



DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Sent on Behalf of DES/DDD

QUALITY MANAGEMENT BULLETIN - APRIL 2025

Target Audience - Qualified Vendors and Providers

Transmittal Date - 04/29/2025

Happy April everyone, it seems the old adage “April Showers bring May flowers” is true we are seeing some wonderful blooms here in the valley. Please kindly review this month’s bulletin.

Heat and Water Safety

As the temperatures start to rise, we need to be conscious of our most vulnerable population and be sure they are protected from exposure and are safe around water. Here are some tips to help avoid heat-related illnesses:

- Drink plenty of water
- Dress in lightweight, light-colored clothes and use sunscreen
- Stay indoors if possible, or seek shade when outside
- Take regular breaks if doing physical activities
- Check the front and back seats before exiting and before leaving the vehicle parked
- Ensure the member enters the building or is greeted by staff before leaving the drop-off location. Do not leave members unattended.

Learn more about [heat safety](#) from the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Here are some tips for water safety:

- Fully enclose pools with a fence
- Never swim alone
- Always have an adult watching the swimmers, and avoid distractions
- Wear life jackets
- Consider the effects of medications
- Make sure all staff are current on CPR training

Learn more about [healthy and safe swimming](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Advanced Directives and Hospice Care Plans

Recently we have had an uptick in incidents of direct care workers performing CPR on members even though they have hospice plan/DNR (prehospital plan/advanced directive) associated with their care. Please refer to this previous [March 2024 QM bulletin](#) on the ability for direct care workers to withhold CPR if this plan is in place and available.

Importance of Due Diligence in Addressing QMU Investigations

QMU’s priority is ensuring the safety, dignity, and quality of care for individuals with disabilities. When an incident is elevated to a Quality of Care concern, it is vital that all parties involved understand the process

and responsibilities to ensure a thorough investigation. More information can be found in [Division Operations Manual 6002-F Investigative Process](#).

The Vendors Role

When a concern is raised, vendors may be contacted to provide relevant documentation including staff statements, internal policies, and any other pertinent information. Your cooperation is a critical component of the investigative process. Please remember:

- Respond promptly and completely to information requests.
- Provide accurate documentation of care plans, service records, and communication logs.
- Ensure your staff are available for interviews or clarifications when needed.

Why Vendor Information Matters

The details you provide help us to:

- Understand the context of the reported incident.
- Validate whether appropriate protocols and care practices were followed.
- Identify any systemic issues that may require corrective action or training.

Division Quality Management Unit's Role

While vendor information is essential, the Quality Management Unit is required to conduct an independent investigation; which includes interviewing all parties involved. Our team conducts:

- Direct interviews with the member, family, or guardian.
- In-depth review of member experience, and outcomes.
- Evaluations of whether care meets both regulatory standards and member expectations.

Due diligence means we approach each case without assumptions, ensuring the voice of the individual served remains central throughout our process.

Why This Matters

Every investigation is an opportunity to strengthen the support system for our members. By working together:

- We uphold trust and transparency.
- We foster a culture of continuous improvement.
- Most importantly, we ensure individuals with disabilities receive safe, person-centered, and respectful care.

Thank you for your continued commitment to quality services. Qualified Vendors with questions about care concern process or how to improve their internal response practices should contact QMU.

Together, we ensure the highest standards of care for the individuals we serve.

Pharmacy Corner

The focus of this month's Pharmacy Corner is on Member medication refusals and the importance of reporting:

Consider this scenario. It is time for the member to take their medication(s). The member says, "No, I do not want to take my medication". The member does not give a reason and walks away. Fifteen minutes later, the member is asked to take their medication and the member refuses again.

Medications are a critical part of the services and treatment a Member receives. Medications are crucial to supporting the member to reduce or prevent symptoms which could cause harm, or even death, if they are not taken as prescribed. It is important to remember that a Member does have the right to refuse their medications. However, it is your responsibility to help remind/educate members on the importance of taking

medications, report instances of refusal and seek professional assistance if continued refusal occurs. We have outlined a few reminders or actions that need to be taken when a Member refuses their medications:

1. Call the prescribing provider or dispensing pharmacy. Explain that the Member is refusing to take their medication.
 - a. Ask if they can take it later in the day or skip the medication dose.
 - b. Document who you spoke with and the information provided.
2. If the Member continues to refuse taking their medication, contact the prescribing provider to schedule an appointment to discuss the Member's refusal and options such as changing the time of day or to another medication.
3. Submit an incident report each time the member refuses their medication and be sure to explain why the Member refused their medication and what actions were taken.

Credentialing Corner

The Quality Management Unit has received additional questions regarding the Credentialing process at the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).

What is Credentialing?

Credentialing is the process of verifying and approving Qualified Vendors to ensure they meet the necessary qualifications, standards, and compliance requirements to deliver services to individuals with developmental disabilities. The credentialing process is outlined in [Provider Manual Chapter 48](#) and [Division Medical Policy Manual Chapter 950](#).

DDD's Credentialing unit operates separately from the Contracting unit and does not share systems, documents, or programs with other units. Qualified Vendors or Applicants should not contact the Contract Unit or their Contract Management Specialist regarding Credentialing. **All documents requested by the Credentialing unit must be submitted directly by the Qualified Vendor or Applicant to the Credentialing unit.**

For any updates, edits, changes to service locations, or signatories contact the [Credentialing Unit](#) directly.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding. We value our partnership and look forward to continuing to work with your organization.

Qualified Vendors with questions should contact the [Credentialing Unit](#) directly via email.

National Core Indicators

The **deadline** for the 2024 NCI-IDD State of the Workforce Survey is **June 30, 2025**. Surveys were sent to Qualified Vendors from staffstability@hsri.org. Get your surveys completed today! The State of the Workforce Survey (formally Staff Stability Survey) is an online survey for Provider agencies that employ direct support professionals and support adults with ID/DD in residential, employment, day services, and other in-home or community inclusion programs. The survey captures information about wages, benefits, and turnover of the direct care professional workforce hired by agencies.

NCI-IDD is excited to share the release of the NCI State of the Workforce for IDD (NCI-IDD SoTW)[®] 2023 report and Data At A Glance. The data below reflects DDD services provided from January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023. The NCI-IDD SoTW is the most comprehensive data on provider agencies and the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce providing direct services to adults (age 18 and over) with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

We welcome your support in sharing these resources more widely! The Data At A Glance gives a high level overview of the data, and is ideal for partners, policymakers, and family members who wish to better understand the extent of workforce shortages, and the factors that are known to contribute to workforce

challenges. For collaborators who want to see state specific results and more information about vacancies, agency size, etc., we encourage you to refer to the [full report](#). Please reach out to NCISurveys@azdes.gov with any questions.

Thank you for continuing to support the members and for ongoing collaboration with the Division.

If you have any questions, please contact the DDD Customer Service Center at 1-844-770-9500 ext. 1 (TTY/TDD 711) or DDDCustomerService-Providers@azdes.gov.

Please send Incident Reports to the appropriate District email below:

- District Central - DDDCentralIR@azdes.gov
- District East - DDDEastIR@azdes.gov
- District North - DDDDistrictNorthIncidentReports@azdes.gov
- District South - DDDD2IR@azdes.gov
- District West - DDDDWestIR@azdes.gov