

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

1600 NINTH STREET, Room 240, MS 2-13
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
TDD 654-2054 (For the Hearing Impaired)
(916) 654-1897



June 4, 2015

Dear Residents, Family Members, Employees, Regional Centers and Other Interested Parties:

Since the passage of the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act (Lanterman Act), the role of the state-operated Developmental Centers (DCs) has been changing. Providing services in the least-restrictive environment appropriate for a person is strongly supported by state and federal laws and court decisions. As a result, efforts have been underway to build community capacity and determine what role the state should have in directly providing services to individuals now living in the DCs. The need for the system to evolve became more pressing when, recently, residential units at the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) were found to be in violation of federal requirements and the state was notified that the federal funds for those units would cease. The state is attempting to negotiate a settlement with the federal government to continue, for a limited amount of time, SDC's federal funding.

Consistent with the call for the transformation of DC services, the May Revision to the 2015-16 Governor's Budget proposes legislation to begin closure planning for the remaining state developmental centers, including SDC in Eldridge, California. If approved, the proposal calls for the closure of SDC by the end of 2018, followed by the closure of Fairview DC and then the non-secure treatment portion of Porterville DC by 2021.

The closure plans will build on some aspects that proved to be successful in the closures of Agnews and Lanterman DCs, but will also include innovative community service models and the maintenance of a state-operated safety-net. Efforts will focus on:

- Working closely with local regional centers to build community capacity reflective of residents' needs through the Community Placement Plan (CPP) process and funding.
- Achieving the safe and successful transition of DC residents to other appropriate living arrangements as determined by the individualized planning process and formalized in the Individual Program Plan (IPP).
- Utilizing some DC assets to continue and refine state-operated safety-net services that may include crisis centers, small-scale integrated housing, clinical services, and other necessary services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

"Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices"

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We appreciate the knowledge and experience of our DC employees, many of whom are second and third generation workers. Their specialized expertise is highly valuable and we will look for ways that this expertise can continue to benefit SDC residents. The Department of Developmental Services (Department) recognizes the importance of building resources for the successful transition of individuals in our DCs, as well as the importance of retaining dedicated, professional staff throughout the closure process and afterwards to ensure a safety net for the people we serve.

The closure planning process for SDC will involve stakeholder meetings and one or more public hearings, as well as the other requirements outlined in the Welfare and Institutions Code for the closure of a developmental center. At this time, the Department is anticipating submitting a Closure Plan for SDC to the Legislature by October 1, 2015, for review and approval. Extensive input from consumers, family members, employees, regional centers, advocates, service providers, public officials and other interested parties will help inform the October 1st Closure Plan. Contributions from the Sonoma Coalition will be key as the Department looks to identify alternative uses for the SDC campus and examines the viability of transferring the unique and specialized services found at SDC to support individuals living in the community. The Legislature will review and may modify the proposed Closure Plan prior to its approval.

Funding has been proposed for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16 budget to allow the Department and regional centers to begin the process of developing community resources specific to the needs of the men and women who reside at SDC prior to approval of the Closure Plan for SDC. An initial investment of \$49.3 million (\$46.9 million General Fund) of CPP funds has been proposed for FY 2015-16. Future investments will be determined through the FY 2016-17 and subsequent budget processes.

The closure of a DC is not a task the Department undertakes lightly. We are strongly committed to ensuring the provision of quality care both at SDC and as individuals transition to community-based services. The closures proposed in the May Revision are the next steps in the state's process of transforming how services are delivered to individuals with significant service needs. We look forward to engaging SDC's stakeholders to develop a comprehensive Closure Plan specific to the unique needs of the men and women who reside at Sonoma.

Sincerely,



SANTI J. ROGERS
Director