



Member Update - January 2026

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.

National Cancer Prevention Month

February is National Cancer Prevention Month. Raising awareness about reducing cancer risk through healthy lifestyle choices, early detection, and understanding preventable factors is the focus. According to the [National Institutes of Health](#), in 2025, about 2 million people were diagnosed with cancer in the United States. Cancer can be caused by a variety of factors. These include a person's genetics, lifestyle, and the environment in which they live. All may increase or decrease the risk of getting cancer.

Limiting exposure to avoidable risk factors may lower the risk of developing certain cancers. These risk factors include:

- Alcohol
- Cancer-Causing Substances
- Chronic Inflammation
- Diet

- Hormones
- Immunosuppression
- Infectious Agents
- Obesity
- Radiation
- Sunlight
- Tobacco

Members who think they may be at risk of developing cancer should talk to their primary care provider. They can help identify risk factors and offer suggestions to reduce the risk of getting cancer. They may recommend different cancer screenings based on a person's age and gender. Screening may detect cancer early, allowing for more effective treatment.

You've Got Mail

Every person has the right to receive their own mail. This includes people with disabilities. Mail is personal. It may include letters from family, friends, doctors, banks, or other important places. Because of this, it must be treated with respect. All adults have the right to privacy when receiving mail. This applies wherever they live, including group homes.

Getting and reading mail is fun, but caution is also required. It is important to understand the difference between First-class Mail and Presorted Mail. First-class mail is personal and can be things such as bills, letters, bank statements, or time-sensitive mail. Presorted Mail is considered "marketing mail" and is not personalized. It is used for advertising, newsletters, catalogs, or coupons. If a member needs help reading or understanding their mail, that help should only be given if the person agrees. Support should be respectful and focused on helping the person make their own choices about their mail, not taking control away from them.

Avoiding Mail Scams

Bad actors run scams through the mail every day. They may want money or your personal information. No matter what, it is important to be scam-aware. Scammers will often ask for account login information and personal information such as a Social Security number. The [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#) identifies some common scam trends:

- Scammers contact YOU and say there's a problem.
- Scammers tell you to hurry.
- Scammers tell you to pay, and they tell you HOW to pay.

Caution should be used with all physical and electronic mail if any of these tactics are used. The [FTC has an Action Plan](#) to help individuals avoid scams, which can be completed by providing the names and numbers of people and companies they trust. This can help avoid all types of scams.

Self-Care Is For Everyone

Self-care means doing something for yourself to help you feel your best. There are many ways to practice self-care. Some self-care activities can be done alone. Some can be done in a group. It is important to learn what works best for you.

Movement is a great way to strengthen your body and improve your mood. Get active in ways that feel safe and give you energy. Try some gentle stretches, chair exercises, or accessible yoga. Listen to your body and don't push yourself past your limits. If you want a break, take one.

One of the healthiest ways to take care of yourself is to join a group. Groups can be a fun way to connect with others. You can join a group online or in person. Some groups spend time outdoors enjoying nature. Exploring your surroundings, birdwatching, or creating art outdoors can be fun.

Good sleep is also important. A bedtime routine can help you get the sleep you need. Create a bedtime routine that feels good, relaxing, and works for you. Building or changing your bedtime routine can include taking a warm bath or shower, adding a skincare routine, having a warm drink, reading, listening to relaxing music, and more.

Self-care is a lifelong practice that can change as you learn what you like and dislike. Remember, self-care is about you feeling your best. Try different activities to see what works best for you. Talk about your self-care ideas with a friend or caregiver. They can help make self-care a part of your daily routine.

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 started in January 2026. Vital Research has sent 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](#).

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, February 5, 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>.

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 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)
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

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.