

Risk Management and Mitigation

The size, complexity, and diversity of California's populations pose unique challenges with respect to implementing an effective risk management system. Among these challenges are communication, coordination, data analysis, reporting, training, resources, standardization, and monitoring. Beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001-02, the Legislature appropriated funds to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and regional centers to develop a comprehensive risk management system to enhance consumers' health, safety and well-being, and to implement preventive strategies and interventions to mitigate such risks. The system contemplated in FY 2001-02 is now fully implemented statewide and applies to all individuals served by regional centers.

The system addresses the challenges of California while respecting the basic roles and responsibilities of the State's service system structures. The overall risk management system for the State involves numerous entities; however, the three key entities involved in risk management and mitigation activities within the developmental disabilities services system, and their respective responsibilities, are as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

DDS has overall state-level responsibility for planning, coordinating, and overseeing implementation of the State's risk management program for persons with developmental disabilities. This is accomplished by:

1. Maintaining a uniform, statewide, automated Special Incident Report (SIR) database system, and reviewing SIRs daily to identify issues or concerns requiring additional follow-up.
2. Aggregating SIR data by regional center, SIR category, residence type, medical diagnosis, age and other factors, and providing such data to the risk management contractor for further analysis and to regional centers for follow-up as appropriate.
3. Providing training and technical assistance to regional centers to educate and inform the service system so as to improve quality of life outcomes for consumers.
4. Maintaining a statewide mortality monitoring system.
5. Monitoring by the Quality Management Executive Committee (QMEC) of statewide and individual regional center short and long-term trends and the results of remediation activities undertaken in response to the trends.
6. Making recommendations for and monitoring the results of statewide risk management system improvement activities through the QMEC.

REGIONAL CENTERS

The 21 regional centers have local-level responsibility for planning, coordinating, and implementing the risk management program by:

1. Implementing, reviewing, and updating the regional center risk management and prevention plan.
2. Ensuring the accurate and timely reporting of SIRs to DDS.
3. Conducting additional discovery activities to gather and report initial and follow-up SIR information.
4. Conducting reviews of mortality to determine if appropriate medical attention was sought or given.

5. Coordinating with other agencies (e.g., licensing, protective services, law enforcement agencies, coroners, long-term care ombudsman, etc.) to gather and review the results of their investigations and to use this information to prevent the recurrence of similar problems.
6. Monitoring any identified remediation activity undertaken in response to each SIR.
7. Mitigating risk through the individualized program planning process.
8. Developing, implementing, and reviewing the results of remediation and system improvement activities based on trends identified through the analysis of the SIR data.
9. Providing training and technical assistance to staff, providers, and others to improve quality of life outcomes for consumers.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONTRACTOR

The State engages the services of an independent, specialized risk management and mitigation contractor possessing a multidisciplinary (clinical, research, data analysis, training, business) capacity to perform the following activities:

1. Conducting detailed statewide and regional center specific analyses of SIR data and related databases to monitor system performance and to track the effects of statewide and local risk management activities on SIR rates over time.
2. Supporting the DDS QMEC by conducting targeted statewide and local risk management discovery activities and data analysis, and making recommendations for statewide or local remediation and system improvement activities.
3. Performing both mortality and non-mortality SIR data collection, analysis, reporting and risk mitigation activities.
4. Performing ongoing review and analysis of current research and scientific literature with respect to preventing accidents, injuries, abuse, neglect, victimization, deaths and other adverse events, and for promoting consumers' health, safety and well-being.
5. Developing and updating articles on the DDS SafetyNet website and quarterly newsletter in response to short and long term SIR trends and immediate health and safety issues. Content is developed based upon best practices in the field of developmental services, risk mitigation, safety, health and well-being.
6. Providing targeted technical assistance and monitoring to individual regional centers with high and/or increasing incident rates, including discovery, remediation and monitoring activities.
7. Providing tools, training, and technical support to assist regional centers in conducting local risk management and mitigation activities.
8. Developing and maintaining a website (www.ddssafety.net) for consumers and their families, providers, professionals, and regional center staff. This website is dedicated to the dissemination of information on the prevention and mitigation of risk factors for persons with developmental disabilities. The site includes information from across the nation on current research, best practices, and practical information directed toward improving consumers' health and safety.
9. Assisting DDS in planning, coordinating, and providing statewide training related to risk management and other related topics.
10. Providing on-site technical assistance to regional centers related to local risk management plans and activities.