



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

DDD Member Update - May 2024

Big Change! OIFA Becomes CARES Administration

On April 1, 2024, the Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA) at the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) got a new name.

The Division rebranded OIFA as the “CARES Administration.” **CARES** stands for **C**ommunity, **A**dvocacy, **R**esolution, **E**ngagement, and **S**upport. The CARES Administration will have an Office of Individual and Family Affairs within it. OIFA staff will still support members who need behavioral health care supports and services.

A Little History

Over the years, DDD’s Customer Service Center and other units working out of the same office have gone by many names. This includes “Customer Service”, “the HERO Unit”, and recently, “OIFA.” All Managed Care Organizations contracted with AHCCCS have an OIFA. OIFA focuses on helping members access behavioral health supports and services.

Before rebranding to CARES, the DDD OIFA team supported more than behavioral health, such as:

- Customer Service
- Behavioral Health Advocacy
- Community Engagement
- Affordable Housing
- General Advocacy
- Benefits Coordination
- Justice Liaisons
- Department of Child Safety Liaison
- Independent Oversight Committee Liaisons
- Provider Relations

As a result, the Division rebranded the staff who support these functions as the CARES Administration. This more accurately reflects the incredible and diverse work they do.

Importance of Oral Health

Did you know the inflammation caused by gum disease may trigger changes in the brain, leading to mood disorders?

Dr. Vick Hirani, DDD's Dental Director, says this is true. "Research has shown that poor oral health can affect overall physical and mental health," he explains. "Studies have found a significant association between gum disease and depression and anxiety."

Proper dental hygiene is part of a person's overall health. Dr. Hirani says gum disease can lead to problems with the heart, pre-term labor, and the kidneys.

Oral Health and People with Developmental Disabilities

Keeping up with proper dental hygiene is especially important for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

"Tooth decay is common in people with developmental disabilities," Dr. Hirani says. "This may be due to poor oral hygiene, and teeth may be crowded or malformed, making them more difficult to keep clean."

People with IDD also tend to form gum disease younger and more often. Other mouth issues tend to be more common in people with I/DD.

"Some people with disabilities have persistently rigid or loose chewing muscles, or have drooling, gagging, or swallowing problems that complicate oral care," Dr. Hirani says.

How to Keep Your Mouth Healthy

With all this knowledge, what can someone do to keep their mouth healthy? Dr. Hirani recommends following these oral hygiene tips:

- **Brush twice a day.** If an individual cannot brush their teeth, a caretaker can help or do it for them.
- **Floss regularly.** If flossing is hard, use aids such as floss holders or floss picks. These can remove food pieces that could cause cavities and gum disease.

- **Visit a dentist regularly.** Dentists can help with disease prevention, early detection, and treatment.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Stay away from foods high in sugar and carbohydrates. Some sugar substitutes like Xylitol help prevent cavities and still satisfy your “sweet tooth.”

Living with Diabetes

Living with diabetes can be hard for anyone. For this reason, having a healthy lifestyle is important. A healthy lifestyle includes exercise, managing weight, eating well, good skincare, and keeping appointments with doctors.

Individuals with I/DD who have diabetes should do these preventative services:

- **Primary care doctor visits** - at least once a year. Should include labs to check kidney function, how well you are managing your diabetes (known as A1C tests), and cholesterol tests to ensure you do not develop heart disease.
- **Dental appointments** - at least two times a year.
- **Eye exams** - once a year.
- **Foot exams** - at least once a year by the podiatrist. If you have sores on your feet, go more often.

Make sure to monitor your blood sugar daily using a glucometer. This will help you know how well you are managing your blood sugar throughout the day.

If you are struggling with managing your diabetes, speak with your primary care provider. Ask if you are a candidate for diabetes self-management training.

Check with your health plan to ensure you can access all the services to help you manage your diabetes.

**Reference: American Diabetes Association*

Positive Behavioral Support Training

The Division partnered with Raising Special Kids (RSK) to develop new training for family members and caregivers. It's called Positive Behavior Support (PBS). PBS is evidence-based and inclusive. It promotes empathy and sensitivity. It also teaches person-centered care. Learn more about PBS on the [Positive Behavior Support Informational webpage](#).

The PBS training will:

- **Inform** on the history of treatment of individuals with developmental disabilities and the impact on their quality of life.
- **Teach** the importance of making one's own choices.
- **Explore** the foundations of behavior. This includes how trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) shape brain development and behavior.
- **Educate** on basic needs, rights, and communication.
- **Teach** how to identify behavior and recognize what influences it.
- **Identify** tools and resources to support individuals.

PBS Training Details and Schedule

The PBS training will be offered once per month on different days and times. The next training will be on June 4 and 5, 2024. Visit the [Raising Special Kids website](#) to register for an upcoming PBS training.

Questions can be submitted to Wendi Scharnhorst at Raising Special Kids.

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SAFETY CORNER

It's Getting Hot! Stay Safe Around Water, During Heat Waves

In 2023, 645 people died from heat in Maricopa County alone, according to the [Maricopa County Department of Public Health](#).

That's a 52 percent increase over 2022, records show.

With the heat comes the need to cool off, leading many people to go swimming. Yet the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) reports drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4.

With this in mind, how can you stay safe around water and during heat waves? Below are some safety tips for both.

Heat Safety Tips

The [Maricopa County Department of Public Health](#) recommends the following tips for staying safe in the heat:

- When possible, stay indoors with air conditioning.
- Drink water BEFORE you feel thirsty. Plus, always carry water with you.
- Always double-check your car. Never leave children or pets in the car, even briefly.
- Watch for signs of [heat illness](#) and seek medical care right away:
 - **Heat stroke** is the most serious heat illness and could lead to death. Signs include a fever above 103 degrees, confusion, dizziness, nausea, and a throbbing headache, among others.
 - **Heat exhaustion** is a milder form of heat illness, but could become heat stroke if not treated. Signs include heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, and dizziness, among others.

Water Safety Tips

According to the [CDC](#), follow these tips to stay safe around water:

- Take swim lessons and learn to swim. Swim lessons can also teach basic water safety skills.
- Build fences around pools. Make sure the fences fully enclose the pool.
- Supervise children closely when they're around water, even in bathtubs.
- Wear a life jacket around natural bodies of water, like a lake. This includes while on a boat.
- Avoid alcohol. Alcohol can impair your judgment and balance. Also, don't drink alcohol while watching children.
- Don't hold your breath for too long underwater. This can cause you to pass out and drown.
- Always swim with a buddy. Never go swimming alone. Additionally, try to swim in places where lifeguards are on duty.

By following these simple safety tips, you can stay cool and have fun when the hottest months hit Arizona. Happy swimming!

Public 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, February 1, 2024.** 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 that DDD may not cover. [Visit the community resources section of the DDD website to learn more](#) or the 2-1-1 Directory at <https://211arizona.org>.

Arizona Warm Lines

Trained peer support specialists are available to provide help if you need it. These warm lines are available to all Arizonans ages 18 and older. Peer support specialists have lived experience with behavioral health challenges. They are trained to listen and support you.

Area Covered	Provider	Phone Number	Hours
All Arizona Counties	NAZCARE	1-888-404-5530	4:30pm to 10:30pm Seven days per week
Central Arizona	Crisis Response Network	602-347-1100	24 hours
Southern Arizona - Pima County	Hope, Inc	520-770-9909	8am - 10pm Seven days per week, 365 days per year, holidays open 8am - 6pm
Southern Arizona - All Other Counties	Hope, Inc	1-844-733-9912	8am - 10pm Seven days per week, 365 days per year, holidays open 8am - 6pm

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: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Crisis Services

If you, a family member, or a friend have a mental health emergency, seek help right away. Trained crisis staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help via phone, text, or chat. The crisis lines are at no cost, confidential and open to anyone who needs help. For medical, police and fire emergency situations, always call 911.

National 24-Hour Crisis Hotlines

Phone

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988
- National Substance Use and Disorder Issues Referral and Treatment Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Text

- Text the word "HOME" to 741741
- Send a text to 988

Chat

- Chat link for 988: <https://988lifeline.org/chat>

Videophone

- Visit the [988 website](#) and look towards the bottom of the page where it states "ASL NOW."

For TTY Users

- Use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988

For those who are Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, and late-deafened, and their families

- Contact [DeafLEAD](#), which provides 24-hour videophone access to crisis interpreters and crisis intervention services
 - Voice Phone: (573) 445-5005
 - Video Phone: (573) 303-5604
 - Toll-Free Phone: (800) 380-DEAF
 - Text: HAND to 839863

Arizona Statewide Crisis Hotline

- Phone: 1-844-534-4673 (HOPE)
- Text: 4HOPE (44673)
- Chat: [Chat with a Crisis Specialist](#)

Suicide and Crisis Hotlines by County

- Apache Country: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Cochise County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Coconino County: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Gila County: Mercy Care, 1-800-631-1314
- Graham County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Greenlee County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- La Paz County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735

- Navajo County: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Maricopa County: Mercy Care, 1-800-631-1314
- Mohave: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Pima County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Pinal County: Mercy Care, 1-866-495-6735
- Santa Cruz County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Yuma County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Yavapai County: Care1st, 1-877-756-4090
- Ak-Chin Indian Community: 1-800-259-3449
- Gila River Indian Community: 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)

Especially for Veterans

- Veterans Crisis Line: 988 (press 1)
- Be Connected: 1-866-4AZ-VETS (429-8387)

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

- AHCCCS online reporting form for FWA: <https://www.azahcccs.gov/Fraud/ReportFraud/onlineform.aspx>
- 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.

Stay Up to Date

Previous versions of 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.