

# Member and Family Newsletter



## Summer 2025



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# Message from the Assistant Director

By **Zane Garcia Ramadan**  
DDD Assistant Director



Dear Members and Families,

Recently, the Division finalized its submission for accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for Case Management for Long-Term Services and Supports (CM-LTSS). NCQA is an organization focused on improving the quality of healthcare through evidence-based standards, measures, and programs. This project has been ongoing for more than three years. As part of this work, the Division has updated and created policies and procedures to align with the NCQA standards. The biggest change is in the person-centered needs assessment. This is a complete analysis of all areas of a person's life. It identifies their strengths, needs, and interests. It is a process that reveals a person's unique layers. This results in understanding the whole person, not just parts. All Support Coordinators have completed training specific to improving the quality of the needs assessment and planning processes.

AHCCCS has recently updated policies that include changes to the planning meeting process. These changes include an annual full person-centered service plan (PCSP) completion with three PCSP reviews. This change will take effect on October 1, 2025. The meeting schedule will look like this for most members.

- Full PCSP, meeting once per year **in person**.
- PCSP Review at the first 90-day Planning Review Meeting. Most members could choose to hold this meeting **virtually**.
- PCSP Review at the second 90-day Planning Review Meeting. This meeting would be **in person**.
- PCSP Review at the third 90-day Planning Review Meeting. Most members could choose to hold this meeting **virtually**.

Options will still exist to update the PCSP more often if requested or needed. All PCSPs and PCSP Reviews would need to be in person for:

- Members on a 180-day review cycle.
- Members using the Parents as Paid Caregiver (PPCG) service model .
- Members using the Spouses as Paid Caregivers service model.
- Members using the Independent Provider service model.
- Members without access to the internet or if it to costs minutes on their phones.



The Division is in the process of publishing its 5-year Strategic Plan. This work started back in December 2024. The Division held listening sessions with members and families around the state as well as with providers and staff. The result of this work is a new vision, *Arizonans with developmental disabilities lead the lives they choose*, which supports DDD's overall mission of *empowering Arizonans with developmental disabilities to lead self-directed, healthy, and meaningful lives*. The Division has identified focus areas for the next 5-years. These focus areas are:

1. Support Coordination Program Excellence
2. High-Quality Service Delivery
3. Empower Individual Success
4. Maintain Trust and Confidence

More details about the strategic plan will be communicated in our monthly emails and public town halls. I would like to thank everyone who engaged in the process and helped us create a great plan.

Thank you for your continued support. Together we can empower Arizonans with developmental disabilities to live self-directed, healthy, and meaningful lives.



# MEDICARE PART D

Medicare Part D helps Medicare-eligible members pay for prescription medications. You must have Medicare Hospital (Part A) and Medical (Part B) to enroll in a Part D plan. If you have Medicare Part A and B, Part D could help you with your medication costs. Not all Medicare-approved Part D plans cost the same. It is important for Medicare-eligible members to find the plan that best meets their needs. Not all medications are covered by every plan. Medicare has a search tool to find out which medications are covered by each plan: [www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan](http://www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan)

Medicare also offers a program to help individuals with the costs of their medications. This program is called Medicare Part D Extra Help. You can apply for Extra Help at any time. Extra Help is based on financial need. Members with Medicaid and Medicare Part A

or B are automatically eligible for Extra Help. <https://www.medicare.gov/basics/costs/help/drug-costs>

**The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)** is a free health benefits counseling service for people with Medicare. SHIP gives people the information needed to make Medicare benefits decisions. Contact SHIP at 1-800-432-4040 to get more details about Medicare Part D plans or go to the website <https://des.az.gov/services/older-adults/medicare-assistance>

Members without Medicare can contact Social Security to find out how to enroll. <https://www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up>

- Call: 1-800-772-1213
- TTY: 1-800-325-0778

## Cultural Competency in DDD

DDD wants to make sure you feel valued and supported when receiving services. The Division shares articles in its monthly member update email about how DDD and Qualified Vendors (QVs) work to help members feel more included. Topics of the articles include:

- Language Access
- Cultural Competency
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



the trainings include:

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP):** Reviews LEP laws, policies, and procedures. Staff learn how to assist people with LEP. Staff take it when they are hired and then every two years.

**ADA 504:** Teaches about the importance of the ADA. It also informs staff about accommodations. Staff take it when they are hired and then every three years.

DDD also makes sure that its staff get training in these areas. This helps them better assist members. After training, staff take a test to show they understood the material. Some of

DDD is also working on new training to help staff serve all members and families in ways that respect their language and culture.



## Family Support Services

Do you have a child or family member who is eligible for behavioral health services? Do you ever feel lost in navigating the system or that your voice is not heard? Are you aware that as a family member there are services available to assist you in supporting your child or family member?

Family Support Services can assist you to:

- Navigate the different systems of care including the behavioral health system, child welfare system, education system, and juvenile justice system.
- Locate services/resources that fit the needs of the member and family.
- Gain new skills to care for and advocate for your loved one.
- Identify formal and informal support systems.
- Feel supported during meetings including Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, Adult Recovery Team (ART) meetings, Court, and 504 / Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings.

- Find classes, trainings, support groups, and more.

These services are available at no cost to you from different agencies including Family Run Organizations. Staff providing Family Support Services have lived experience navigating systems of care for their own family. Additionally, they have special training to ensure they are able to support you and your family in the best way possible. To access these services, contact your AHCCCS health plan, their Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA), or one of the Family Run organizations listed below:

**Caring Connections for Special Needs** (Benson, Sierra Vista, Payson, Douglas, Safford, and Tucson)

[www.ccsneeds.com](http://www.ccsneeds.com)

520-639-9006

**Family Involvement Center (FIC)** (Phoenix, Prescott, Flagstaff, and Tucson)

[www.familyinvolvementcenter.org](http://www.familyinvolvementcenter.org)

602-288-0155

## Family Support Services cont.

### **Mentally Ill Kids In Distress (MIKID)**

(Phoenix, Tucson, Yuma, Casa Grande, Kingman, Nogales)

[www.mikid.org](http://www.mikid.org)

602-253-1240

### **Encircle Families (formerly Raising Special Kids)**

(Statewide)

[www.encirclefamilies.org](http://www.encirclefamilies.org)

800-237-3007

### **Reach Family Services/Alcanza Servicios de Familia**

(Phoenix)

[www.reachfs.org](http://www.reachfs.org)

602-512-9000

There are also peer services available to support members. Peer Recovery Support



Specialists are trained staff who have lived experience with their own mental health and/or substance use disorders.

For more information on Peer Support and Peer Run Organizations, visit

<https://www.azahcccs.gov/AHCCCS/Downloads/PeerRunOrganizationsFlyer.pdf>

\*\*Information provided from the AHCCCS OIFA Website and the Family Involvement Center Website.

## Councils and Committees



The Division of Developmental Disabilities welcomes input from people with disabilities, their families, providers, advocates, community partners, and other stakeholders to improve our services and supports.

Volunteers are needed to support all of DDD's councils and committees. Contact

the DDD Volunteer Coordinator by email at [dddvolunteers@azdes.gov](mailto:dddvolunteers@azdes.gov) if you are interested in learning more.

For more information on these councils and committees, go to:

[https://bit.ly/ddd\\_volunteer](https://bit.ly/ddd_volunteer)

# Drug and Alcohol Recovery Is for Everyone

Millions of Americans have a substance use disorder. Recovery is possible with treatment. Substance use disorder can occur from using:

- Alcohol
- Marijuana
- Inhalants (inhaling vapors, fumes, gasses, or aerosol sprays to get high)
- Opioids (misuse of prescribed opioid pain relievers, heroin, illegal opiates including counterfeit pills with fentanyl)
- Methamphetamine
- Cocaine
- LSD and other hallucinogens

Different substances pose different dangers. Alcohol and drug use can lead to:

- Dependence and addiction
- Injury and accidents
- Health problems and sleep issues
- Financial and work problems
- Relationship and other problems
- Some substances lead to a higher risk of illness or death. For example, more than five people die every day in Arizona from opioid overdoses (from prescription opioids and illegal opioids, like counterfeit pills with fentanyl).

Depending on the type of substance use disorder, treatment may include:

- Outpatient counseling through a behavioral health provider – This type of program helps people understand addiction, their triggers, and their reasons for using substances. People also learn tools to



reduce or eliminate use.

- Inpatient rehabilitation – A full-time facility provides an environment to help people recover without distractions or temptations.
- Behavioral health care – Trained providers who help with mental health concerns.
- Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Specific conditions like opioid use disorder may benefit from medication as the first course of treatment. MAT can help with cravings and withdrawal symptoms.
- There are also Community-Based options such as 12-Step Programs, SMART Recovery, and Celebrate Recovery.

## Find strength in getting help

If there are concerns about substance use, speak with a Support Coordinator for information about services or call the Customer Service number on the back of the health plan insurance card. Members' Support Coordinators can connect them with behavioral

health providers for help. The Division also has Behavioral Health Complex Care Specialists. A Behavioral Health Complex Care Specialist can be invited to a member's planning meeting and can offer information to help the member's team as it arranges services.

If you would like to complete a private questionnaire to see how alcohol use may be affecting your health and well-being, follow this link to the AUDIT questionnaire:

<https://auditscreen.org/check-your-drinking>

The Opioid Assistance and Referral Line (OARLine), 1-888-688-4222, is another available resource.



Any Arizona resident, with or without insurance, can get help.

If you or someone you know is having a behavioral health crisis, call one of the crisis lines listed below. You should call if you are feeling really sad, hopeless, or angry and also feel like you might hurt yourself or someone else.

Crisis help includes:

- 24-hour-a-day helplines answered by trained crisis specialists.
- Mobile teams with behavioral health professionals who travel to the person having a crisis. The mobile team may help the person get more care if needed.
- Facility-based crisis stabilization centers give first-line help that includes treatment with medication.

### **Arizona Statewide Crisis Hotline:**

Phone: 844-534-HOPE (4673)

Text: 4HOPE (44673)

### **National Crisis Hotlines:**

To reach the **National 24-Hour Crisis Hotline, Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:**

**Call or text:** 988

**Videophone:** 988lifeline.org

### **National Substance Use and Disorder Issues Referral and Treatment Hotline:**

**Call:** 800-662-HELP (4357) or

**Text:** 988

### **Suicide and Crisis Hotlines by County and Tribal Nation**

**Apache, Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Pima, Santa Cruz, or Yuma County:**  
866-495-6735

**Coconino, Navajo, Mohave, or Yavapai County:** 877-756-4090

**Maricopa, Gila, or Pinal County:**  
800-631-1314

**Ak-Chin Indian Community:**  
800-259-3449

**Gila River Indian Community:**  
800-259-3449

**Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community:** 1-480-850-9230

**Tohono O'odham Nation:**  
844-423-8759

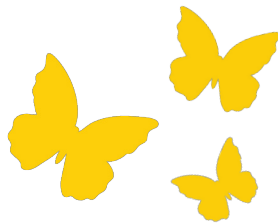
# Suicide

# Prevention



Reduce the risk of suicide for yourself and the people you care about. Watch for warning signs and know how to offer help to deal with the crisis. Knowing who to call when in crisis is also important. Suicide warning signs include:

- Feeling you are a burden
- Feeling alone
- Feeling more anxiety
- A trapped feeling or as if in physical or emotional pain
- More alcohol or substance use
- Looking for a way to self-harm, such as gathering pills to take
- More anger or rage
- Extreme mood swings
- No sense of hope
- Too little or too much sleep
- Talking or posting about wanting to die
- Making plans for suicide
- Giving away important possessions



Ways to reduce sadness during difficult times:

- Be with others: Spend time with family and friends, make new friends, and attend community activities.

- Wellness: Drink enough water, get enough sleep, eat healthy food, and exercise.
- Healthy thoughts: Think about strengths and good things in life, happy memories, and problem-solving.
- Meaning: Find hobbies and fun activities or help others.

If you think someone is going through a tough time, talking to them is the first step to giving them the help they need. Ask caring questions and be a good listener. Simple questions can be helpful. You might ask: “How are you?”, “You don’t seem like yourself, and I want to know how you’re really feeling because I care about you”, or “Do you need to talk? Sometimes talking can help make things feel better”, or “Do you feel like hurting yourself?”

## Behavioral Health Services

Speak with your Support Coordinator or call the Customer Service number on the back of your health plan insurance card to get help with Behavioral Health Services.

Read your health plan’s Member Handbook to learn more about Behavioral Health Services. Links to the Mercy Care and United Healthcare handbooks are available on the Division’s website at [bit.ly/ddd-health-plans](http://bit.ly/ddd-health-plans).

The Division’s video, “Introduction to

## Suicide Prevention cont.

Behavioral Health Services”, has information on Behavioral Health Services and how they may assist a member’s health and well-being.

The video can be found at:

<https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities/DDD-informational-videos>

### Behavioral Health Advocacy

The DDD Office of Individual and Family Affairs has a Behavioral Health Advocacy Unit. Behavioral Health Advocates work closely with members and/or their responsible person to ensure their voices and choices are heard and respected. The Advocates are able to assist in:

- Breaking down barriers that prevent

access to behavioral health services.

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

Members should talk to their Support Coordinator if they are having problems getting behavioral health services. They will connect an advocate to the member.

### Quick Reference - Behavioral Health Journey:

Visit: <https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities/current-member-resources/qrg/bh-service-journey>

connection  
is a helping  
hand



Prevent  
Suicide





# Health Before Pregnancy

The first step in planning a healthy pregnancy is a checkup with your obstetrician-gynecologist (ob/gyn) or other pregnancy care provider before you get pregnant. This checkup can help you learn about things that could affect your pregnancy.

At this visit your provider will talk with you about:

- Your diet and lifestyle
- Your medical and family history
- Medications you take
- Past pregnancies
- Vaccination history
- Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)

## Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are spread by sexual contact. STIs include: chlamydia, gonorrhea, human papillomavirus (HPV), herpes, syphilis, and human immunodeficiency virus



(HIV). HIV is the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

It is important to be tested for HIV if you are pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant. Early diagnosis and treatment can help you stay healthy. It can also lower the chance of passing the virus to your baby. HIV can be passed to your baby during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding.

A pregnant person should also be tested for syphilis at their first prenatal visit, at the start of their third trimester, and at the time of delivery. Syphilis can be treated and cured with antibiotics. Treatment during pregnancy helps to stop the infection from being passed

to your baby during pregnancy and childbirth.

Talk to your provider about getting tested. AHCCCS covers testing and treatment. There is no copayment or other charge for covered services.



# Getting Non-Title XIX/XXI Services

(Medicaid and the  
State Child Health Insurance Program)

Some DDD members may qualify for non-Title XIX/XXI services including:

- room and board, billing limitations apply
- mental health services
- auricular (ear) acupuncture
- utility subsidies

These services are provided by contracted health plans known as **AHCCCS Complete Care Contractors with Regional Behavioral**

## **Health Agreements (ACC-RBHAs).**

A member's Support Coordinator can also help members access non-Title XIX/XXI Services.

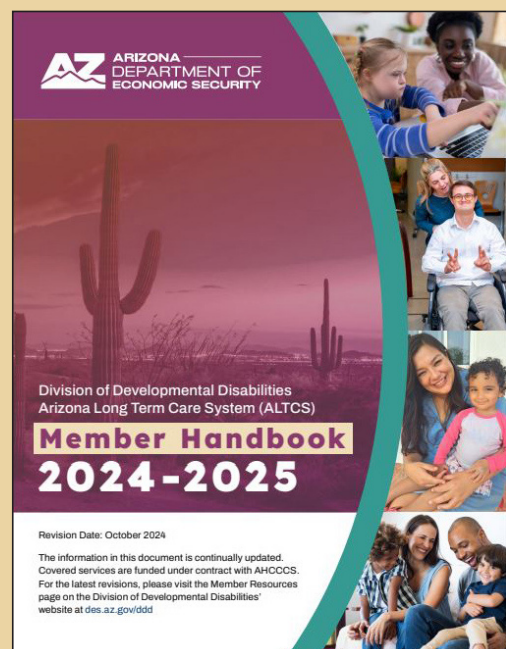
***For more information about Non Title XIX/XXI, contact a behavioral health provider, who will be able to assess the need for these services.***

## **ALTCS MEMBER HANDBOOK**

Members eligible for DDD/ALTCS can review a copy of the 2024-2025 ALTCS Member Handbook on DDD's website at:

<https://bit.ly/ALTCS2025memhandbook>

Call the DDD Customer Service Center at 1-844-770-9500, Option 1, to request a printed copy.



# REPORT FRAUD, WASTE OR ABUSE: SUSPECT IT, REPORT IT!

Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA) are crimes. Report fraud, waste, and abuse right away. Reporters will not get in trouble or lose services for making a report of any suspected fraud, waste, or abuse.

You can report fraud, waste or abuse 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 the online form at: <https://bit.ly/ReporttoDDD>



You can also report FWA to AHCCCS:

- Provider Fraud:
  - In Arizona: 602-417-4045
  - Outside Arizona: 888-ITS-NOT-OK (888-487-6686)
- Member Fraud:
  - In Arizona: 602-417-4193
  - Outside Arizona: 888-ITS-NOT-OK (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 [www.azahcccs.gov/Fraud/ReportFraud/](http://www.azahcccs.gov/Fraud/ReportFraud/)

## DDD CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER

To file a **grievance/complaint** or if you are looking for general resources, call the DDD Customer Service Center at 844-770-9500, Option 1.

### GET NEWS FROM DDD.

Get monthly updates and news emailed to you. Sign up at:

<https://azdes-community.my.salesforce-sites.com/subscribe/>

### CAN'T FIND SOMETHING ON OUR WEBSITE?

Call the DDD Customer Service Center at 844-770-9500, Option 1.

### DDD POLICY

If you would like to be notified of Division policy updates, **send an email** with contact

information to [DDDpolicy@azdes.gov](mailto:DDDpolicy@azdes.gov)

**RESOURCES** for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and their families can be found on the DES/DDD website at

<https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities/current-member-resources>

Follow DDD on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/OfficialArizonaDDD>

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