San Diego Regional Center Plan for COVID-19 Testing and Vaccinations
Prepared February 24, 2021, by Carlos Flores, Executive Director

In a directive dated January 29, 2021, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) directs regional centers to submit a plan to the Department regarding COVID-19 testing and vaccinations. This is the plan for the San Diego Regional Center (SDRC).

Personal Protective Equipment
Since mid-March 2020, the SDRC has collaborated with service providers to develop a system for distributing almost six million articles of personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE have been distributed to clients, families, and service providers. The distribution system contains the following elements:

- Identification of sites throughout San Diego and Imperial counties for distribution of PPE. Service providers volunteered the sites.
- Creation of a volunteer pool of service providers and SDRC staff to distribute PPE.
- Outreach and advertisement through service coordinators and social media announcing an upcoming distribution event. Events are for clients and families or for service providers.
- Pre-registration and scheduling of time slots for the pick-up of PPE (to avoid long lines).
- A transportation service provider delivers PPE to clients and families when a member of the family has tested positive for COVID-19 and a family member cannot pick up PPE from a site.

Testing
With the assistance of the COVID Testing Task Force of the California Health and Human Services Agency, the SDRC has registered with Color Laboratory to provide COVID-19 testing for clients, families, service providers’ staff, and SDRC staff. The testing project was created in collaboration with service providers. The testing project contains elements similar to the PPE distribution system and in some cases PPE is distributed and people are tested at the same time. The testing project contains the following elements:

- Identification of 16 sites throughout San Diego and Imperial counties for testing. Service providers volunteered the sites.
- Creation of a volunteer pool of service providers and SDRC staff to supervise the testing.
- Outreach and advertisement through service coordinators and social media announcing upcoming testing events. Events are for clients, families, service providers’ staff and SDRC staff.
- Pre-registration and scheduling of time slots for testing (to avoid long lines).
- Mobile units to deliver and supervise tests if necessary.
- Transportation service provider pick up test samples from drop off points and deliver them to the Color Lab in Valencia, California.
Vaccinations

The SDRC has contacts with the organizations in San Diego and Imperial counties providing vaccinations including San Diego County Health Department, Imperial County Health Department, Cal Fire, CVS Pharmacies, and Walgreens Pharmacies. Most clients living in residential facilities have received the second vaccination. Residential facilities have been contacted and asked to verify all clients who have received vaccines. The information will be entered in SANDIS.

The SDRC has issued letters to approximately 350 service coordinators, quality assurance and intake staff declaring their eligibility to receive vaccines.

In accordance with the DDS directive dated February 12, 2021, and to reduce risks associated with COVID-19, the SDRC is conducting outreach to, and making contact with, every regional center client age 65 and older who is not known to already be vaccinated, their family or conservator, or with the administrator of their licensed residential facility.

In anticipation of expanding vaccine eligibility for people with developmental disabilities on March 15, 2021, the SDRC intends to contact San Diego and Imperial county health departments regarding the feasibility of providing vaccines at the sites established for PPE distribution and testing. Presumably, this can ease the burden on the counties. In addition, people knowledgeable about developmental disabilities would administer vaccines.

Through its PPE and testing programs, the SDRC has the foundation in place to add vaccines. The tangible issues related to vaccines at the established sites would be:

- locating clinical personnel who are qualified to give vaccines and have experience serving persons with developmental disabilities;
- receiving an on-going supply of vaccines; locating refrigeration units to store vaccines; receiving training on the defrosting and proper handling of vaccines; and,
- locating qualified clinical personnel at each vaccine site who can intervene in the event of a serious, adverse reaction.