

# DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 10: Services

## Item 002: Substance Abuse Referrals

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA](#) Mailbox

Issued: **6/5/2013**

References: Welfare & Institutions Code 16500.5.  
Substance Abuse Master Agreement 2013.

Replaces Issue: New

American Society of Addiction Medicine Patient  
Placement Criteria..

### Preamble

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

### Policy

The Department of Social Services (DSS) will ensure that all DSS Child Welfare clients with substance abuse issues are provided with timely access to substance abuse evaluations and treatment services. The referral and vendor selection process shall be uniformed and conducted in a manner that is intended to meet the specific needs of each individual client.

### Purpose

To inform and provide DSS staff with consistent roles, responsibilities, and general requirements when referring child welfare clients to substance abuse treatment services and to ensure a uniform vendor selection process and to provide guidance in regards to resolving referral process and/or vendor selection conflict or disagreement.

### Points of Entry

Referrals for a substance abuse evaluation (SAE) and treatment can be made at any time it is discovered or suspected that a parent or guardian is in need of substance abuse treatment in order to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of their children.

Parents or guardians who are, or will be, participating in an active Child Welfare case (i.e. Voluntary Family Maintenance or Family Reunification) will be referred to services by the DSS Child Welfare Department. Fresno County dependent minors in need of substance abuse treatment will also be referred to services by the DSS Child Welfare Department (See PPG [PPG 3-6-16](#)).

Parents or guardians who are not current participants in an active Child Welfare case, but are CalWORKs/Welfare to Work recipients, can be referred to the DSS REACH Team for substance abuse services (see PPG [40-11-21](#)).

### Referral Process

## Linkages/AB 429

In order to ensure the proper funding for services, Social Workers (SW) will be sure to connect with AB 429 staff for all families receiving Family Reunification services and Linkages staff for all families receiving Voluntary or Court Ordered Family Maintenance. Please refer to PPG [15-07-072](#) for information regarding AB429 and to PPG [15-07-074](#) for information related to Linkages.

## SW Responsibilities

- Upon determination of need or when Court ordered, the assigned SW will complete and email the Child Welfare Resource Referral form ([6169](#)) to the "[CWS Referrals](#)" mailbox.
- If referring the client to the DSS REACH Team, the assigned SW will complete and email an [ES103](#) referral to the "[DSS SW/SAS Referrals](#)" mailbox (See [PPG 40-11-088](#)).
- Provide a client misrepresentation statement to the Substance Abuse Specialist (SAS) within two business days of request. Please note that only families who do not have an open Juvenile Court case, are on Cash Aid, and have time left on their Welfare-to-Work clock can be referred to the REACH Team.
- Review the SAE and SAS recommendations within one week of receiving the SAE.
- If the SAE recommendation is for treatment and the client has not already been referred to a treatment program, the SW will, within one week of receiving the SAE, arrange for a staffing to be held with the client to discuss treatment options. The SW will request a SAS' presence at the staffing by completing and emailing a request for staffing form ([6022](#)) to the "[CWS Referrals](#)" mailbox. Upon confirmation of a SAS' attendance, the SW will inform the client of the staffing date, time, and location.
- Document all staffings in CWS/CMS within 7 working days. Documentation should include, at minimum, the staffing participants, all treatment options discussed, any barriers to treatment that may have been discussed and any decisions made.
- Following the staffing, the assigned SW will provide the client with any assistance needed to begin treatment as soon as possible.
- When the assigned SW has been informed that that a client has been terminated from a treatment program, the SW will arrange for a staffing to be held with the client to discuss the most appropriate manner in which to proceed. The SW will request a SAS' presence at the staffing by completing and emailing the request for staffing form ([6022](#)) to the "[CWS Referrals](#)" mailbox. Upon confirmation of a SAS' attendance, the SW will inform the client of the staffing date, time, and location.
- If it is determined that the client is or may be in need of treatment immediately, the assigned SW is to send an email to the "CWS Referrals" mailbox to request an immediate SAE and possible referral for treatment. The subject line of the email should read, "Emergency SAE Request".

## SAS Responsibilities

- Verbally notify the assigned SW of the treatment level recommendation within three business days of completing the SAE followed up with an email notification.
- Forward a copy of the completed SAE and SAS recommendation to the assigned SW within 10 business days of receiving the 6169 referral form.
- Include in the SAE summary section a misrepresentation statement obtained from the assigned SW and/or from information obtained in CWS/CMS.

- Attend staffing with the assigned SW and client to discuss treatment options (initial and re-referral).
- Identify and present to the assigned SW and client all vendors suitable to meet the client's needs (see Vendor Selection section below). The SAS shall only recommend vendors listed on the Substance Abuse Treatment Services Master Agreement.
- Contact the selected vendor to confirm availability and/or intake appointment prior to the end of the staffing.
- Following the completion of the staffing, return an updated 6022 form to the Office Assistance (OA).
- Narrate in CWS/CMS the treatment level recommendation for the client, the treatment program the client was referred to, and the rationale for referring the client to that specific treatment program/vendor within 7 working days.
- If during the completion of the SAE, the SAS determines that the client needs to enter a treatment program immediately, the SAS will refer the client to a program (see Vendor Selection section below) and advise the assigned SW via email within one business day.
- Communicate the goals of the client's case plan to the vendor.
- Refer clients for drug testing, as needed.

### **OA Responsibilities**

- Monitor the CWS Referrals mailbox for 6169 Resource Referral forms requesting a SAE or substance abuse treatment services and 6022 staffing request forms related to substance abuse treatment.
- Each morning, the OA will:
  - Provide the SAS Supervisor with copies of the 6022's for review and assignment of a SAS to attend each staffing.
  - Provide the SAS Supervisor with a copy of the SAS calendar listing the scheduled SAE's for the day.
- Upon receipt of a Child Welfare Resource Referral form (6169) requesting a SAE and/or substance abuse treatment, the OA will schedule an appointment on the weekly SAS calendar within one business day.
- When the client's primary language is other than English, the OA will generate a referral to an appropriate agency.
- When a request for staffing form 6022 is received in the [CWS Referrals](#) mailbox, the OA will review the form to ensure the SW has provide all of the required information. If all the required fields are not completed on the form, the OA will email the form back to the SW specifying which fields need completion.
- The OA will schedule an appointment for the staffing on the SAS weekly calendar for the date and time requested by the SW. If the requested date and time are not available, the OA will contact the SW to request an alternate date and time.
- Once the date and time of the staffing has been scheduled, the OA will notify the SW via email that a SAS will attend the staffing.
- Upon receipt of the updated 6022, the OA will generate and email a service plan referral for the client to the designated vendor. The email will be encrypted to ensure client confidentiality.
- Upon receipt of an email request for an immediate SAE, the OA will inform the SAS Supervisor immediately. If the SAS Supervisor is not available, the OA will contact the Program Manager (PM)

### **Service Coordinator Responsibilities**

- Advise clients of the date, time, and location of their SAE. This is only for clients who have a Detention hearing or when first referred to Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM).
- Schedule substance abuse evaluations for any non-English speaking clients.

### **Staff Analyst Responsibilities**

- Ensure each vendor has maintained appropriate licensure and/or certification for their program.
- On a quarterly basis provide an updated list of which vendors have maintained appropriate licensure and/or certification to the SAS Supervisor.
- Advise SAS Supervisor immediately when there is a temporary hold on referring clients to a specific vendor, when DSS has terminated its contract with a vendor, or when the vendor has otherwise not maintained appropriate licensure and/or certification for their program.
- Maintain an updated list of vendors who are on the master agreement and currently in good standing with the DSS.
- Review Monthly Activity Reports from each vendor.

### **SAS Supervisor Responsibilities**

- Review all 6022 request for staffing forms and assign a SAS to attend each staffing on a daily basis.
- Review SAS calendar on a daily basis for scheduled substance abuse evaluations and ensure assignments.
- Immediately inform SAS staff via email when a hold has been placed on a specific vendor, when the DSS has terminated its contract with a vendor or when a vendor's license and/or certification is pending.
- Maintain a listing and track the number of referrals to each vendor by date of referral.
- Upon notification that a request has been made for an immediate SAE, the SAS Supervisor will determine if there is a SAS available immediately. If a SAS is not immediately available, the SAS Supervisor will provide the client with an appointment time that is no later than the next business day.

### **Vendor Responsibilities**

- Intake will be within 3 business days of receiving the DSS referral.
- Email notification to the DSS case manager and the [CWS Referrals](#) mailbox within one business day of a client's missed intake appointment.
- Assign the client a primary case manager and complete an individualized treatment plan for each client within 14 calendar days from intake.
- Email an encrypted copy of the treatment plan to the assigned SW and the CWS Referrals mailbox.

### **Vendor Selection**

The vendor selection process will be based upon the treatment program that is best suited to meet the needs of the client and shall include, but is not limited to, consideration of the following dynamics:

- The vendor has the appropriate licensure/certification for their program(s).

- Geographic location of the client (only considered when referring to an outpatient treatment program).
- Type of transportation available to the client (only considered when referring to an outpatient treatment program).
- Past treatment of the client with a particular program.
- The client has suffered a traumatic event.
- The child(ren) is/are living with the client.
- Health concerns/problems.
- The client needs to detoxify prior to entering treatment.
- The client is currently on methadone.
- Known or potential conflict with program staff or attendees.
- Mental health needs (Dual Diagnosis).
- Gender specific treatment needs.
- SAS feels the client may do well under a specific counselor at a certain treatment program.
- The client has requested a referral to a specific treatment program.

**Note:** Should more than one treatment program/vendor be determined to be appropriate to meet the client's needs, the vendor selection will be based upon client choice. Should the client not have a preference, the vendor selected shall be the vendor that has been utilized the least in the last 90 days.

## **Resolution**

### **Client Resolution**

- Should a client disagree with the SAE or SAS recommendations in regards to treatment level (out-patient/in-patient) or vendor selection, the SAS and/or assigned SW will counsel the client regarding the specific reasons for the recommendation.
- If the client remains in disagreement with the recommendation, the recommending SAS will consult/staff the client's situation with another SAS and the assigned SW.
- If there is a change in recommendation, the original SAS and assigned SW will inform the client of the change.
- If the original recommendation is not changed or the client does not agree with the modified recommendation, the SAS and the assigned SW will advise the client of the option to challenge the DSS recommendation in Court and/or self refer to a program of their choice.
- Should the client choose to self refer to a program of their choice, the SAS will narrate in CWS/CMS within 7 working days that the client has been advised of the following:
  1. The level of treatment and/or vendor may not be suitable to meet the client's specific recovery needs.
  2. The Court may or may not accept the client's participation in or completion of the program as satisfying the DSS case plan or Court order.
  3. The DSS will not be responsible for payment to the client's chosen vendor unless ordered by the Court to do so.
- Allowing a client to participate in treatment at a level lower than what is recommended in the SAE is rare and should only occur under extenuating circumstances. Any such agreement will be subject to specific conditions and will require the approval of the SAS Supervisor and the assigned SW Supervisor (SWS). In addition, agreement to allow a client to participate in a lower level of treatment does not affect or change the SAE recommendation.

### **Social Worker/Substance Abuse Specialist Resolution**

Should the SW and SAS disagree at any time regarding a client's treatment plan and are unable to resolve the matter on their own, the SWS and SAS Supervisor will be asked to help resolve the matter. If the SWS and SAS Supervisor are unable to come to an agreement, the SW's PM and SAS's PM, will be asked to help resolve the matter. If the two PMs are unable to come to an agreement, the Child Welfare Deputy Director will make the final decision.

### **Vendor Resolution**

Any client complaints received by the DSS regarding vendors will be forwarded to EBAA (see [PPG 15-9-13](#)). When the client's complaint is specific to discrimination, the client will be directed to contact the DSS Civil Rights Coordinator, Steve Sanchez, at 600-2996 (see [PPG 10-02-009](#)). If the Civil Rights Coordinator determines that the complaint is not a Civil Rights issue it will be routed to EBAA at Stop 53a for resolution. In the event the nature of a complaint against a vendor is such that the clients' immediate health and safety may be at risk, a PM must be contacted to determine the appropriate immediate action.