Special Care Increment (SCI) programs are designed and established by each individual county and approved by the State. Special Care Increment systems vary widely throughout the State. Systems can vary significantly on rate amounts, criteria, duration, process, time frames and documentation.

Special Care increments are authorized for the purpose of providing additional financial support for the care and supervision of children and youth in foster care who have a medical, mental health or behavioral challenge.

Special care increments, once approved, are added to the monthly basic rate. Increments are regularly reviewed and can begin, increase, decrease or end as medical, mental health or behavioral challenges arise or change.
Appeals

Care providers always have the right to appeal a rate decision. It is recommended that care providers follow these steps in order to seek resolution of a rate disagreement:

⇒ Discuss with the assigned Social Worker.
⇒ Discuss with the assigned Social Worker’s Supervisor.
⇒ Discuss with the Foster Care Ombudsman 415-558-2828.
⇒ Request a State Hearing. This step can be completed at any time. Information is provided on the back of the Notice of Action. Or call 1-800-952-5253. For the hearing or speech impaired who use TDD, call 1-800-952-8349.

Request for State Fair Hearings must be completed within 90 days of the date the Notice of Action was mailed to you.
The amount of money received on behalf of a child or youth placed with a care provider is referred to as the foster care payment.

The foster care payment can have two components:
- The basic rate, and
- A Special Care Increment (SCI)

The basic rate is based upon State regulations.

**Care and Supervision**

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, 89201, defines care and supervision as the following age appropriate activities:

- Assistance with dressing and personal hygiene.
- Assistance with taking medications.
- Storing and distribution of medications.
- Arrangements of medical and dental care, including transportation.
- Maintenance of house rules.
- Supervision of child’s schedule and activities.
- Maintenance of child’s resources and property.
- Monitoring food intake or special diet.
- Providing basic services, which include, but are not limited to:
  - safe home and grounds
  - access to extracurricular activities
  - ensuring foster youth’s rights are respected
  - helping to coordinate visitation with parents and siblings, as deemed appropriate by the department
  - maintaining child specific files/records
  - maintaining current home license or approval

**Rates go up and rates go down**

Special Care Increments are county specific and are issued when children or youth require extraordinary care and supervision for extended periods of time.

Special Care Increments should be considered temporary additional financial assistance to compensate the care provider for supervision and care of needs beyond those previously listed.

Special Care Increments are added to the basic foster care rate for a limited amount of time, generally for one year. If the conditions/behaviors improve, the special care increment can be either decreased or discontinued. A yearly reassessment of the special care increment will determine if it will continue, change or end.

In all cases, additional verification is necessary to determine whether a special care increment can be issued.

**SOCIAL WORKERS AND STAFF AT THE CHILD PROTECTION CENTER (CPC) DO NOT DETERMINE OR APPROVE SPECIAL CARE INCREMENTS**

The process of establishing a special care increment may take up to 30 days. Approvals are considered from the date of request – so it is important to make the request as soon as a need for consistent extraordinary care is identified.
The Rate Setting Process

If you believe the child or youth in your care may be eligible for a special care rate based upon their medical, mental health or behavioral challenges:

- Discuss the specific challenges with the child’s or youth’s Social Worker.
- Request a special care rate assessment.
- Request should be made no later than 30 days after placement for a rate adjustment retroactive to the date of placement.
- Requests can be made anytime during the placement episode if new challenges arise.

Rates paid on behalf of children in foster care are based upon the funding rules within the county of residence.

Not all medical conditions, mental health challenges and troubling behaviors qualify for a special care rate.

If a care provider believes that they need to provide extraordinary care and supervision beyond what would be considered age appropriate, it is important to discuss the circumstances with the assigned Social Worker.

If you do not agree with a foster care rate you can contact the Foster Care Ombudsman for guidance in appealing the decision at 415-558-2828.

City and County of San Francisco
Human Services Agency
Family & Children’s Services

Establishing Foster Care Rates for Out of County Placements

City and County of San Francisco
Human Services Agency
Family & Children’s Services

Explanation of the Process and Limitations

City and County of San Francisco
Human Services Agency
Family & Children’s Services
PO Box 7988
San Francisco, CA 94120-7988
415-557-5000
Pub. 1331 (RV 04/17)
Out of County Rate Setting
Rates established for the supervision and care of children and youth in foster care placed out of the county must comply with regulatory requirements. All Foster Care basic rate payments of $889 are issued for the care and supervision of a child. Payments exceeding the basic rate, referred to as special care increments must also comply with the state approved and county specific payment guidelines.

Special Care Increments (SCI) may be paid in addition to the basic rate based upon specific county guidelines for the additional care and supervision required for children with medical, mental health or behavioral challenges.

Special Care Increments may fluctuate or end based on changes in the child’s needs. This applies to children living within and outside San Francisco.

County Specific Rules Apply
Each county is responsible for its own Specialized Care Increment system. Counties submit their SCI plans to the state for approval. Rate categories and requirements differ considerably from one county to another.

Differences between counties include, but may not be limited to:
- amount and timeframes
- medical, mental health or behavioral conditions covered
- training requirements for rate eligibility

For example, a medical condition in one county may entitle the foster parent to an additional $50 per month – while in San Francisco or other counties the condition may not result in any additional funds.

Special Care Increment
Rates are not established by social workers or staff at the Child Protection Center (CPC)

At placement, a basic rate is established until a review of the child or youth’s needs and the county specific special care rate criteria can be assessed—this process can take up to 45 days.

If a special care increment is deemed appropriate, a retroactive adjustment of the rate will be processed and a supplement will be issued.