



## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

*Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona*

### DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

## OIFA Member Update - March 2023

### REMINDER! COVID-19 National Emergency Ending in May

The federal government is planning to end the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency in May 2023. This means in June 2023, many COVID-19 options will end for people getting supports and services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).

You can read the national announcement on COVID-19 [by clicking here](#).

#### What's Changing at DDD?

During the COVID-19 emergency, DDD offered various options so families could keep vital services. Some of those options will end on April 1, 2023. These changes are:

- All planning meetings with Support Coordinators will return to in-person.
- DDD will stop offering support for remote learning. Schools are back to in-person classes.
- DDD is taking down the guidance, "Assessing Risk for DDD Members Who Are At Higher Risk for Severe Illness From COVID-19."
- Group homes or developmental home services will no longer have to hold a place for DDD members who move in with family due to COVID-19.

Many other options from the COVID emergency will end on June 30, 2023. You can visit DDD's [Actions Related to COVID-19](#) web page for more information to see the status of each option.

#### Worried About COVID Exposure? Just Ask to Mask

DDD knows some members and families may worry about COVID. Returning to in-person meetings may increase that worry.

To reduce COVID risk, all you have to do is Ask to Mask. Reach out to your Support Coordinator and ask them to wear a mask for the visit.

DDD takes the health and well-being of its members seriously. This is the main reason DDD is returning to in-person planning meetings. Planning meetings are the core of DDD's work to help members live self-directed, healthy, and meaningful lives. By returning to in-person meetings, Support Coordinators can assess members' health and well-being. They can also ensure members have what they need and are free of abuse and neglect.

However, if you are trying to avoid COVID, don't be shy. Your health matters! Tell your Support Coordinator and Ask to Mask.

### Get Financially STABLE with AZ ABLE, Now Celebrating 5 Years

Did you know Arizona offers people with disabilities a tax-exempt savings account to meet their needs?

The program is called Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE). March 2023 marks five years since

AZ ABLE started.

## What is AZ ABLE?

[AZ ABLE](#) helps Arizonans with disabilities reach greater independence and financial security through STABLE accounts.

STABLE accounts allow you to save and invest money without losing certain benefits, like Medicaid or Social Security Disability Income. Best of all, you don't pay federal income tax on STABLE accounts. Just make sure to spend the money on [qualified disability expenses](#) like education, housing, and health.

## Who's Eligible?

Any resident of Arizona who developed a qualifying disability before the age of 26 is eligible for a STABLE account. If you cannot open one, an Authorized Legal Representative (also known as an ALR) can do it for you.

## What Else Should You Know?

- [HB 2388](#) is the law that establishes AZ ABLE.
- You can save and invest up to \$17,000 a year in a STABLE account. If employed, you may be able to invest an additional \$13,590.
- The account's growth is tax-free. Your contributions may qualify for a state income tax deduction.
- Friends and relatives can add to the STABLE account for you.

For more information on AZ ABLE, call 1-800-439-1653 Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. MT.

## **DDD Hosting Self-Care for Caregivers Conference April 25**

No-cost event to help Arizona caregivers learn to care for themselves while caring for others

In Arizona, one in five adults is a caregiver to a friend or family member, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

More than half provided care for at least two years. Sixty percent are women.

Caregivers often put the needs of others first. This sacrifice can create burnout and health problems. Caregivers need to be healthy mentally and physically. This allows them to care for others.

For this reason, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is hosting its first Self-Care for Caregivers Conference. The event will be April 25, 2023 at the Desert Willow Conference Center in Phoenix. **There is no cost to attend.** Caregivers need to [pre-register here](#).

## What is the Self-Care for Caregivers Conference?

The event is a day of self-care, learning, and community. It's for caregivers of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD). Caregivers will learn how to care for themselves while caring for others.

The event will have presentations from experts in self-care and mental health. It will also offer workshops, relaxation exercises, yoga, and art therapy, among others.

Caregivers who need help finding respite services while attending can contact their Support Coordinators at the DDD.

## Details

- WHO: for parents or family members who are caregivers of people with I/DD
- WHAT: a no-cost event to help caregivers learn ways to care for themselves while caring for others
- WHERE: Desert Willow Conference Center at 4340 E Cotton Center Blvd., Phoenix, AZ 85040
- WHEN: April 25, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- WHY: to build connections, find resources and learn about self-care

For more information about the event, please visit [bit.ly/ddd-self-care-conf](https://bit.ly/ddd-self-care-conf).

## AHCCCS Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

Anyone who provides or receives services that require Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) must comply with this federal requirement.

Following the rules of EVV will ensure members get the services they need. It's also a mandatory program.

### What is EVV?

EVV tracks and monitors certain services provided to members. It monitors how fast they get services and how easily they can access care.

Qualified Vendors who provide certain services for people receiving support from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) must comply with EVV. Direct Support Professionals and members must also comply.

The services that require EVV are:

- Attendant Care
- Homemaker
- Habilitation
- Home Health (nursing)
- Respite

### Scheduling with EVV

Qualified Vendors help DDD members set up their weekly schedule in EVV. A schedule helps DDD know if members are getting services the way they discussed with their planning team. Members with live-in caregivers have the option to develop a schedule or not.

### For More Information

AHCCCS has a [webpage for EVV](#). DDD also made a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) sheet to offer more details about EVV.

Members should contact their Qualified Vendor Agency for questions about their agency's EVV system. Members, guardians, and Direct Support Professionals should all be using EVV now.

## 'This Is My Life' Helps DDD Members Take Control of Own Futures

If you have an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD), that doesn't mean you can't make decisions about your own life.

In fact, the United Nations has a treaty called the "[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)." This treaty says that people with a disability making their own life decisions is a basic

human right.

DDD fully supports its members' rights to make their own life decisions. For this reason, the Division has a well-established program called "This Is My Life."

### What is 'This Is My Life'?

"This Is My Life" is a service funded by the state of Arizona. It's available to anyone age 16 or older who receives benefits from the DDD.

The service helps DDD members learn how to communicate their wishes, make personal decisions, and choose the type of help they receive. It also teaches DDD members to advocate for themselves.

Some of the skills taught in "This Is My Life" are:

- Self-advocacy
- Self-awareness
- Goal setting
- Communication
- Problem-solving

Many people with I/DD don't learn the skills they need to advocate for themselves or push for things they want in life. "This Is My Life" helps them learn how to do that and use those skills. The outcome is a happier, more fulfilling life for DDD members.

### How to Sign Up for 'This Is My Life'

Anyone age 16 or older who receives DDD benefits can ask to get services from "This Is My Life." It's easy! Just ask your Support Coordinator to help you sign up. Family members and guardians can also ask the Support Coordinator for help signing up their loved one for "This Is My Life."

## Update Your Contact Information with AHCCCS

If you or your family member receive a request for information from AHCCCS, please respond right away. AHCCCS is updating its systems. Your quick response will ensure AHCCCS can keep contacting you for important information in the future. Please work with your Support Coordinator to ensure AHCCCS has your contact information. If you don't know the name of your Support Coordinator, contact DDD Customer Service and they can assist you: 1-844-770-9500 ext. 1 (TTY/TDD 711) or [DDDCustomerServiceCenter@azdes.gov](mailto:DDDCustomerServiceCenter@azdes.gov). Thank you for your cooperation.

## 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, March 2, 2023.** Guests from Arizona Special Olympics will present at the meeting. 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.](#)

## Arizona Warm Lines

Trained peer support specialists are available to provide support if you need it. These warm lines are available to all Arizonans age 18 and over. Peer support specialists have lived experience. They have been through tough times. They are trained to listen and support callers.

Area Covered	Provider	Phone Number	Hours
All Arizona Counties	<a href="#">NAZCARE</a>	1-888-404-5530	4pm to 10pm Monday – Thursday 3pm to 10:30pm Friday – Sunday
Central Arizona	<a href="#">Crisis Response Network</a>	602-347-1100	24 hours
Southern Arizona - Pima County	<a href="#">Hope, Inc</a>	520-770-9909	8am - 10pm
Southern Arizona - All Other Counties	<a href="#">Hope, Inc</a>	1-844-733-9912	8am - 10pm

The Family Involvement Center offers a warm line for family members. They offer support to family members that deal with behavioral health challenges. This service is also available at no cost.

- Statewide phone number: 1-877-568-8468
- Hours:
  - Monday - Friday: 8am - 6pm
  - Saturday - Sunday: 8am - 12pm

## 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.

### Statewide Crisis Hotline

- 1-844-534-4673 (1-844-534-HOPE) or text 44673 (4HOPE)

### 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, Santa Cruz and Yuma Counties served by Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan: 1-866-495-6735
- Apache, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo and Yavapai Counties served by Health Choice Arizona: 1-877-756-4090
- Pinal County served by Mercy Care: 1-866-495-6735
- Gila County served by Mercy Care: 1-800-631-1314
- Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities: 1-800-259-3449

- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: 1-855-331-6432
- Tohono O’odham Nation: 1-844-423-8759

### Especially for Teens

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

### National 24-Hour Crisis Hotlines

#### Phone

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 available for talk or text
- 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](mailto: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

- Provider Fraud
  - In Arizona: 602-417-4045
  - Outside Arizona: 1-888-ITS-NOT-OK (1-888-487-6686)
- Report Member Fraud:
  - In Arizona: 602-417-4193
  - Outside Arizona: 1-888-ITS-NOT-OK (1-888-487-6686)
- If you have questions about AHCCCS fraud, abuse of the program, or abuse of a member, email the AHCCCS Office of Inspector General (OIG) at [AHCCCSFraud@azahcccs.gov](mailto: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.