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SAN ANTONIO SSLC FAILS FOURTH ROUND COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Austin, TX – The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) has released a monitoring report indicating people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the San Antonio State Supported Living Center (SSLC) remain at high risk for abuse and neglect due to the facility's continued noncompliance on basic health and safety provisions.

More than two years since the implementation of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) settlement agreement with DADS, the San Antonio SSLC has met standards in less than 20 percent of the provision areas for which the DOJ settlement agreement currently requires that they already show substantial compliance.

The San Antonio facility continues to show limited to no improvements in many areas and has in fact lost compliance in six major areas in which it had previously been determined to have met standards, including areas related to protection from harm – restraints; protection from harm – abuse, neglect and incident management; and serving institutionalized persons in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

The following significant failures were reported at the San Antonio SSLC:

- Between Aug. 25, 2011 and Feb. 3, 2012, restraints were used 131 times on residents.
- Monitors noted that there "continued to be a high number of incidents and injuries at the facility." There were a total of 782 injuries reported for the fiscal year 2012; this marks an increase from the same period for FY 2011.
- "There was minimal progress being made on developing plans that would lead to a more meaningful day for individuals." According to monitors, "plans were built around programming that was available at the facility rather than looking at what each individual may need or want."
- The facility "had taken minimal steps towards compliance" with meeting the care needs of at-risk individuals, the facility's most fragile population.
- Monitors found "a lot of work needed to be done" in areas related to psychological care and services, including increasing the percentage of functional assessments that included all the necessary assessment components.
- The neurological care provided by medical staff "was not comprehensive."
- Monitors revealed "a continued and pervasive pattern of problems in nursing practices across all aspects of care." Nurses failed to perform timely, complete, accurate assessments and failed to develop acute and chronic health management plans to address individuals' health problems.
- Relative to pharmacy services and safe medication practices, monitors noted that the "medication dispensing variances were reported as zero." However, "given the history of dispensing variances, a sudden drop to zero was a clear indication that the facility was not able to provide accurate and reliable data."
- Hygienists were no longer visiting homes on site to provide instruction to the residents and staff on tooth brushing and oral care.
- Individuals were placed in the most integrated setting at annual rate of less than 2 percent (two placements in six months). Further, only two individuals had been placed in the community since the last review.

"This fourth monitoring report on the San Antonio facility is extremely alarming, as it indicates the center is actually backtracking in its ability to meet the basic health and safety needs of individuals," said Beth Mitchell, supervising attorney for Disability Rights Texas, the federally designated legal protection and advocacy agency for Texans with disabilities.

“More than two years into the Settlement Agreement, the facility continues to fail in making the necessary improvements to the protections, supports and services provided to residents,” Mitchell added. “The San Antonio center’s lack of progress is incredibly disturbing given how little time remains for the facility to gain compliance.”

For more information on the April 9, 2012, San Antonio SSLC Monitoring Team Report, visit www.dads.state.tx.us/monitors/reports/index.html.

For additional information on how all the state supported living centers are performing, visit the Disability Rights Texas onsite Press Room at www.disabilityrightstx.org/who-we-are/press-room/.

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Disability Rights Texas is a nonprofit disability advocacy organization that protects and advances the legal, human and service rights of Texans with a broad range of disabilities. Disability Rights Texas is federally funded and designated as the protection and advocacy agency (P&A) for the state of Texas. In March 2011, the agency changed its name from Advocacy Inc. to Disability Rights Texas.