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AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

March 14, 2012

Chandra L. Waller, County Executive Officer  
County of Santa Barbara  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: ADMHS Update**

Dear Ms. Waller,

I understand that an ADMHS update will be presented to the Board of Supervisors at an upcoming meeting. I am writing to give a contract agency perspective that may be useful to the Board in evaluating ADMHS performance.

Since 1999 Casa Pacifica Centers for Children and Families has provided under contract with ADMHS a variety of programs to Santa Barbara County's most challenging children and youth. I believe we are the largest provider of children's mental health services in Santa Barbara County. Over the last three years we have observed a substantial upgrade in ADMHS' contracting procedures, contract monitoring processes, and financial tracking. These are some of the improvements we have seen.

**Contracting Processes.** Contracts have been revised to provide clarity on the relationship between providers and the County. Moreover, contracts are reviewed and approved prior to the beginning of the fiscal year which facilitates our own annual planning and budgeting.

**Quarterly Reimbursement Rate Adjustments & Timely Payments.** ADMHS has implemented a procedure that adjusts provisional Medi-Cal reimbursement rates quarterly instead of establishing an annual provisional rate at the beginning of the contract year. These periodic adjustments assure that payments for services during the year are based on actual cost rates and avoid wide swings in year-end settlements (adjusting for over- or under-payments). Monthly payments are timely and directly deposited into our bank account which significantly improves cash flow.

**Settlement Policy.** ADMHS has developed a year-end settlement policy that clearly articulates the "rules" by which the County will settle cost reimbursed contracts. This clarity enables us to monitor our contract with greater precision and confidence and allows us to make adjustments throughout the year as necessary. It means "no surprises" at settlement time.

**Quarterly Scorecards & Performance Review Meetings.** ADMHS has developed scorecards for each provider which are issued and reviewed quarterly. These scorecards show provider performance against the contract in the areas of finance, staffing, service levels, and quality assurance/improvement. This regular feedback is quite useful and is used at the quarterly meetings with each provider as an agenda for discussion. In addition, the meetings provide an opportunity to discuss concerns and resolve issues in a timely fashion.

**Information on Medi-Cal Claims.** ADMHS has launched an electronic billing system that allows providers to directly input services into the system in real time. We have seen many improvements in this area – the IT and quality assurance teams have been terrific in helping us understand the system and providing timely information. The detail we receive enables us to research denials, correct errors, provide additional information as necessary and improve our own internal processes.

Casa Pacifica contracts with a number of Counties to provide mental health services to children and youth. I can say unequivocally that ADMHS provides more timely information, is more responsive to our queries, and manages provider relationships better than any other County with whom we work. ADMHS staff are available, knowledgeable, skilled in their areas, and a pleasure to work with. We prize our relationship with Santa Barbara County and appreciate greatly the efforts and sensitivity with which ADMHS has implemented contracting, billing and other fiscal changes that enable us to focus significantly more effort on our most important task – working with the children and youth of Santa Barbara County.

Sincerely,



Steven E. Elson, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

C: Members of the Board of Supervisors  
Ann Detrick, Ph.D., Director ADMHS