DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

OIFA Member Newsletter - November 2021

COVID-19 Update

Arizona continues to be impacted by positive COVID-19 cases. All counties currently are considered to have high or substantial COVID-19 transmission rates. On November 1, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) agreed with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recommendation on October 29, 2021, to make the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine available under emergency use authorization to children aged 5-11 years old. Now Arizonans 5 years of age and older can receive the Pfizer vaccine and Arizonans 18 years of age and older can receive the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, highly effective and available at no cost to you.

The CDC updated its guidelines for COVID-19 vaccine booster shots. As of November 9, 2021, the CDC recommends the following:

- People who received the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least 6 months ago.
  - Those who **should** get the booster:
    - People aged 65 years and older
    - People aged 50-64 years old with underlying medical conditions.
    - People 18 years and older who live in long-term care settings
  - Those who **may** receive the booster:
    - People 18 years and older who work or live in high-risk settings.
- People who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least 2 months ago.
  - People 18 years and older **should** get the booster.

The CDC says a person does not need to get the same vaccine brand booster they received for their initial vaccine. Any vaccine booster will have the desired effect of boosting the person's immune system against COVID-19.

The vaccines are as widely available and as easily accessible as possible. Vaccines are available at pharmacies, doctor's offices and other locations run by county health departments. You can find a vaccine site near you online at https://www.azdhs.gov/findvaccine or by calling 1-844-542-8201. You can text your zip code to 438829, for English, or 822862, for Spanish, to receive a text message with details about three locations near you with vaccine availability.

Eligible Medicaid members can get non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) to their vaccine appointment. Contact your health insurance provider for more details. You can also find facts and myths about the COVID-19 vaccine on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. All guidance and details about flexibilities allowed during the COVID-19 public health emergency are available on the DDD Actions Related to COVID-19 web page.

AHCCCS E.V.V. ✓
ELECTRONIC VISIT VERIFICATION

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) ensures, tracks and monitors timely service delivery and access to care for members. EVV applies to all providers of these services, including paid family direct care workers. EVV is a federal requirement. EVV is a mandatory program. All individuals who receive services from AHCCCS must participate.

The DDD services impacted are:
- Attendant Care
- Homemaker/Housekeeping
- Habilitation Hourly
- Home Health (Nursing)
- Respite
- Skills Training and Development

Members and families should contact their Qualified Vendor Agency if they have questions about their provider's EVV system. AHCCCS has posted several FAQ documents on its website as well as other information about EVV.

Get A Flu Shot

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness. It is caused by influenza viruses that can infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. Anyone can get the flu. Serious problems related to flu can happen at any age. Some people are at high risk of serious flu-related complications if they get it.

Flu symptoms are similar to COVID-19 symptoms. People who have flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:
- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Vomiting and diarrhea (this is more common in children than adults)

The best way to prevent the flu is to get the flu vaccine. Flu vaccine (or flu shot) has been shown to reduce flu related illnesses and the risk of serious flu complications. You can also do the following to help slow the spread of germs:
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands often.

The flu and COVID-19 are not the same disease. The flu vaccine does not prevent severe illness from COVID-19. Talk to your doctor about getting the flu vaccine. Also talk to them about the COVID-19 vaccine if you have not yet gotten it.

You can also call your DDD Health Plan or the DDD Tribal Health Program for information about where to get a flu shot.

- Mercy Care: 1-800-624-3879
- UnitedHealthcare Community Plan: 1-800-348-4058
- DDD Tribal Health Program: 1-844-770-9500 ext. 7 (TTY/TDD 711)

Turning An Obstacle Into A Profession

Nocturnal seizures are not only scary, but they can also be deadly. A lack of sleep can trigger seizures among individuals with epilepsy. Nocturnal seizures that disrupt sleep can increase the risk of seizures. This creates a vicious cycle for individuals like David.

David used to experience night seizures. Fortunately, a medication change made a big difference. His seizures are "pretty much under control now," said David. New medication, combined with resources provided by the DDD Support Coordinator allowed David to go to school and launch a career as a certified Polysomnographic Technician, or sleep tech. He now helps people who struggle with nocturnal seizures, just like he did.

Lori Kimmel, David's DDD Support Coordinator said, "His change in medication really made a difference in his life. He is much more clear thinking and his seizures are now well controlled. This is important because it made a big difference in his ability to concentrate on schoolwork."

A sleep tech monitors a patient while they sleep. David is currently working as an electroencephalogram (EEG) technician. "Polysomnography and EEG are basically cousins," David explains. "The EEG monitors the head; polysomnography monitors more of the body and less of the head." EEGs, in part, help doctors diagnose people with epilepsy. They are also used to diagnose other conditions like head injuries, brain tumors, strokes, dementia and more.

David has been a patient at various Valley sleep centers to help him with his night seizures. His favorite program is at Phoenix Children's Hospital (PCH). He went there for his own EEGs and later, was a patient in PCH's sleep center. "They helped me a lot."

"Becoming a sleep tech sounds a little bit silly," said David, but it's not. For individuals interested in becoming a polysomnographic technician, David advises: "It's hard work because you're going to stay up, depending on the shift for 10 or 12 hours. You're going to stay up and you have to be monitoring your patient. If you're going to become a sleep tech, you have to be committed to it. But if you like technology, this may be the vocation for you."

About his chosen profession, David believes, "This field of work is so underrated. Many people don't see sleep as medicine, or as something important in their lives." The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (a part of the National Institutes of Health) states that "Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout your life. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect

your mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.

David recommends contacting your doctor if you are experiencing sleep issues and suspect something is wrong.

National Core Indicators (NCI)

National Core Indicators (NCI) is an effort between the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI). NCI uses in-person interviews and surveys to measure member satisfaction. These services also measure DDD programs and services effectiveness. The surveys and interviews are a chance for members and families to provide feedback about the services provided by the Division.

Members selected to participate in the in-person interviews will be notified by their Support Coordinator. They will also be contacted by the interviewer from Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona. Members can choose not to participate. Families selected to participate in the mailed surveys will receive them by mail. DDD only receives a final report from NCI, not personal data from each survey. Your input helps DDD improve services for our members. More information will be shared in future newsletters. Learn more about NCI at nationalcoreindicators.org.

Person Centered Service Plan

Support Coordinators are using a new process called Person-Centered Service Planning. This new process supports our mission of empowering individuals with developmental disabilities to lead self-directed, healthy and meaningful lives. It will help your Support Coordinator better engage with you, your family, and your planning team.

Your Support Coordinator will use Person-Centered Service Planning during your planning meeting. They will use it to complete the assessment. It will help determine needed services and supports. It was created by AHCCCS and all Managed Care Organizations (MCO) supporting the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS). The goal of the Person-Centered Service Planning process is to help the planning team work together to create and put to action a plan driven by the member.

Person-Centered Service Planning will help DDD ensure members' voices and choices are heard. Members will have greater independence and input on the services they receive. It will also improve timely and appropriate care coordination, so their needs are met. The ultimate goal is to help members achieve their goals and live the life they want. More details and answers to frequently asked questions are available on the DDD website.

Volunteers Needed

DDD needs volunteers to support the district Independent Oversight Committees (IOC). IOCs provide oversight on topics related to the human rights of people with developmental disabilities. Each IOC has between 7 and 15 members. Some members are required to have specific experience. Parents of individuals that receive services from DDD are also on the committees. Visit https://ioc.az.gov/committees/ddd to learn more and apply.

DDD needs volunteers to support the Program Review Committees. Program Review Committees review member Behavior Treatment Plans. They also make recommendations to address challenging behaviors. Committee membership is open to a wide range of individuals. PRC sessions are held twice a day. Volunteers are not required to attend all sessions. Visit the DES Volunteer Center for more information.
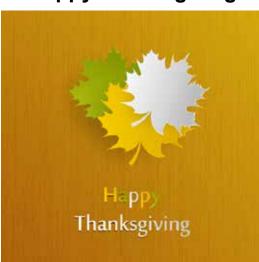
Town Hall Meetings

DDD hosts town hall meetings for members, families and providers on the first Thursday of every month. The town hall starts at 6:00 p.m. You can join via the Internet or by telephone. Attendees can also ask questions. The next town hall will be held on Thursday, January 6, 2022.

Visit http://bit.ly/dddtownhall for details to join.

Community Resources

DDD has information for local, state, and national groups that support members and their families. The DDD website has links to many of these groups that can assist with day to day tasks and other services that may not be covered by the Division. Visit the community resources section of the DDD website to learn more.

Happy Thanksgiving

Everyone at DDD would like to wish the members and families we serve a very happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving.

Crisis Services

If you, a family member, or a friend have a mental health emergency, it is important that you seek help right away. Trained crisis staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help over the phone. The Crisis lines are free, confidential, and open to anyone who needs help. For medical, police and fire emergency situations, always call 911.

Suicide and Crisis Hotlines by County
- Maricopa County served by Mercy Care: 1-800-631-1314 or 602-222-9444
- Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Pima, Pinal, Santa Cruz and Yuma Counties served by Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan: 1-866-495-6735
- Apache, Coconino, Gila, Mohave, Navajo and Yavapai Counties served by Health Choice Arizona: 1-877-756-4090
- Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities: 1-800-259-3449
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: 1-855-331-6432

Especially for Teens
- Teen Life Line phone or text: 602-248-TEEN (8336)

National 24-Hour Crisis Hotlines
Phone
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Substance Use and Disorder Issues Referral and Treatment Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Text
- Text the word "HOME" to 741741

Report Fraud, Waste or Abuse

Medicaid fraud, waste and abuse (FWA) are crimes. Report fraud, waste, and abuse right away. You will not get in trouble or lose services if you report any suspected fraud, waste, or abuse.

You can report FWA to DDD by:
- Calling DDD at 1-877-822-5799
- Sending an email to dddfwa@azdes.gov
- Sending a letter to DES/DDD, Attn: Corporate Compliance Unit, 1789 W Jefferson St., Mail Drop 2HA1, Phoenix, AZ 85007
- Completing this online form.

You can also report FWA to AHCCCS
- Call the Office of the Inspector General at 602-417-4193
- Report Online at the AHCCCS Website
- Report provider fraud by calling:
  - Maricopa County: 602-417-4045
  - Outside Maricopa County: 1-888-487-6686

- Report member fraud by calling:
  - Maricopa County: 602-417-4193
  - Outside Maricopa County: 1-888-487-6686
- Submit general questions via email at AHCCCSFraud@azahcccs.gov.

Stay Up to Date

All old OIFA newsletters are available to view on DDD's website. Visit the Member Services page and click on the "Member Newsletters" section.

DDD is Here to Help

Please contact your Support Coordinator or the DDD Customer Service Center at 1-844-770-9500 ext. 1 (TTY/TDD 711) if you have questions.

Call the DDD Customer Service Center at 1-844-770-9500 ext. 1, TTY/TDD 711, to ask for this material in other formats. Language help is available at no cost to you.