OIFA Member Newsletter - December 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.

Arizonans 5 years of age and older can receive the Pfizer vaccine. 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.

Booster Shots

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its guidelines for COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to the following:

- People 16 years and older who received the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine at least 6 months ago **should** get the booster.
- People 18 years and older who received the second dose of the Moderna vaccine at least 6 months ago **should** get the booster.
- People 18 years and older who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least 2 months ago **should** get the booster.

The CDC says a person aged 18 years and older 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.

Individuals aged 16-17 who received the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine at least 6 months ago should only get the Pfizer booster vaccine, they should not mix brands.

How to Get A Vaccine

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.

Virtual Planning Meetings

Planning meetings are still being held virtually as COVID-19 continues to impact Arizona. These meetings are important and necessary. It is important for all members of the planning team to attend. Members should be involved in the meeting and on the video so their Support Coordinator can see them. The planning meeting is held to ensure they are getting the services they need. Attending planning meetings is required to receive DDD services. Members are encouraged to participate in the meeting and offer input on what they want. Tell your Support Coordinator if you cannot attend online. They can set up a phone call or in-person meeting with all team members instead.

DDD uses Google Meet to host virtual planning meetings. Below are some resources that can help members and families participate:

- How to Use Google Meet Quick Tutorial (with Sign Language)
- ASL Introduction to Google Meet (American Sign Language)
- How to Translate In a Google Meet

Participants can also use closed captioning. Closed captioning can be turned on by hovering the mouse pointer at the bottom of the screen until the menu appears. Click "Turn On Captions" and as each participant speaks, what they are saying will be displayed under the video image. The captions are only seen on that user's computer. Tell your Support Coordinator if you need language assistance at your meeting.

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. Learn more about at nationalcoreindicators.org.

Finding Living Space and Breathing Room

Everyone faces turning points in life. Some become roadblocks, while others have minimal effect on our future plans. It is part of the human experience. Ed, a DDD member, has faced numerous turning points in his life. After less than five years of marriage his beloved wife passed away. Ed moved into a group home to regain his footing. However, he wanted more freedom than the group home offered. He moved into a studio apartment, but the limited space left him feeling unorganized. With assistance from DDD, Ed was able to locate and move into a one-bedroom, rent-assisted Phoenix apartment in September 2021. "The size is better for me," said Ed. "I can organize better than living in a studio, where it felt like too much clutter."

Ed and his mother first learned about DDD's Affordable Housing program from a former DDD Support Coordinator. The DDD Affordable Housing Program is operated by DDD's Office of Individual and Family Affairs. Ed went through the process of applying for the DDD Affordable Housing Program, was approved, and was offered an apartment. "You go out and look at that area to see if you want to accept it," he said. Although Ed preferred to live in Mesa, he signed up for every city in Maricopa County. Once notified that an apartment was available in Phoenix, the process, he said, went pretty quickly.

Ed moved to his new home in September 2021. A DDD Occupational Therapist helped him set up his kitchen, organizing pots and utensils. During the COVID-19 pandemic Ed has been eligible to have Mom's Meals deliver meals to his home twice a month, providing 14 meals with each visit.

A new turning point was learning a new public transportation and transfer system. A bus stop is conveniently located near where Ed lives. He takes the bus to go shopping, visit the pharmacy, and go to medical appointments. Ed advises other DDD members experiencing a turning point related to their living-arrangement talk to their Support Coordinators. The DDD Affordable Housing Program may be able to help.

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)

Town Hall Meetings

DDD hosts town hall meetings for members, families and providers. 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. At this meeting, DDD will present updates and announcements. Dr. Susanne Arnold, DDD Behavioral Health Administrator, will also present an overview of DDD Behavioral Health Services. 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.

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.