



Member Update - December 2025

Revised AHCCCS Policies and Exhibits Regarding the HCBS Needs Tool (HNT)

AHCCCS told the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to implement new policies about the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Needs Tool (HNT), starting October 1, 2025. The HNT is used to assess the needs of children for direct care and habilitation services.

On October 16, 2025, the Governor's Office and AHCCCS directed DDD to pause the use of the HNT after hearing concerns from families. AHCCCS has revised the following policies and exhibits. They were open for expedited public comment through November 24, 2025.

- 1620-17A: HCBS Needs Tool (revised)
- 1620-17B: HNT Guidance for Child Tool (revised)
- 1620-17C: HNT Guidance for Adult Tool (revised)
- ACOM 450: ALTCS Extraordinary Care Review Process for Minor Members

AHCCCS made some clinical changes to the HNT. It outlined these changes through emergency rulemaking. The changes include new tasks that can be assessed for children with complex needs. They also added a new process called Extraordinary Care Review for children under the age of 18. Details about the changes can be found on the [AHCCCS Member Resources web page](#) in the *ALTCS Policy Updates* section.

The Division is creating a new Division Operations Policy specific to the Extraordinary Care Review process. "Extraordinary Care Review" or "ECR" refers to a review process available to each member under the age of 18 who disagrees with the number of assessed hours for Direct Care Services, Habilitation Service, or both as a result of the age limitations in the HNT. More details about the ECR will be shared when the process is further developed.

Minimize Cold Weather's Impact on the Body

Many people enjoy fall and winter as the days get longer and the temperature drops. However, according to the [American Heart Association](#), prolonged exposure to normal winter temperatures can affect the heart, the brain, and other organs. When it is cold, the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. This can lead to hypothermia or frostbite.

In cold air, the body's blood vessels constrict. This protects the vital organs and limits heat loss. However, this increases blood pressure. This can lead to a heart attack or stroke. People with existing cardiovascular conditions are especially at risk. Constricting blood vessels can also impair thinking. People experiencing excessive shivering, confusion, slurred speech, memory loss, drowsiness, or a puffy or swollen face should get to a warm area as soon as possible. They should seek medical help if their condition does not improve.

Cold weather can worsen respiratory issues like asthma and chronic lung disease. Cold air is very

dry and can irritate the airways. This can cause them to be inflamed or constrict the muscles around them. This can lead to coughing or shortness of breath.

People who are very young or very old are most susceptible to cold weather. Older adults with chronic illnesses are also at high risk. People planning to be outside in cold weather should wear appropriate clothing, avoid overexertion, and drink warm drinks.

Avoid the Holiday Blues

This time of year can be stressful. The days are shorter and the nights are longer. There are also several holidays celebrated. Some people may feel anxiety or depression because of these changes. As a result, focusing on your overall health is important. The [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) offers the following tips to avoid the holiday blues.

- Stick to normal routines as much as possible.
- Get enough sleep. Try to get at least 7 hours a night.
- Spend time with supportive people who care about you.
- Do not overeat or drink too much. Limit alcohol if you feel down.
- Get some exercise daily. Get some fresh air if possible.
- Make a simple to-do list.
- Set realistic goals for yourself related to holiday activities.
- Set a budget and stick to it.
- Find ways to relax.

Contact a Warm Line or Crisis Line if you are feeling the holiday blues and need someone to talk to.

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 Monday to Thursday 3:00pm to 10:30pm Friday to Sunday
Central Arizona	Crisis Response Network	602-347-1100	24 hours
Southern Arizona - Pima County	Hope, Inc	520-770-9909	8am to 10pm Seven days per week, 365 days per year, holidays open 8am to 6pm (English) and 8am to 1pm (Spanish)

Area Covered	Provider	Phone Number	Hours
Southern Arizona - All Other Counties	Hope, Inc	1-844-733-9912	8am to 10pm Seven days per week, 365 days per year, holidays open 8am to 6pm (English) and 8am to 1pm (Spanish)

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

National Core Indicators (NCI)

[National Core Indicators - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(NCI-IDD\)](#) is a joint effort between the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI). NCI uses [surveys and in-person interviews](#) to measure member satisfaction with DDD programs and services.

Vital Research LLC (Vital) is the National Core Indicator-IDD [NCI-IDD] Surveys vendor. Vital is contacting members, families, vendors, and Support Coordinators to schedule In-Person Survey (IPS) interviews. They are scheduled to start in January 2026. Vital Research will send IPS notifications to schedule interviews. Visit the [Vital Research, LLC and DDD website](#) to learn more.

There are also three Family Surveys. Each Family Survey is specific to the member identified on the letter included with the survey. The Family Guardian Survey (FGS), Adult Family Survey (AFS), and Child Family Survey (CFS) can be completed online or on paper. All Family Surveys are anonymous.

Other National Core Indicator-Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (NCI-IDD) Resources:

- [What is NCI? video](#)
- [‘What to Know About NCI’ video](#)
- [Que Hay Que Saber de NCI](#)
- [NCI-IDD Peer Surveyor videos](#)
- [How Employment Goals Impact Job Outcomes for People with Disabilities](#)
- [NCI-IDD website](#)
- [NCI Facebook page](#)

Members or families with questions can email the [Division’s NCI Coordinator](#).

Behavioral Health Advocacy

The Division’s Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA) has a Behavioral Health Advocacy Unit. This unit includes Behavioral Health Advocates who work closely with members and/or their responsible person to ensure their voices and choices are heard and respected. These Advocates are able to assist in:

- Breaking down barriers that prevent access to behavioral health services.
- Helping the family navigate the behavioral health system.

- Connecting members and families to community resources.
- Assisting members and families as part of the planning team.

Members having issues getting behavioral health services can talk to their Support Coordinator about adding a Behavioral Health Advocate to their planning team.

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 Thursday, January 8, 2026.** 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>.

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>

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
 - Text: 988

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 County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Cochise County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Coconino County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 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: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-877-756-4090
- Maricopa County: Mercy Care, 1-800-631-1314
- Mohave: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 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
- Yavapai County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-877-756-4090
- Yuma County: Arizona Complete Health - Complete Care Plan, 1-866-495-6735
- Ak-Chin Indian Community: 1-800-259-3449
- Gila River Indian Community: 1-800-259-3449
- Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: 480-850-9230
- 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.