

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 4/25/02
Department Name: Social Services
Department No.: 044
Agenda Date: 6/18/02
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: 10 Min
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Charlene A. Chase
Director

STAFF CONTACT: Deborah E. Hartman
Ext. 4495

SUBJECT: Specialized Care Increment Rates Program for Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors support and approve the modified rate increase from the current two levels of \$58 moderate-\$249 severe per month to four levels ranging from \$101-\$909 per month for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children – Foster Care Specialized Care Increment Program for the provision of providing intensive in-home services to children placed in out-of-home care in Santa Barbara County and shifting the number of out of county group home and foster family agency placements to foster family home placements in the county.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

{Double-click here} The recommendation(s) are primarily aligned with Goal No. 7. A Community that Fosters the Safety and Well-Being of Families and Children.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The Welfare and Institutions Code 11461.(e)(l) defines specialized care increment as an approved amount paid with state participation on behalf of an Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care child requiring specialized care to a home in addition to the basic rate. These children require additional care because of health and/or behavioral problems beyond daily normal and routine care.

The specialized care increment rates program provides supplemental funding to the family home provider, in addition to the family home basic rate, for the cost of supervision and the cost of providing that supervision to meet the additional daily care needs of a foster care child who has health and/or behavioral issues. Placement of children who require specialized care in family homes complies with the intent of state and

federal requirements that a child is entitled to placement in a family environment, in close proximity to the parents' home, and consistent with the best interest and special needs of the child. California's specialized care rate setting system promotes these concepts.

Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services/Child Welfare Services submitted a Specialized Care Rates Increment Program Proposal to the State on April 30, 2002 for the following reasons:

- The last Specialized Care Rates Program was conditionally approved effective July 1, 1986. Since that date there have been no modifications to the rate except for the state approved cost of living adjustments.
- The current rate structure is limited to two rates. The moderate rate of \$58 and the severe rate of \$249 are no longer sufficient to meet the challenging needs of Foster Care youth.
- The proposed Specialized Care Rate Program will increase the number of specialized and trained Foster Family Homes that will allow children to be placed in their own community, thus maintained in the least restrictive environment.
- The proposed Specialized Care Rate Program will decrease the number of children currently placed in Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes by allowing these children to be placed in specialized and trained Foster Family Homes.
- Santa Barbara County, similar to other California counties, has found it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain adequately trained Foster Care providers who are willing to care for children with complex emotional and behavioral needs. The proposed Specialized Care Rate Program recognizes the difficulty and allows compensation to caregivers for assuming the responsibility of providing care for our special population of children.

Mandates and Service Levels:

This is not a mandated program although it will strengthen services available to Santa Barbara County Foster children placed in Santa Barbara County.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: The Department does not believe that approval of new specialized care rates will have any fiscal impact or any annualized increased program costs. We anticipate the reduction of high cost placements will offset the increased specialized care rates. We used the new rate structure when developing our 2002-2003 foster care assistance requested budget. Any additional costs will come out of our Department's budget.

Special Instructions: After approval by the Board of Supervisors, please send one (1) certified copy of the Minute Order to DSS, 234 Camino del Remedio. Santa Barbara, Attn: Hilary Yost. A copy of the Proposal is available at the Clerk of the Board.