

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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April 26, 2022

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCED SERVICE COORDINATION FOR CONSUMERS WITH LOW OR NO PURCHASE OF SERVICE

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide guidance for regional centers (RCs) as they implement Enhanced Service Coordination. RCs must adhere to these guidelines established by the Department of Developmental Services (Department) when implementing Enhanced Service Coordination.

Background

The Budget Act for Fiscal Year 2021-22 established funding for Enhanced Service Coordination at a 1 to 40 service coordinator (SC) to consumer ratio for consumers in underserved communities with low or no purchase of service (POS). The reduced caseload is intended to improve service access and delivery for consumers in underserved and diverse communities, including non-white, non-English speaking, hearing impaired, and/or other populations preapproved by the Department. With smaller caseloads, specially trained SCs can provide focused support and increased service coordination to the consumers and families who participate in Enhanced Service Coordination.

The Department allocated funding to RCs for Enhanced Service Coordination positions, based on each center's Status 1 and 2 caseloads as of July 2021, as follows:

- 4 positions to each of the 7 RCs with the lowest populations
- 5 positions to each of the 7 RCs with populations between the lowest and highest populations
- 6 positions to each of the 7 RCs with the highest populations

By June 30, 2022, RCs should have filled all these SC positions. If an RC is unable to meet this goal, that RC should contact the Department staff noted below with a plan for filling these positions in a timely manner.

“Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices”

Training and Qualifications for SCs that Provide Enhanced Service Coordination

Welfare & Institutions Code §4647(a) states, in relevant part:

“...service coordination shall include those activities necessary to implement an individual program plan, including, but not limited to, participation in the individual program plan process; assurance that the planning team considers all appropriate options for meeting each individual program plan objective; securing, through purchasing or by obtaining from generic agencies or other resources, services and supports specified in the person’s individual program plan; coordination of service and support programs; collection and dissemination of information; and monitoring implementation of the plan to ascertain that objectives have been fulfilled and to assist in revising the plan as necessary.”

SCs providing Enhanced Service Coordination, as described below, must have advanced and broad knowledge of the developmental disabilities services system and the cultures of the consumers and families they are serving. RCs will develop and implement training plans for the SCs that provide Enhanced Service Coordination. The training plans shall include, but not be limited to the following components:

- Person-centered planning and person-centered thinking
- Cultural competency and cultural humility
- Family centered planning that engages family members in program planning and service coordination
- Supportive communication as a tool to preserve or enhance positive relationships while addressing problems, giving negative feedback, or tackling difficult issues
- Full array of services and supports, e.g., age-specific services, Participant Directed Services, Self-Determination Program, and employment
- Expectations and guidelines for Enhanced Service Coordination, including data collection standards
- Orientation and training provided to families by SCs
- Interview skills to effectively communicate with and assess the needs of families and consumers
- Understanding the relationship between a consumer’s service needs and available service options
- Generic resources from local and statewide agencies (e.g., In Home Supportive Services, CalFresh, and CalWORKs)

Components of Enhanced Service Coordination

SCs providing Enhanced Service Coordination will provide information and support to consumers and families on topics that will enable them to navigate the California developmental disabilities services system. SCs should use supportive communication when interacting with consumers and families. Support and information provided to them should include, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Person-centered planning
- Understanding the consumer's diagnosis and how it might impact the consumer's development and need for services
- RC services and supports, including the role of SCs
- Generic services and supports
- Client's rights, including the fair hearing process
- Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) process
- Self-advocacy
- Navigating multiple state-wide systems (e.g., those administered by the Department of Managed Health Care, Department of Social Services, and Department of Rehabilitation)

Contact Requirements for Enhanced Service Coordination

Meaningful and regular telephonic and/or video and face to face contact are integral parts of consumer and family engagement. This enhanced contact will enable SCs to better understand consumer and family needs and increase their awareness of emerging needs. It can also lead to timely assistance and support as questions emerge and needs change. The following are minimum contact requirements; however, each individual's and family's needs may benefit from more:

- Routine contact, via phone or video, with consumers and/or their families to answer emerging questions
- Quarterly in person review meetings
- Annual in person IPP and IFSP meetings

Entrance and Exit Criteria for Enhanced Service Coordination

Entrance Criteria: Consumer and family participation in Enhanced Service Coordination is voluntary. Based on position allocations, RCs shall establish Enhanced Service Coordination caseloads informed by the data set of consumers with low or no POS provided by the Department on October 22, 2021, or subsequent updates to that data set. RCs requesting to include consumer(s) not included in the October 22, 2021, data set must send a proposal to the Department for consideration. The proposal will include an explanation or rationale for providing Enhanced Service Coordination to consumer(s) who are not in the data set.

Exit Criteria: The following criteria should be used to determine if Enhanced Service Coordination is no longer necessary.

- Family/consumer is no longer interested in receiving Enhanced Service Coordination
- All identified service needs are thoroughly explored
- All information and training were provided, and focused support goals were completed
- Family/consumer feels confident they can continue to receive the assistance they need to be successful without receiving Enhanced Service Coordination

When one or more of these conditions are met the RC should begin a three-month transition period, during which the SC providing Enhanced Service Coordination should conduct an exit assessment and a warm handoff to the new SC. However, because participation in Enhanced Service Coordination is voluntary, consumers/families can exit the program at any time and without participating in the three-month transition period.

Ongoing Tracking and Reporting

The Department and the Association of Regional Center Agencies are developing a process to measure the impact and outcome of Enhanced Service Coordination. Guidance regarding the process will be provided in a separate correspondence.

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If you have any questions regarding the implementation of enhanced case management please contact Jacqueline Gaytan, Chief, Office of Community Operations at jacqueline.gaytan@dds.ca.gov or (951) 405-2365.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ernie Cruz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ERNIE CRUZ
Deputy Director
Community Service Division

cc: Nancy Bargmann, Department of Developmental Services
Brian Winfield, Department of Developmental Services
Carla Castaneda, Department of Developmental Services
Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies