

# DDD SHOUT

## PROVIDER NEWSLETTER

Volume XXII - February 2021

### COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Update

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) is prioritizing the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine in Arizona [in three phases](#). All Arizona counties are currently in Phase Priority 1B or 1B, enabling healthcare personnel, healthcare support occupations including HCBS direct care workers, long-term care facility residents (and staff at these facilities), protective services occupations, individuals 75 years of age and older and adults with high-risk conditions who live in congregate settings.

Distribution of the vaccine will be conducted at both the state and county level. The state operates Points of Dispensing (POD) sites at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Phoenix Municipal Stadium in Phoenix and just recently announced the University of Arizona in Tucson. Counties and tribal partners may elect to prioritize populations within each phase of the vaccine roll out, based on considerations specific to their jurisdiction. Please see your county's public health website for distribution information. Please refer to the [Arizona Department of Health Services COVID-19 vaccine web page](#) for county contacts and additional information about the vaccine and distribution plan. Additional links for county and clinic pre-registration and pre-screening for vaccine availability can be found at <http://azhealth.gov/findvaccine>. DDD is working with State and Health Care partners to ensure that once members are eligible to receive the vaccine and supply becomes available there is a plan to get them the vaccine in a way that accommodates their needs.

Qualified Vendors and Providers may get questions from members or their families regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. The Division has added links to [Information About the COVID-19 Vaccine for People in Arizona](#) created by the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Network and [COVID-19 Vaccine Information in Plain Language](#) document created by the Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) on its [Actions Related to COVID-19 web page](#).

### New Claims System

As part of the Division's Current 2 Future Initiative, DDD has partnered with WellSky, a company providing healthcare software solutions, to adapt its claims processing and meet the industry standards for transactions and code sets, while ensuring HIPAA compliance. Using the WellSky Human Services platform will enable the Division to process provider claims for services rendered more efficiently to meet the needs of its providers and members. The expected completion date of this project is summer 2021. The implementation date will depend on the other projects impacting the vendors, recognizing the level of effort and impact to operations of those projects. The Division will provide more information in the coming months, including vendor training to ensure vendors are prepared when the new system goes online.

## Vendor Call - Network Development Update

The Division also continues its work on the Current 2 Future Initiative related to the Vendor Call Process. The Division is making changes and improvements including:

- Enhancements to the Vendor call system (FOCUS) to make it easier for vendors to use.
- Additional member information available in “Member profile”, reducing the need to ask for more information about service needs or member and family contact information.
- Enhanced data analytics and tracking.

**These changes will take effect on Monday, March 22, 2021.** DDD has published a [web page specifically for the Vendor Call project](#) on its website that includes a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document. On Wednesday, March 3, 2021, DDD will publish training materials including the following:

- Training Video: Reviewing the Vendor Call Process, Policies, and Procedures
- Training Video: How to Use Focus Vendor Calls
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Focus User Guide for Vendors: Step-by-Step Guide on How to Use Focus Vendor Calls
- Updated Provider Policy Manual Chapter 50 - Vendor Call Requirements for Qualified Vendors

Additionally, DDD will host four virtual meetings so vendors can ask questions and have them answered by DDD staff. These sessions will be held on the following dates from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.:

- Tuesday, March 9, 2021
- Tuesday, March 16, 2021
- Tuesday, March 23, 2021
- Tuesday, March 30, 2021

Qualified Vendors can join these session via the Internet, <https://meet.google.com/zus-xcdg-ttb>, or by phone using 1-562-232-9095 and PIN 100 064 982#.

DDD strongly recommends Qualified Vendors review all of the published training materials prior to attending a Q&A session. Vendors can submit any questions they have about the changes to the Vendor Call process directly to the project team using this form, <https://forms.gle/mDDMTXXFRgr3jhqs7>.

## Rate Book Updates for Therapy Services

In March 2020, the Arizona Legislature passed and Governor Ducey signed into law [House Bill 2668](#) (Laws 2020, Chapter 46) which established a second assessment effective October 1, 2020. Per the new law, monies from this assessment are to be deposited into the Health Care Investment Fund (HCIF) to:

- Make directed payments to hospitals pursuant to 42 CFR § 438.6(c) to persons eligible for Title XIX services.
- **Increase base reimbursement for services reimbursed under the dental fee schedule and physician fee schedule.**
- Pay for the non-federal share of the costs for AHCCCS to administer this program, not to exceed one percent of the total assessment monies collected.

An updated [Rate Book](#) and [rate lookup files](#) have been posted on the DDD website. Vendors can use the claims replacement process for services rendered and paid at the previous rates from October 1, 2020, to today. In July 2021, DDD will manually recalculate the differential for any remaining claims paid at the previous rates to

process retroactive payments to vendors. Vendors can use the new rates for services that they have not yet submitted claims for dates of service since October 1, 2020.

**Please note, as a result of this rate increase, effective March 1, 2021, vendors can no longer bill for Absent Units.**

## Focus User Interface Upgrades

The Division of Developmental Disabilities will release a new version of the Focus application **on Friday, February 26, 2021**. This change will impact all Focus users. These upgrades to the user interface include improved graphics, layout and usability. The changes are cosmetic ONLY and will not impact how users currently conduct business through Focus.

DDD has posted two PDF documents on its website that highlight the changes users can expect to see when these updates are implemented.

- [Administrative Tools](#)
- [Main Menu](#)

Please reference these brief guides and share them with other Focus users in your organization so they can be prepared for these changes.

## Financial Statement Requirements

**Qualified Vendors, as outlined in section 6.3.3.3 of the [Qualified Vendor Standard Terms and Conditions](#), are required to submit annual financial audit reports for submission to the Division.** There are four types of annual financial statement audits and each is determined by the annual revenue received by the Qualified Vendor from the Division. COVID-19 incentive funding has caused some Qualified Vendors to cross thresholds for a different audit requirement, which increases costs to the vendor. The Division is allowing Qualified Vendors to complete the same type of annual financial statements audit as they did in the year prior to the pandemic. The intent of the incentive funding was to cover pandemic costs and not create new costs for vendors.

## Qualified Vendor Provider Directory Search Application

The Division's Qualified Vendor Application (QVA) Provider Directory Search application includes the ability for a Qualified Vendor to update and maintain the required site-specific details, including cultural/linguistic capabilities and accessibility features on their own and at any time. This information is used to improve the overall functionality of the Provider Directory and online Provider Search used by members and Support Coordinators assisting in matching members/families with Qualified Vendors.

Qualified Vendors are responsible for updating and maintaining this directory. The Division updated [Provider Policy Manual Chapter 47, Managing Vendor Call Lists, Provider Directories and the Scope of Services and Reporting](#) in September 2019 to reflect this requirement and compliance with AHCCCS Contractors Operations Manual (ACOM) 406 – Member Handbook and Provider Directory, which includes requirements for identifying facilities with special accessibility features.

Please ensure the required site-specific information for your facilities is up to date as inaccurate information can result in mis-matching members with your agency or your agency not being considered for a service you are able to provide.

Additional resources:

- [QVA User manual](#)
- [Provider Manual Chapter 47: Managing Vendor Call Lists, Provider Directories, Scope of Services and Reporting Requirements](#)

## **Program Integrity Unit Investigative Process**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires managed care organizations (MCOs) to ensure their network providers are reputable and provide quality care with transparency and integrity. The Division as an MCO, has the responsibility to monitor providers and ensure program integrity. This includes leading activities related to the prevention, detection, and correction of Fraud, Waste, Abuse (FWA) and Misconduct. The DDD Program Integrity Unit (PIU) is responsible for this oversight. The PIU's objective is to minimize fraudulent and abusive behaviors by providers, including billing for services not provided and medications not dispensed, misrepresenting services and/or procedures performed, and seeking kickbacks.

The Program Integrity Unit creates partnerships with state and federal regulatory agencies to detect, prevent, and correct instances of Medicaid FWA and Misconduct. This is done by trained professionals with expertise in data analysis, health care claims audit, and investigation to identify suspicious activities and stop or prevent unethical behavior. FWA detection is very complex and requires experienced professional expertise.

The DDD PIU's mission and purpose are:

- To effectively detect and prevent health care fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct and recover benefit payments obtained through deceit or misrepresentation.
- To comply with state and federal regulations concerning Anti-FWA plans and FWA reporting.
- To develop a dedicated group responsible for working with providers to prevent, detect, investigate, and ultimately resolve potential compliance issues.

The Program Integrity Unit's three main investigative pathways are:

1. Prospective
  - a. Analyze member, Division employee, provider, and claims data.
  - b. Identify trends, current/upcoming schemes or unusual behavior.
  - c. Stop potentially fraudulent or defective claims from being paid.
4. Retrospective
  - a. Analyze member, Division employee, provider, and claims data.
  - b. Identify trends, schemes or unusual behavior; then investigate.
  - c. Work with state and federal agencies to stop fraud, waste and abuse consistently across the Division.
4. Intelligence
  - a. FWA Hotline: 877-822-5799
  - b. Email: DDDFWA@azdes.gov
  - c. Mail: 1789 W. Jefferson, 4th Floor SW, Phoenix, AZ 85007
  - d. Internal and External trainings

The PIU Investigates suspected misconduct by Division employees and providers involving violations of rules, regulations, laws or contractual obligations that, even if substantiated, might not result in criminal prosecution, such as:

1. Allegations of Division staff and providers misconduct involving non-Medicaid FWA.
2. Allegations of Division staff and providers misconduct involving Standards of Conduct, Ethics and Conflict of Interest, and violations of federal/state laws, regulations and/or contractual obligations.
3. Perform internal monitoring to ensure the various internal controls are operating effectively and efficiently ensuring federal and state laws, regulations, and contractual compliance.

Examples of misconduct include:

1. Falsification of official documents and signatures.
2. Concealment, removal, or mutilation of official documents.
3. Using abusive language towards members or providers.
4. Requesting and accepting gratuities or money for gas from members or families for Division paid services.
5. Unreported conflicts of interest.
6. Any attempt to improperly influence or hinder the decision making of a member.

## **2021 Qualified Vendor Meeting Schedule**

As DDD continues to encourage the use of technology and social distancing in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, a statewide model for vendor meetings was implemented in January 2021. This enables the Division to provide consistent and timely communication to the entire vendor community. All meetings will be held virtually and participants can join via computer or phone. Meetings will be held in the morning on the second Thursday of the month and include all Qualified Vendors for a specific service line as outlined below. Meetings will no longer be organized by District and will be recorded for those who are not able to join during the times held. Login details will be emailed to Qualified Vendors/Providers prior to the meeting.

The meeting schedule and recordings of previous meetings are available on the [Division's website](#).

## **DDD Town Hall Meetings**

The Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA) continues to host town hall meetings for members, families and providers. The next town hall meeting will be held on Thursday, March 4, 2021, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Please share this information with the members and families you serve and encourage them to participate. The town hall schedule and instructions to join via the Internet or phone can be found at [bit.ly/dddtownhall](https://bit.ly/dddtownhall).

## **Get Caught Up**

Did you know the Division posts vendor announcements and editions of the Shout on the web? Get caught up and stay informed on all of the recent vendor communications, <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities/vendors-providers/vendor-announcements>.