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9 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
10 FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA  
11

12 J.K., a minor by and through R.K., et al., on  
13 behalf of themselves and all others similarly  
14 situated,

15 Plaintiffs,

16 v.

17 WILL HUMBLE, in his official capacity as  
18 Interim Director of the Arizona Department  
19 of Health Services; DR. LAURA NELSON,  
20 in her official capacity as Director, Division  
21 of Behavioral Health Services; THOMAS J.  
22 BETLACH, in his official capacity as  
23 Director, Arizona Health Care Cost  
24 Containment System

25 Defendants.

No. CV-91-261 TUC-AWT

**SPECIAL MASTER'S REPORT  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

26 On November 15, 2012, Judge A. Wallace Tashima appointed the undersigned as  
27 Special Master in this matter. The appointment followed several attempts by the parties  
28 to agree upon the proper interpretation of the parties' 2001 Settlement Agreement (the  
Agreement or SA) and to define those issues remaining for resolution by the Court.  
Judge Tashima directed that, within six months of appointment, I should issue a report

1 and recommendations “concerning the interpretation of the Settlement Agreement and  
2 whether and, if so, how to proceed in resolving any disputes arising under the  
3 Agreement.” Dkt. 586.

4 After meeting informally with the parties and their attorneys, the special master  
5 directed that the parties submit written memoranda analyzing the issues in dispute. As to  
6 each issue, the parties were to “define those provisions in the Agreement that affect the  
7 issue; what the parties intended in adopting the relevant provisions; what relevant  
8 extrinsic evidence can be considered in determining the intent of the parties; and what  
9 standard the Court should apply to measure compliance with the relevant provision.”  
10 Dkt. 589, December 20, 2012. The parties filed their respective memoranda on January  
11 24, 2013, [Dkt. 592 and 594] and their responses on February 4, 2013. Dkt. 595, 596.

12 The special master heard oral argument on February 21, 2013. Dkt. 598; TR at  
13 Dkt. 603. The parties filed post-hearing memoranda on March 4, 2013. Dkt. 601, 602.  
14 The special master provided a draft copy of this Report to the parties on April 24, 2013,  
15 and allowed them to file objections and recommendations on or before May 6, 2013.  
16 After considering those objections, in conjunction with previously-filed documents and  
17 argument, I submit this Report and Recommendations.<sup>1</sup>

### 18 **Background**

19 The current dispute arises out of the Settlement Agreement entered between the  
20 parties in 2001 and extended in 2006.<sup>2</sup> In 2009, plaintiffs invoked the dispute resolution  
21 provisions of Section IX of the Agreement by sending a letter to defendants. In their  
22 letter of March 6, 2009 (the March 2009 letter),<sup>3</sup> plaintiffs listed six “serious” issues in  
23 dispute. Although the parties disagree as to the scope of the issues defined by plaintiffs  
24 and the analysis required to resolve these issues, they have reached agreement in several

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25 <sup>1</sup> All materials considered by the special master are part of the record; no materials  
26 were filed under seal.

27 <sup>2</sup> The Settlement Agreement appears in the record in several locations. It appears  
28 in electronic format at Dkt. 592, Ex. A.

<sup>3</sup> The March 2009 letter appears in electronic format at Dkt. 491, Ex. 11.

1 areas.

2 First, the parties agree that the Court retains jurisdiction to resolve the issues  
3 plaintiffs raised in the March 2009 letter and that their current dispute is limited to those  
4 matters raised in the letter. They also agree that the Agreement should be interpreted as a  
5 contract and that the laws of Arizona govern its interpretation.

6 The parties also do not dispute the basic rules that apply to contract interpretation  
7 in Arizona. They agree that the party alleging a breach bears the burden of proving the  
8 breach. They also agree that a court's objective in interpreting a contract is to arrive at  
9 the intent of the parties as expressed in the contract and that the court should give words  
10 their ordinary meaning; read the contract as a whole, giving effect to the main purpose of  
11 the instrument; and interpret the contract so as to make it effective and reasonable. *E.g.*,  
12 *Phelps Dodge Corp. v. Brown*, 112 Ariz. 179, 181, 540 P.2d 651, 653 (1975).

13 Several other aspects of Arizona law affect the resolution of these disputes. First,  
14 Arizona has adopted the general principles of the *Restatement (Second) of Contracts*  
15 (1979) to guide judicial interpretation of contracts. *See Gordinier v. Aetna Casualty &*  
16 *Surety Co.*, 154 Ariz. 266, 742 P.2d 277 (1987). In addition, Arizona law "implies a  
17 covenant of good faith and fair dealing in every contract." *Rawlings v. Apodaca*, 151  
18 Ariz. 149, 153, 726 P.2d 565, 569 (1986). "Such implied terms are as much a part of the  
19 contract as are the express terms." *Wells Fargo Bank v. Arizona Laborers, Pension Trust*  
20 *Fund*, 201 Ariz. 474, 490, 38 P.3d 12, 28 (2002).

### 21 **Measure of Compliance**

22 Although the parties agree as to the basic rules governing contract interpretation in  
23 Arizona, they disagree about the test to apply to determine whether defendants have  
24 breached any contractual obligation. Plaintiffs assert that the test is whether defendants  
25 have substantially complied with the terms of the Agreement. Defendants, who initially  
26 argued that the substantial compliance test applies, now assert that, because many of the  
27 terms of the Agreement created qualitative obligations to which no objective performance  
28 standards apply and left implementation in many areas to the defendants' discretion, their  
performance should be measured under a standard of good faith. Given the terms and

1 structure of the Agreement, both parties' arguments find support in the law of Arizona  
2 and, in application, are not inconsistent.

3 Plaintiffs correctly assert that Arizona measures alleged breaches of contract under  
4 the doctrine of substantial compliance. *Matson v. Bradbury*, 40 Ariz. 140, 144, 10 P.2d  
5 376, 378 (1932). To determine questions of substantial compliance, a court generally  
6 considers the promised performance, the purpose of the contract, and the extent to which  
7 any defects in performance have frustrated the purpose of the contract. *See Foundation*  
8 *Development Corp. v. Loehman's, Inc.*, 163 Ariz. 438, 446-47, 788 P.2d 1189, 1197-98  
9 (1990) (citing *Restatement (Second) of Contracts* § 241).

10 Although the doctrine of substantial compliance applies to all alleged breaches of  
11 contract, precisely what constitutes substantial compliance must be measured according  
12 to the nature of the promised performance. The doctrine provides a relatively easy test to  
13 apply when a contract defines a quantitative standard to use in measuring a party's  
14 promised performance. The substantial compliance test is more difficult to apply when,  
15 as in this case, some terms of an agreement create qualitative obligations for which the  
16 parties have defined no objective standards of performance.

17 Defendants correctly point out that the language of the Agreement defines many of  
18 defendants' obligations, including "core obligations," in qualitative terms and provides  
19 no objective standard by which to measure performance. By way of example, the  
20 Agreement describes the parties' intent as being to "substantially improve the system for  
21 delivery of behavioral health services," SA.I.1, states that defendants "agree to foster the  
22 development" of a system that "delivers services according to [the Agreement's]  
23 Principles," SA.III.14, and requires that defendants "move as quickly as practicable" to  
24 develop the system, SA.III.15. In these and other instances, the Agreement affords the  
25 defendants discretion in how to implement qualitative obligations. In contrast, other  
26 terms of the contract, particularly those in Section VI, define more specific steps that  
27 defendants must take, some of which apply objective standards and some of which define  
28 defendants' obligations in qualitative terms, as discussed below.

Whether a contract defines contractual obligations in qualitative or quantitative

1 terms, however, the first task in resolving questions of substantial compliance is to define  
2 the nature of the promised performance. When a party's promised performance relates to  
3 a qualitative term of a contract that affords the party discretion in performance, the  
4 analysis of whether the party has breached that contractual term typically turns on  
5 whether the party has breached the covenant of good faith and fair dealing. *See, e.g.,*  
6 *Labor/Community Strategy Center v. LA County Metropolitan Transp. Auth.*, 564 F.3d  
7 1115 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2009); *Bike Fashion Corp. v. Kramer*, 202 Ariz. 420, 424, 46 P.3d 431,  
8 435 (App. 2002).

9 The reason for applying a good faith analysis in such instances seems clear.  
10 Unless some standard limits a party's exercise of discretion in performing qualitative  
11 terms of a contract, an allegedly breaching party could assert that any activity fell within  
12 the ambit of his discretionary duties and thus fulfilled the promised performance.  
13 Because that approach could result in enforcing an outcome inconsistent with the  
14 intention of the parties, most courts, including those of Arizona, regard the covenant of  
15 good faith and fair dealing as an implied term of every contract. "The duty to perform in  
16 good faith applies when one party exercises discretion in performance and thereby  
17 controls the other party's anticipated benefit. The good faith performance doctrine may  
18 be said to permit the exercise of discretion for any purpose—including ordinary business  
19 purposes—reasonably within the contemplation of the parties. A contract thus would be  
20 breached by a failure to perform in good faith if a party uses its discretion for a reason  
21 outside the contemplated range—a reason beyond the risks assumed by the party  
22 claiming a breach." Steven J. Burton, *Breach of Contract and the Common Law Duty to*  
23 *Perform in Good Faith*, 94 Harv. L. Rev. 369, 385-86 (1980). Even discretionary duties,  
24 therefore, must be performed in a manner that does not defeat the parties' purpose in  
25 entering the contract and in a manner consistent with a party's justified expectations.  
26 *Wells Fargo Bank*, 201 Ariz. at 492, 38 P.3d at 30.

27 Although plaintiffs here did not allege that defendants breached the covenant of  
28 good faith and fair dealing, plaintiffs' claims, for the most part, must rely on that implied  
covenant. Under the express terms of the Agreement, defendants' obligations are, in

1 many instances, defined only by subjective standards that afford the defendants  
2 considerable discretion. Absent application of the covenant, defendants could assert that  
3 any exercise of discretion satisfied their obligations. Under Arizona law, however,  
4 defendants could exercise the discretion afforded by the contract only in a manner  
5 consistent with the purpose of the Agreement and in a manner consistent with plaintiffs'  
6 reasonably expected benefits.

7 **Issues Set Out in Plaintiffs' March 6, 2009 Letter**

8 Although the parties agree that the disputes over which the Court retains  
9 jurisdiction are those set out in the March 2009 letter, they disagree over the scope of the  
10 disputes as defined in the letter. At the hearing before Judge Roll on November 22, 2010,  
11 plaintiffs acknowledged that they were bound by the parameters of the issues they raised  
12 in the letter.<sup>4</sup> Dkt. 535 at 17. On later occasions, however, plaintiffs have suggested that  
13 the scope of the dispute before the Court is considerably broader than those specific  
14 issues set out in their letter. *E.g.*, Dkt. 594, 14-16. The Court must determine, then,  
15 whether plaintiffs can argue matters not expressly raised in the March 2009 letter.

16 Section IX of the Agreement, which describes the dispute resolution process  
17 available under the Agreement, defines a sequential process that begins when a party  
18 submits to all other parties "a written statement of the issue in dispute." SA.IX.A.59.  
19 Given the detail with which the parties describe the dispute resolution process and the  
20 express requirement that a party begin the process by providing a written statement of the  
21 issue[s] in dispute, the most reasonable interpretation of the provision is that the parties  
22 intended to define and limit the issues in dispute, an outcome that is possible only if  
23 disputed issues are defined with some specificity. I therefore conclude that the issues in  
24 dispute are limited to those six issues specifically identified as serious remaining issues

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25 <sup>4</sup> At the hearing, Judge Roll reminded the parties of his earlier concerns related to  
26 the lack of specificity in the Agreement: "Again I recall back many years ago when this  
27 was discussed, and it's my recollection I expressed some concern about the lack of  
28 precision as far as exactly what was contemplated by the agreement, and I was assured  
that it would come together and that details would be worked out, but obviously, after all  
these years, they have not been worked out." Dkt. 535 at 12. As these proceedings  
demonstrate, Judge Roll accurately predicted the parties' difficulty in applying the  
imprecise terms of the Agreement.

1 on page 3 of the March 2009 letter.

2 Plaintiffs object to this recommendation, arguing that portions of the March 9  
3 letter that precede the listing of specific issues should be included as part of the  
4 allegations at issue. That argument appears inconsistent with plaintiffs' own approach to  
5 the nature of the letter. First, plaintiffs use the introductory portions of the letter as a  
6 general explanation of why the six "serious issues" remain. Second, plaintiffs agreed,  
7 both before Judge Roll and the special master, that the disputes remaining are those six  
8 issues set out in the March 2009 letter. Although plaintiffs' statements recognizing the  
9 limits of the disputes at issue certainly do not constitute admissions, they are helpful in  
10 determining what plaintiffs intended to accomplish in their letter.

11 As to each of the six serious issues defined by plaintiffs, I make the following  
12 recommendations.

13 **Issue 1**

14 Issue 1 in plaintiffs' March 9 letter includes two distinct allegations. First,  
15 plaintiffs allege that defendants "failed to meet their core obligation under the Settlement  
16 Agreement to develop (at first by July 2007, but now by July 2010); a Title XIX  
17 behavioral health system that delivers services according to the *J.K. Principles*."  
18 Second, plaintiffs allege that defendants "have not made changes to 'contracts, decisions,  
19 practice guidelines and other policies' needed to achieve the Principles for class  
20 members."<sup>5</sup>

21 Although plaintiffs' March 2009 letter does not identify the specific provisions of  
22 the Agreement that defendants allegedly breached, their first allegation relies initially  
23 upon Section III.14 of the Agreement, which states that defendants "agree to foster the  
24 development of a Title XIX behavioral health system" that delivers services according to  
25 the Principles defined in Section V of the Agreement. The plaintiffs also point to  
26 paragraphs 15 and 16 in Section III, which require, respectively, that defendants "move  
27 as quickly as practicable to develop" a system that delivers services in accord with the

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28 <sup>5</sup> Plaintiffs end by stating, "Major failings are described below," apparently  
referring to the five more specific issues that follow.



1 Principles and that defendants conform “all contracts, decisions, practice guidelines and  
2 policies” to be consistent with and designed to achieve the Principles.

3 The parties’ disagreement as to the scope of defendants’ obligations under  
4 paragraphs 14 through 16 of the Agreement is at the heart of their dispute. Defendants  
5 argue that paragraph 14 requires only that they “foster,” or encourage, the development  
6 of the described system and that nothing in the Agreement requires them to “develop” or  
7 ensure any particular system. Plaintiffs assert that paragraph 15, which requires that  
8 defendants move as quickly as practicable “to develop” a system and maintain that  
9 system for “the term of this Agreement” essentially expands the scope of defendants’  
10 obligations under paragraph 14. These two interpretations of the Agreement cannot be  
11 reconciled; one must be selected as the more reasonable interpretation of the parties’  
12 intent at the time of the Agreement.

13 The first task in interpreting these basic provisions of the contract is to define the  
14 promised performance: Did defendants agreed to “develop” the described system or,  
15 more modestly, to “foster” the development of such a system? I conclude that the  
16 express language of paragraph 14, which requires defendants to “foster” the system,  
17 discloses the parties’ intent. Several other factors favor that interpretation. First,  
18 paragraphs 15 and 16, as structured and placed in the Agreement, add to but do not  
19 redefine the initial, basic requirement of paragraph 14. Second, other portions of the  
20 Agreement indicate that the parties understood that the defendants would foster, not  
21 assure, development of the system. The Recitals, in Section I.1, state that the parties  
22 intend to “substantially improve” the delivery of services and that implementing the  
23 Agreement will require “initiatives to *improve* front-line practice, *enhance* the capacity of  
24 private agencies to deliver needed services, *promote* collaboration among public  
25 agencies, and develop a quality management and improvement system *focused* on sound  
26 practice.” (Emphases added.) All these general terms are consistent with an intent to  
27 foster development of an improved system rather than an intent to require development of  
28 a specific system.

If the language of the Agreement were not sufficiently clear to discern the parties’



1 intent, external evidence of the circumstances surrounding the settlement negotiations  
 2 provides strong support for defendants' argument.<sup>6</sup> In November 2000, plaintiffs  
 3 submitted a draft Settlement Agreement that stated in part: "Defendants shall a) *ensure*  
 4 *that by July 1, 2006*, behavioral health services are provided to class members in  
 5 conformity with the 'principles' in Section V below." Dkt. 592, Ex. B, II(a) (emphasis  
 6 added). But the Agreement as adopted describes defendants' obligation as being to  
 7 "foster," rather than "ensure," development of a Title XIX behavioral health system that  
 8 delivers services according to the Principles. Dkt. 592, Ex. A, III.14. In addition, while  
 9 plaintiffs' draft document included a date certain for performance, the Agreement as  
 10 adopted requires that defendants "move as quickly as practicable" to develop the  
 11 described system. *Id.* 15.<sup>7</sup>

12 Plaintiffs' allegation in Issue 1 of the March 2009 letter that defendants have  
 13 failed to develop a particular system by July 2012, returns to the language of the  
 14 proposed, but rejected, draft settlement agreement. The final Agreement simply does not  
 15 require either that defendants "develop" a desired system or that they do so by a date  
 16 certain. By asserting that defendants failed to meet their core obligation to develop a  
 17 system that delivers services by a defined date, plaintiffs have moved beyond the  
 18 language of the contract and now seek to impose obligations not a part of the Agreement.  
 19 While the allegation may describe plaintiffs' intent in bringing the underlying action, it  
 20 does not describe the parties' intent as reflected in the language of the Agreement.

21 I recommend that the Court find, as a matter of law, that the Agreement does not

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22 <sup>6</sup> Section 212(1), *Restatement (Second) of Contracts*, on which Arizona relies,  
 23 points out that the interpretation of an integrated contract "is directed to the meaning of  
 24 the terms of the writing or writings in the light of the circumstances, in accordance with  
 25 the rules stated in this Chapter." Comment b further explains that the rule of subsection  
 (1) should not be limited to cases in which the language used is ambiguous, as any  
 determination of meaning or ambiguity should be made only in light of the relevant  
 evidence of the situation and the relations of the parties.

26 <sup>7</sup> Plaintiffs point to memoranda and letters prepared by plaintiffs during the years  
 27 after execution of the Agreement to support their argument that the Agreement requires  
 28 defendants to develop, rather than to foster the development of, a specific system.  
 Documents not directly related to the parties' intent at the time of an agreement provide  
 little relevant information as to intent at the time of execution of a document.

1 obligate defendants to develop a behavioral health system that delivers services according  
2 to the *J.K.* principles by a time certain.

3 Plaintiffs object to this recommendation, arguing that, while the letter may have  
4 been inartfully drafted, plaintiffs previously had put defendants on notice that they were  
5 required to move as quickly as practicable to develop a system that complied with the  
6 Principles. Therefore, plaintiffs conclude, this statement in Issue 1 should be regarded as  
7 alleging not that defendants failed to develop a system by a time certain but rather as  
8 stating that defendants did not move as quickly as practicable, as required by paragraph  
9 15 of the Agreement.

10 In my view, plaintiffs seek more than an alternate interpretation of an inartfully-  
11 described “serious issue.” Plaintiffs chose the language to define their dispute with  
12 defendants and chose very specific language. Asserting that defendants failed to develop  
13 a system by a date certain is different in kind than asserting that defendants failed to  
14 move as quickly as practicable to foster the development of a system. The nature of  
15 defendants’ required performance differs substantially under the two assertions. While  
16 plaintiffs could have defined the issues in dispute differently, they did not. This  
17 assertion, as described, does not allege a violation of any obligation imposed by the  
18 Agreement.

19 The second allegation of Issue 1 does involve an obligation imposed on  
20 defendants by the Agreement. Drawing on language taken directly from Section III.16 of  
21 the Agreement, plaintiffs charge that defendants “have not made changes to ‘contracts,  
22 decisions, practice guidelines and other policies’ needed to achieve the Principles for  
23 class members.” Paragraph 16 defines defendants’ obligation in broad, general terms,  
24 includes no objective standards by which to measure compliance with this obligation, and  
25 allows defendants to exercise discretion in conforming the documents and policies to be  
26 “consistent with and designed to achieve” the Principles. Under these circumstances,  
27 defendants’ performance should be measured against their obligation to comply with the  
28 covenant of good faith and fair dealing. To establish this allegation, plaintiffs must show  
that defendants exercised their discretion to make changes needed to achieve the

1 Principles in a manner not consistent with the covenant of good faith and fair dealing.

2 **Issue 2**

3 In Issue 2, plaintiffs charge that defendants failed to design a quality management  
4 system (QM system) that measures whether services “are designed and implemented to  
5 achieve the *J.K.* functional outcomes” and “generate[s] information on whether services  
6 are provided in the most integrated setting, or on the sufficiency of interagency  
7 collaboration.” In addition, plaintiffs allege, defendants have not developed adequate  
8 systems to review individual cases. These requirements, plaintiffs assert, form a critical  
9 part of the remedy provided under the terms of the Agreement.

10 This disputed issue arises from obligations imposed on defendants by Sections  
11 III.17(i) and VIII.55 of the Agreement. Paragraph 55, the most specific, requires that  
12 defendants “change their quality management and improvement system *so that it*  
13 *measures* whether services to class members are consistent with and designed to achieve  
14 the Principles . . . .” (Emphasis added.) Defendants assert that the parties intended to  
15 give defendants flexibility in adopting changes to the QM system, rather than to be  
16 prescriptive.

17 I conclude that plaintiffs have defined a dispute that raises factual issues as to  
18 whether defendants performed their obligations. Defendants correctly assert that the  
19 language of the contract clearly affords defendants discretion in developing and  
20 implementing a QM system. It is also clear, however, that defendants promised to  
21 change their QM system so that it performs the required measurements. The system, as  
22 developed and implemented by defendants, either measures whether services provided  
23 are consistent with and designed to achieve the Principles, or it does not. The  
24 measurement process either did include an in-depth review of a sample of individual  
25 cases, or it did not. The Agreement does not give plaintiffs authority to design or select  
26 defendants’ QM system, but the Agreement does define measurable standards for  
27 evaluating defendants’ performance. If the plaintiffs establish that defendants’ QM  
28 system does not fulfill the requirements of paragraph 55, then defendants have breached  
this obligation.

**Issue 3**

Plaintiffs' basic allegation in Issue 3 is that defendants failed to develop a functioning QM system that identifies enrolled children with high needs. In addition, plaintiffs assert, defendants failed to expand services to this group by failing to reallocate money from costly residential care and that defendants have hired too few case managers for high-needs children. Defendants respond that the Agreement exacts no promise that they will develop the services sought or expand the number of case managers for high-needs children.

As defendants argue, the Agreement does not obligate defendants to develop the specific services now sought by plaintiffs, and plaintiffs cannot establish a breach of contract for failing to provide services not required by the Agreement. These allegations, however, do relate to the challenges plaintiffs raised to the QM system as developed by defendants. High-needs children are part of the class certified by the Court, and any promised performance that relates to the entire class also applies to these plaintiffs. For that reason, plaintiffs' allegation that defendants failed to develop a functioning QM system that measures whether services for high-needs children are consistent with and designed to achieve the Principles falls within the allegations of Issue 2. Factual questions related to defendants' promise to develop a QM system that measures whether services for high-needs children are consistent with the Principles, particularly those described in Section V, paragraphs 21, 23, 25 and 27, can be developed as part of the inquiry under Issue 2.

**Issue 4**

Plaintiffs assert, as their basis for Issue 4, that defendants provide inadequate services to address substance abuse among high-needs children. Defendants respond that their obligations with regard to substance abuse are clearly defined in Section VI.H.52. As defendants correctly note, paragraph 52, the only contractual provision that addresses substance abuse treatment services, requires that defendants "develop a plan for the expansion of substance abuse treatment services as part of its first Annual Action Plan." Plaintiffs do not dispute that defendants completed the performance promised under

1 paragraph 52. Defendants have fulfilled their contractual obligations related to substance  
2 abuse services; no additional issues remain for the Court's consideration.

### 3 **Issue 5**

4 Issue 5 rests upon the premise that defendants have made little change in the  
5 treatment of 18- to 21-year-olds in the behavioral health system. As defendants correctly  
6 respond, no promised performance or time table applies to this group. Defendants have  
7 breached no obligation undertaken as to these patients, when identified as a separate  
8 group. As is true of the high-needs children to whom plaintiffs referred in Issue 3,  
9 however, defendants owe these children, as part of the class, any obligations owed to the  
10 entire class. Questions related to defendants' promise to develop a QM system that  
11 measures whether services for these children are consistent with the Principles can be  
12 raised as part of the inquiry under Issue 2.

### 13 **Issue 6**

14 The final issue raised in the March 2009 letter involves defendants' alleged failure  
15 to develop a training program that meets the specifications of the Agreement.  
16 Specifically, plaintiffs allege, "there are not qualified trainers in sufficient numbers, and  
17 the program fails to impart sufficient knowledge and skills to enable staff to provide  
18 services according to the Principles." Defendants respond that, because the contractual  
19 provisions related to the training program do not require specific numbers of trainers but,  
20 rather, afford defendants discretion in carrying out this obligation, defendants fulfilled  
21 their obligations if they hired trainers in a number they deemed sufficient.

22 In Section VI of the Agreement, titled "Specific Steps," the parties adopted several  
23 specific provisions that describe the promised training program in some detail. *See* SA,  
24 VI.A.32-39. With regard to the specific allegations made by plaintiffs, paragraph 39  
25 defines defendants' promised performance as follows: "The behavioral health system *will*  
26 *have qualified trainers in sufficient numbers* to train front-line staff and supervisors."  
27 (Emphasis added.) Paragraph 35 directs defendants to design a training program "to  
28 provide front-line staff and supervisors sufficient knowledge and skills to enable them to  
plan and provide services consistent with the Principles." As defendants point out, the

1 Agreement includes no quantitative measurements related to training and vests discretion  
2 in defendants. The covenant of good faith and fair dealing, however, requires that  
3 defendants provide trainers and training in sufficient quantity to fall within the reasonable  
4 contemplation of the parties. Whether the plan developed by defendants fulfills the  
5 covenant of good faith and fair dealing raises factual issues for the Court's consideration.

### 6 **Recommendations**

7 Based upon the foregoing analysis, I recommend that the Court proceed as  
8 follows:

- 9 1. The Court should limit the disputes before the Court for resolution to  
10 those six issues expressly raised in plaintiffs' March 2009 letter. The  
11 result of doing so will be to reject those arguments by plaintiffs that  
12 depend upon the general introductory language of the letter and those  
13 arguments that rely upon allegations of the Complaint rather than  
14 upon terms of the Settlement Agreement.
- 15 2. The Court should interpret the Settlement Agreement as a contract,  
16 applying the local law of Arizona, including Arizona's reliance upon  
17 the *Restatement (Second) of Contracts* and Arizona's interpretation of  
18 all contracts as including an implied covenant of good faith and fair  
19 dealing.
- 20 3. Arizona requires that, to establish a breach of contract, a party must  
21 establish that the breaching party failed to substantially comply with  
22 the terms of the contract, which requires a showing that the party  
23 failed to deliver the promised performance and that the defect in  
24 performance frustrated the purpose of the contract.
- 25 4. Several of plaintiffs' allegations involve obligations described in  
26 qualitative terms, which provide no objective standard by which to  
27 judge performance and which afford defendants discretion in carrying  
28

1 out their obligations. Those allegations should be considered as  
2 alleging a breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair  
3 dealing.

- 4 5. I recommend that the Court hold that plaintiff's first allegation in  
5 Issue 1 of the March 2009 letter does not raise a dispute cognizable  
6 under the Settlement Agreement, as the Agreement does not obligate  
7 defendants to develop a system that delivers prescribed services by a  
8 date certain.
- 9 6. Plaintiffs' second allegation in Issue 1, that defendants failed to make  
10 the changes to "all contracts, decisions, practice guidelines and other  
11 policies" needed to achieve the Principles, raises factual issues that  
12 must be resolved to determine whether defendants breached the  
13 implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing.
- 14 7. In Issue 2, plaintiffs allege that defendants failed to develop a quality  
15 management assurance system that performs certain required  
16 measurements. Paragraph 55 of the Agreement defines measurable  
17 standards for evaluating defendants' performance; these allegations  
18 require factual development.
- 19 8. In Issue 3, plaintiffs allege that defendants' quality assurance system  
20 does not measure whether services provided for high-needs children  
21 are provided consistent with and to further the Principles. This  
22 allegation is part of the argument related to Issue 2 and should be  
23 considered in conjunction with that issue.
- 24 9. I recommend that the Court hold as a matter of law that defendants  
25 have complied with the contractual obligations related to substance  
26 abuse treatment, as defined by Paragraph 52 of the Agreement and  
27 that no dispute remains as to Issue 4.  
28



10. In Issue 5, plaintiffs allege that defendants' quality assurance program does not measure whether services for 18- to 21-year-old children are being provided in a manner consistent with and to further the Principles. This allegation is part of the argument related to Issue 2 and should be considered in conjunction with that issue.

11. Issue 6 requires the Court to determine whether defendants have complied with the obligations described in paragraphs 32 through 39, which require development of a training program that provides staff and supervisors sufficient knowledge and skills and sufficient trainers to provide services consistent with the Principles. These allegations require factual development.

DATED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2013.

Ruth V. Mc Gregor

Ruth V. McGregor  
Special Master