



ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR CONSUMER ABUSE OR NEGLECT

1.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC) has no tolerance for consumer abuse or neglect. Research studies document that individuals with developmental disabilities have a significantly higher risk of becoming the victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation as compared to the non-disabled population. In an effort to ensure the health, safety, and security of VMRC consumers, our agency is committed to a “Zero Tolerance” standard for consumer abuse and neglect.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Abuse includes, but is not limited to, physical abuse, neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction, or other treatment which results in physical harm, pain or emotional/mental suffering, or deprivation, by a person providing care and supervision, of goods and services which are necessary to avoid physical harm or emotional/mental suffering further defined as follows:

- **Physical Abuse:** Any act which results in non-accidental injury. The use or attempt to use force on the person of another, unreasonable physical constraint, prolonged or continual deprivation of food and water, chemical restraint, or psychotropic medication without medical authorization used for punishment.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any non-consenting sexual act or behavior.
- **Financial Abuse:** The illegal or unethical exploitation and/or use of a consumer’s funds, property, or other assets.
- **Neglect:** The negligent failure of a person(s) having care or custody of a consumer to exercise a reasonable degree of care including, but not limited to, a failure to assist in personal hygiene and the provision of food, clothing, and shelter, or failure to provide medical care or protect the client from health and safety hazards including a medical diagnosis of failure to thrive.
- **Abandonment:** The desertion of a consumer by someone who is a caregiver or has custody of the consumer under circumstances in which a reasonable person would continue to provide care and custody.
- **Abduction:** The removal, without the consent of the consumer/conservator, of a consumer/conservatee to another state.
- **Isolation:** The intentional preventing of a consumer from receiving mail, telephone calls or visitors when contrary to the expressed wishes of the consumer.

- Emotional Abuse/Mental Suffering: Fear, agitation, confusion, severe depression or other forms of emotional distress that is brought about by deprivation, threats, harassment, or other forms of intimidating behavior.

3.0 PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

VMRC and all of their service providers shall ensure employees are fully informed of VMRC's Zero Tolerance Policy on Consumer Abuse and Neglect.

Employees are to be fully informed of the policy upon hire and annually thereafter. Each employee must be knowledgeable of

- 1) their responsibility to protect consumers from abuse and neglect, and
- 2) the signs of abuse and neglect, and
- 3) the process for reporting suspected abuse or neglect, and
- 4) the consequences of failing to follow the law and enforcing this policy.

"Reasonable suspicion" is the standard for reporting abuse and neglect. All VMRC staff who are mandated reporters pursuant to the California Penal Code, and all employees of service providers and long-term care facilities who are mandated reporters will strictly comply with the reporting laws at all times. A mandated reporter must (unless exempt under law) report all consumer abuse to the applicable governmental authorities immediately or as soon as practicable after his or her discovery or reasonable belief that consumer abuse has occurred.

Consumer abuse committed by VMRC employees or employees of service providers or long-term care facilities will not be tolerated. All such abuse or allegations of such abuse will be thoroughly investigated. Any VMRC employee found to have engaged in abuse against a consumer will be subject to severe discipline, up to and including termination. Any abuse found to have been committed by a service provider or long-term care facility employee will be referred to the appropriate authorities and the service provider may also be subject to sanctions up to and including devendorization which equates to removal from the list of those authorized to provide services for any and all regional center consumers.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Suspected abuse must be reported immediately by calling the appropriate 24-hour hotline and followed by a written report within 2 days of receiving the information concerning the incident.

If you suspect that a child is being abused, contact Child Protective Services:

- San Joaquin County (209)468-1333
- Stanislaus County (800)558-3665
- Amador County (209)223-6550 or (209)223-1075 (After Hours)
- Calaveras County (209)754-6452 or (209)754-6500 (After Hours)
- Tuolumne County (209)533-5717 or (209)533-4357 (After Hours)

If you suspect that an adult is being abused, contact Adult Protective Services:

- San Joaquin County (209)468-2202 or (888)800-4800
- Stanislaus County (800)336-4316
- Amador County (209)223-6550 or (209)223-1075 (After Hours)
- Calaveras County (209)754-6452 or (209)754-6500 (After Hours)
- Tuolumne County (209)768-7753 or (209)533-HELP (4357) (After Hours)

Ombudsman's Offices:

- San Joaquin (209)468-3785
- Stanislaus (209)529-3784
- Amador (209)532-7632
- Calaveras (209)532-7632
- Tuolumne (209)532-7632

ZERO TOLERANCE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that I have read and understand the information provided to me regarding Valley Mountain Regional Center's Zero Tolerance Policy for Abuse or Neglect.

Service Provider Signature

Date