

# **Health Services for Agnews Consumers in the Community: An Overview**

## **Introduction**

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) continues to assure the provision of comprehensive health, behavioral and dental care services for consumers transitioning from Agnews Developmental Center (Agnews) to the community. The DDS, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and Agnews have created a framework for the development and delivery of health services to consumers who are transitioning to the community. This framework is based on a comprehensive health transition plan for each consumer, to ensure access to appropriate health care and services in the community.

## **Individual Planning**

Before a consumer moves to the community from Agnews, an individualized health transition plan (Plan) is developed by the Regional Center in consultation with Agnews staff and staff from the consumer's new living arrangement. The Plan includes an evaluation by the consumer's primary care physician of the consumer's health history and current health status. The Plan provides specific information on how the consumer's health needs will be met in the community and the health transition services that will be provided. The consumer, their family and/or representative, if appropriate, have an opportunity to participate in the development and review of the Plan. The planning team reviews the Plan and incorporates it into the Community Living Options process.

## **Health Transition Services**

To support the seamless transition of medical care for consumers moving to the community, the Agnews physician first assures that the consumer is stable in the new home, and then works with the community physician to provide the information needed to effectively serve the consumer. Responsibility for primary care is transferred to the community physician after a 30-90 day transition period to ensure that the new physician has a sound working knowledge of the consumer and his or her needs. Thereafter, Agnews staff will provide consultation and support when needed.

The Agnews Primary Care Clinic provides primary care services as well as dental, psychiatry, neurology, ophthalmology, and laboratory services. Services will continue to be provided by the Primary Care Clinic at Agnews, as necessary, after the closure of Agnews and until the DDS is no longer responsible for the property.

## Health Care Service Delivery Systems

Depending on the county of residence and eligibility for Medi-Cal and Medicare, there are various service delivery systems that provide health care services to consumers transitioning from Agnews to the community. The Regional Center assists the consumer and their representative in evaluating the options, coordinating and facilitating eligibility, and, when indicated, enrolling in a managed care health plan. As indicated above, the Primary Care Clinic will be available to all Agnews residents who have transitioned into the community, regardless of whether or not the consumer is Medi-Cal and/or Medicare eligible. The Clinic will remain open until the DDS is no longer responsible for the property.

Options for consumers who are not eligible for Medi-Cal or Medicare: For consumers who are not eligible for either Medi-Cal or Medicare, the Regional Center will work with the consumer in developing the individual health transition plan, in order to assure that the consumer is provided access to the necessary health services and supports in the community.

Options for consumers enrolled in Medi-Cal: Depending on the county of residence, consumers who are Medi-Cal eligible have specific health care service options. In San Mateo County, Agnews consumers transition into the Health Plan of San Mateo, a County Organized Health System (COHS). As a COHS, San Mateo operates the only Medi-Cal health plan in the county. The COHS are different from the other models of Medi-Cal managed care because the DHCS requires nearly all Medi-Cal beneficiaries residing in the county to enroll in this health plan to receive care.

In Santa Clara and Alameda Counties, Agnews consumers have the option to enroll in either the locally-administered Medi-Cal managed care plan (Santa Clara Family Health Plan, Alameda Alliance for Health), a commercial Medi-Cal health care plan (Blue Cross), or receive services through the fee-for service system often referred to as “regular Medi-Cal”. Therefore, Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) and San Andreas Regional Center (SARC) consumers will have the option of staying in the Medi-Cal fee-for-service system or enrolling in one of the Medi-Cal managed health care plans, which are discussed below. For the consumers who opt to receive services through the fee-for-service system, the Regional Center service coordinator will assist in coordinating access to health care services in the community, as outlined in the individual health transition plan.

Options for Consumers Enrolled in Medi-Cal and Medicare: Consumers who are eligible for both Medi-Cal and Medicare are offered the same Medi-Cal health care options outlined in the previous section, and also have the option of enrolling into a “Special Needs Plan.” A Special Needs Plan is a federal Medicare option that allows Health Plans to target a specific segment of the Medicare population, including those who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. The Medi-Cal managed care plans that are also Special Needs Plans are able to provide a comprehensive service strategy that integrates Medicare and Medi-Cal benefits, thereby providing a seamless service

delivery system. The Health Plan will discuss this option with eligible consumers and their representatives and assist them in making decisions regarding enrollment.

## **Managed Health Care**

As previously noted, the designated managed care health plans (Santa Clara Family Health Plan for SARC consumers, Alameda Alliance for Health for RCEB consumers and Health Plan of San Mateo for GGRC consumers) have established a partnership with these Regional Centers, the DDS, and the DHCS to arrange for medical and specialized health care services for Agnews consumers who elect to enroll in these plans.

When a person elects to enroll in a designated managed care health plan (Health Plan), available services include but are not limited to:

- Access to qualified providers. The Health Plan will arrange for an array of medical service providers that include primary care and specialty physicians, optometry and ophthalmology services, medications, support services such as occupational and physical therapies, and medical equipment and supplies including adaptive equipment.
  - The Health Plan has the authority to recruit, train and appropriately compensate, within federal limitations, the full range of health service providers that are needed.
  - The Primary Care Physician will determine the person's medical needs, refer the person for additional services, and evaluate recommendations to determine appropriate follow-up.
- Comprehensive Medical Care Management. A registered nurse will be assigned to each consumer to coordinate individualized health services and assure that the consumer receives specialty services identified as medically necessary by the primary care physician.
- Coordination with the Regional Center and other health service providers.

The Health Plan provides information regarding the plan, and, when appropriate, assists the consumer with enrollment in additional programs such as a Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plan.

## **Coordination of Services**

Regional Center Coordination: The Regional Center service coordinator supports the development and implementation of a person-centered plan that supports the wellness of the person and monitors the effectiveness of the services delivered. The service coordinator is the primary contact for the consumer and their family members.

Health Plan and Regional Center Coordination: When the consumer elects a Health Plan, health services are coordinated by the Health Plan and the Regional Center. Comprehensive medical care management is provided by a Registered Nurse

at the Health Plan who coordinates and expedites the delivery of health services and resolves any issues related to the Health Plan benefits.

The Health Plan and the Regional Center have each designated a liaison who resolves emerging issues, coordinates consumer service, and coordinates education and training for providers, consumers and staff from the Regional Centers and Health Plans.

The Regional Center and the Health Plan:

- Share medical information with each other and the service providers, consistent with applicable confidentiality provisions, to promote continuity of care;
- Work together to ensure access to the necessary health services; and
- Coordinate services to assure the provision of appropriate acute care services when needed and outpatient services to promote the return of the person to their home.

**Residential Provider:** The residential providers play a critical role in the provision of services, as follows:

- Provide services, support, equipment and supplies as required by applicable statute, and the consumer's IPP;
- Implement those elements of the consumer's individual program plan (IPP) that are their responsibility;
- Assure the availability of qualified staff as needed and provides routine transportation;
- Implement a comprehensive quality improvement process that includes internal mechanisms and external reviews; and
- Coordinate health related services with the Regional Center and Health Plan, pursuant to the consumer's IPP.

## **Dental Services**

The emphasis of the dental service strategy is prevention. Regional Center dental coordinators are completing a comprehensive individualized assessment of the dental status and needs of each consumer. The dental coordinator is responsible for assuring that each consumer has access to and receives appropriate dental services when they move to community settings and are responsible for providing training and supplies to residential staff on needed dental hygiene supports. Additionally, each of the Regional Centers is recruiting dental hygienists to provide ongoing dental screenings and cleanings for consumers in their own homes.

Regional Centers are recruiting and supporting the training of dentists to provide prevention and remediation consistent with each consumer's needs. They assist the consumer and the residential provider by making referrals to dentists with expertise in the provision of services to consumers.

The majority of consumers moving from Agnews require sedation dentistry. The Regional Centers and the Health Plans coordinate services to assure timely and appropriate access. Health Plans are in the process of identifying community resources

that will support this service through outpatient surgery centers, and Regional Centers have identified dentists who can provide this service.

## **Behavioral Services**

The transition planning process at Agnews will assure the development of a behavioral transition plan for persons with behavioral needs prior to a consumer's move. Staff in the community will be trained on the implementation of this behavioral plan prior to a consumer's transition. Additionally Agnews staff is available to provide consultation and training and to assist in the development of plans to respond to emerging issues if a need arises. In addition, Regional Centers are developing mobile crisis services with a prevention focus to support Agnews consumers who could benefit from those supports.

One fifth of the consumers residing at Agnews receive psychiatric services at Agnews. These services will be provided through a variety of programs both health care through the health plans and specialty mental health services through the county mental health plans. Medicare and Medi-Cal will provide payment for services when consumers are eligible for these benefits and the covered services are determined to be medically necessary. Finally, the Regional Centers may purchase services identified in the consumer's plan when other options are not available.

The Regional Center of East Bay and the Alameda County Mental Health Agency have established a partnership to provide residential options for consumers who require crisis stabilization at a setting away from their home regardless of the assigned Regional Center. Redwood Place, a 34-bed intensive treatment program, provides residential options for eligible Agnews consumers as well as consumers from RCEB, GGRC and North Bay Regional Center who require crisis stabilization at a setting away from the home. The facility has a delayed egress arrangement but is not locked. A locked facility that can provide short-term treatment and stabilization will be available to Bay area residents in 2008.

## **Mobile Services**

During the spring of 2007, the DDS researched the viability of mobile health care services to help meet the needs of consumers transitioning from Agnews. Meetings were arranged with established mobile clinic providers of health care and oral health services and with the Mobile Health Clinics Network to better understand the service model. This research served as the foundation for discussions with stakeholders including the Health Plans, Regional Centers, families and consumers, to further explore mobile service viability and needs. The DDS has progressed in discussions with stakeholders and will soon be finalizing plans for the service model.

## **Regional Center, DDS, DHCS and Health Plan Coordination**

The Regional Centers and the designated Health Plans have established Memorandums of Understanding that outline the roles and responsibilities of each

organization. The Health Plans are responsible for assuring the provision of medically necessary services to its members. The Health Plans are working with the Regional Centers, the DHCS, and the DDS to recruit and train a sufficient number of qualified providers to assure timely access to the full array of needed medical services. Regional Centers have supported these efforts by identifying experienced providers that may be interested in becoming Health Plan providers. Training in developmental services is also being provided to promote services to this population. The Health Plans are responsible for establishing performance standards and appropriate provider rates to support their participation in the program. Well established quality improvement mechanisms are required and in place within each of the Health Plans to promote appropriate services.

Policies and procedures have been developed to guide DHCS, DDS, Regional Centers, and designated Health Plans' implementation of the health services and supports in the community. The departments have established systems to share information required for budget development, health plan reimbursement, need identification and strategic planning, and to expedite the enrollment process when a consumer selects a designated Health Plan. In addition, the departments have held trainings for staff and providers.

The DHCS is amending its contracts with the designated Health Plans to provide for cost reimbursement to the plans within federal limitations. This enables the Health Plans to establish provider rates necessary to assure access to the full array of medical services, to provide comprehensive medical case management to its members and to implement quality improvement activities. The DHCS has established interim payments for the Health Plans until there is sufficient data to permit a semiannual reconciliation to actual allowable costs.

The Regional Centers, the Health Plans, county social services offices and Agnews are working with the DDS and the DHCS to expedite eligibility for membership in the Health Plan. This includes establishing residency in the consumer's home county, including any inter-county transfers, and assuring that the consumer's aid code and Social Security status reflects their change in residence. Regional Centers notify the DHCS when the planning team has approved a health transition plan. The DHCS has established a relationship with counties and the Social Security Administration to expedite the processing of residence and eligibility information. A process has been established with Maximus, the contractor that assists with the enrollment process, to assure that enrollment forms are processed in a timely manner.