

FOCUS AREA: Continuum of Care Reform (CCR or AB 403 Implementation)

Issue Statement

Beginning in 2017, the County must implement the requirements of AB 403, which aims to phase out the way treatment and services are currently provided to youth in group homes, in favor of measures geared toward providing greater support to foster families. The new regulation has the goal of drastically reducing the number of foster and probation youth placed in group homes as well as the length of time they spend in such placements through increased resource family recruitment, greater support toward family-based care, and the establishment of Short-Term Residential Treatment Centers (STRTCs). Partners working collaboratively toward these efforts include but are not limited to the Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency, and Probation.

Community Activities/Schedule

The countywide CCR implementation team meets monthly (first Thursday of the month). This implementation team consists of four subgroups:

1. Child & Family Teams (CFTs)/Inter-Agency Placement Teams
2. Stakeholder Engagement
3. Foster Family Agencies (FFAs)
4. Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs)

The County of Orange also participates in several statewide and local committees which meet regularly, including:

- Statewide Committee on AB 403 Implementation (Monthly)
- Directors' Call (Bi-weekly)
- High Needs Committee (Monthly)
- Child Welfare System Improvement Partnership (Monthly)

Other related activities that must occur for CCR implementation:

- County Mental Health to certify all foster family agencies and group homes (STRTCs).
- An analysis of current providers/resources to be conducted, including congregate care and family-based homes to ensure adequate resources are available (right sizing). A workgroup has not yet been established for this activity.

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OCCP Involvement

1. Assist with the rollout of the modified Resource Family Approval (RFA) process. Formerly, there was a two-tiered approval process which varied in requirements and training for relatives, non-relative care providers, and adoptive families. The modified process streamlines and standardizes the approval process, however assistance is needed with coordinating training and contract development.
2. Engage in a countywide Needs Assessment evaluation for the residential housing/treatment needs for Dual Jurisdiction youth, served by both Child Welfare and Juvenile Probation. This evaluation is particularly essential to address the needs of youth whose placement is not best served at either Orangewood Children and Family Center or Juvenile Hall, especially child welfare youth involved in criminal activity and assaultive behaviors.
3. Coordinate services to ensure a smooth flow of processes and services among all agencies that work with these children, such as Child Welfare, Health Care Agency, Probation, Public Defender, District Attorney, Orange County Department of Education, and non-profit community partners.
4. Increase community and stakeholder awareness about Continuing Care Reform and, specifically, the need for increased family based care. Efforts to increase awareness could include:
 - Identifying targeted audiences for recruitment roadshow presentations, particularly groups with potential interest in providing resources for the following hard-to-place youth populations:
 - Sibling groups
 - Commercially sexually exploited children
 - Children with special medical needs
 - Adolescents
 - Displaying recruitment material in facility lobbies
 - Including links on agency webpages to www.oc4kids.com, the Social Services Agency's website for recruitment and training information
 - Highlighting the increased need for resource families in agency newsletters and publications
 - Assisting with engaging high profile venues for recruitment efforts, such as Orange County sports teams
5. Support legislative changes and additional requirements related to CCR as they arise

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Intended Outcome of OCCP Role

The implementation of CCR is a tremendous and multi-faceted endeavor. Collaboration with Child Welfare partners is essential to the successful rollout of this massive initiative. It is anticipated that OCCP will assist in activating its resources to support the recruitment of resource families to increase the family-based placement options for Child Welfare and Probation youth. It is also anticipated that OCCP's involvement will help in supporting necessary programs and assessments to ensure the system's transition to increased family-based care is a seamless, collaborative, and comprehensive.

Specific anticipated outcomes include:

1. A robust service delivery system through the coordination of agencies represented at the OCCP
2. Streamlined communication between the child serving agencies represented at the OCCP
3. Increased community awareness of the need for additional resource families
4. Increase in the number of family based caregivers
5. Decrease in the number of youth placed in residential care

Reporting Schedule

September 2016 – Initial report to OCCP and clearly defined, proposed tasks for OCCP's involvement

December 2016 – Progress Report

January 2017 and forward – Monthly progress reports and refined tasks for OCCP's involvement

By January 2017 – Some organizations will be accredited, County Mental Health will have begun certification, and an assessment of existing resources and needs will be conducted.