

## **XIX. ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY REGARDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF THOSE WE SERVE**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC) recognizes the importance of transparency and accountability to the community it serves. RCOC is committed to reporting information with accuracy and transparency and maintaining full compliance with the laws, rules and regulations that govern RCOC's business, as well as RCOC's contract with the California Department of Developmental Services. This includes annually notifying all its employees, its vendors and licensees of long-term health care facilities\* that are serving RCOC persons served that RCOC has a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding abuse and neglect of those we serve.

### **POLICY**

Abuse of individuals we serve committed by RCOC employees, employees of RCOC vendors, or employees of licensees who operate long-term health care facilities will not be tolerated. All such abuse or allegations of such abuse will be thoroughly investigated. Any RCOC employee found to have abused a person served will be subject to severe discipline, up to and including discharge, and will be referred to appropriate authorities. All employees of RCOC vendors and of licensees who operate long-term health care facilities found to have abused a person served will be referred to the appropriate authorities, and the vendor may also be subject to sanctions, up to and including, removal from the list of those authorized to provide services for regional center.

All employees of RCOC, employees of RCOC vendors, and employees of licensees who operate long-term health care facilities who are mandated reporters pursuant to the California Penal Code shall strictly comply with the reporting laws at all times, including, but not limited to, Welfare and Institutions Code Section 15630. A mandated reporter must report all abuse of individuals we serve to the applicable governmental authorities immediately or as soon as practicable after his or her discovery or reasonable belief that abuse has occurred.

RCOC, all RCOC vendors, and all licensees who operate long-term health care facilities serving RCOC persons served shall ensure their employees are fully informed upon hire and annually thereafter regarding RCOC's Zero Tolerance Policy Regarding Abuse and Neglect of Those We Serve and the mandatory abuse and neglect reporting laws. Each employee must be knowledgeable of their responsibility to protect our population from abuse and neglect, the signs of abuse and neglect, the process for reporting suspected abuse or neglect, and the consequences of failing to follow the law and enforcing this policy.

RCOC's Zero Tolerance Policy Regarding Abuse and Neglect of Those We Serve will be incorporated into any new or revised contract, vendorization or other agreement for services.

If RCOC, a RCOC vendor, or a licensee who operates a long-term health care facility becomes aware of abuse of a person served, it shall take immediate action, to the extent

permitted by law, to ensure the health and safety of the affected individual and all other individuals receiving services and supports from RCOC. This obligation is in addition to those obligations required of mandated reporters to report abuse under the reporting laws.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Persons served are in safe and supportive settings that promote a life of independence, acknowledge diverse cultural perspectives and that respect the inherent risks and valuable learning experiences that come from living in the community.
- Service coordinators inform families of their rights and the services and supports available to them.
- RCOC aspires to the highest standards of ethical conduct: doing what we say; reporting information with accuracy and transparency; and maintaining full compliance with the laws, rules and regulations that govern RCOC's business.
- The RCOC Board of Directors will possess the highest personal and professional ethics, integrity and values, and be committed to representing the long-term interests of the Orange County community it serves.

\* According to the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 1418,

- (a) "Long-term health care facility" means any facility licensed pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1250) that is any of the following:
- (1) Skilled nursing facility.
  - (2) Intermediate care facility.
  - (3) Intermediate care facility/developmentally disabled.
  - (4) Intermediate care facility/developmentally disabled habilitative.
  - (5) Intermediate care facility/developmentally disabled-nursing.
  - (6) Congregate living health facility.
  - (7) Nursing facility.
  - (8) Intermediate care facility/developmentally disabled-continuous nursing.
- (b) "Long-term health care facility" also includes a pediatric day health and respite care facility licensed pursuant to Chapter 8.6 (commencing with Section 1760).
- (c) "Long-term health care facility" does not include a general acute care hospital or an acute psychiatric hospital, except for that distinct part of the hospital that provides skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, intermediate care facility/developmentally disabled, or pediatric day health and respite care facility services.
- (d) "Licensee" means the holder of a license issued under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1250) or Chapter 8.6 (commencing with Section 1760) for a long-term health care facility.

***Last Policy Review Date: October 21, 2024***

***No Revisions Recommended to Board: November 7, 2024***

***Date of Next Review: on or before November 7, 2025***