



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona



Division of Developmental Disabilities

August 13, 2020

DDD's top priority is the health and safety of our members, their families, and the professionals in our program that support them

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is:

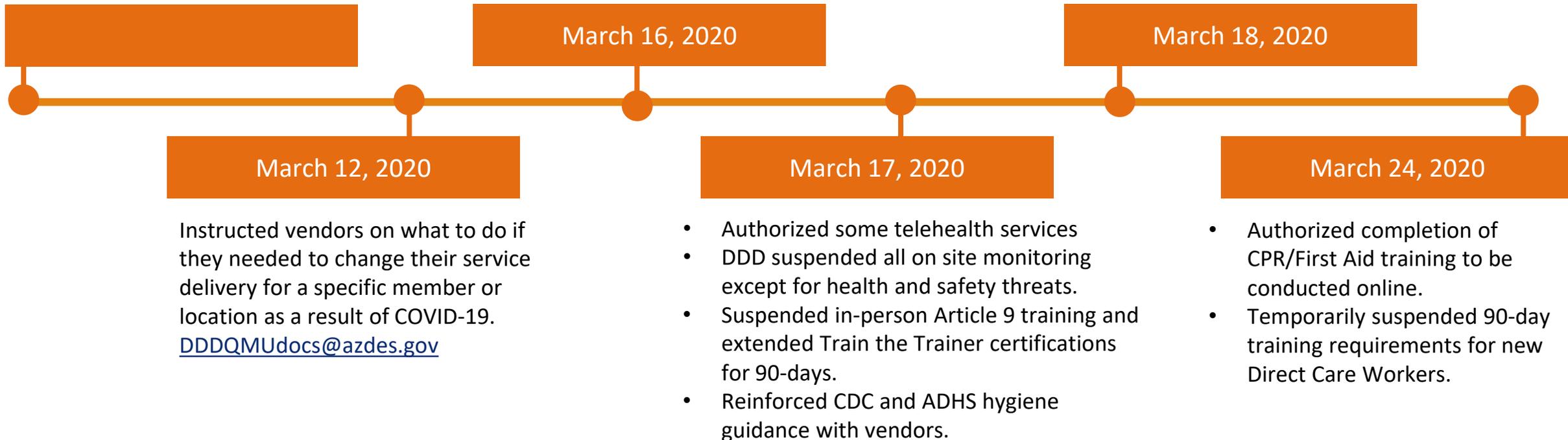
- Working with ADHS and CDC guidelines to ensure appropriate measures are in place to allow for the continuation of necessary services
 - Monitoring service delivery and availability to ensure service continuation
 - Providing regular updates on the DDD COVID-19 Website:
https://bit.ly/DDD_COVID19Actions
-

Changes in DDD Regarding COVID-19

- Governor's Executive Order – Visitor Policies for SNF, ICF and ALF.
- DDD contacted all facilities and encouraged GHs to implement similar policies.
- DDD reminded all providers to review their Pandemic Performance Plans.

Support Coordinators began conducting planning meetings through video conferencing or telephone calls.

- Announced PRC meetings would be conducted via video conference or telephone.
- Granted 90-day extension for expiring CPR/First Aid certifications.
- Started virtual Article 9 training.
- Adjusted Prevention and Support expectations for new hires.

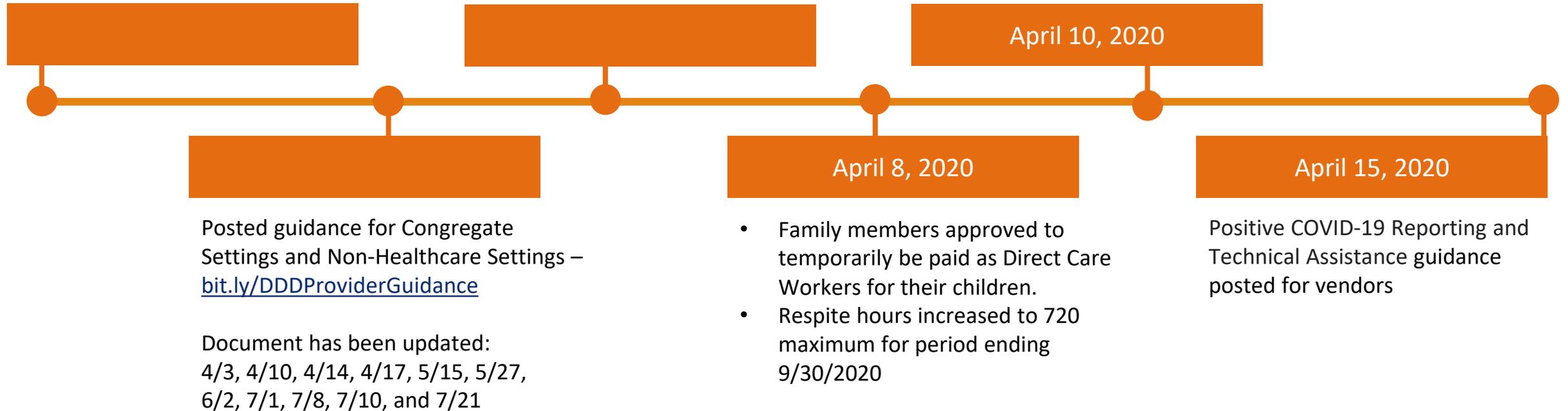


Changes in DDD Regarding COVID-19

- Approved Day Treatment services to be provided in a member's home or developmental home.
- Allowed billing for 1:1 and 1:2 day treatment ratios without prior approval.

Governor's Executive Order – Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected

Employment and Habilitation authorized for delivery via telehealth during COVID-19



Changes in DDD Regarding COVID-19

Posted guidance regarding temporary provision of home delivered meals as a service

Governor Ducey's Executive Order –Returning Stronger: Amending the Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected Order Until 5/15/20

Published Risk Assessment guidance Vendors can implement mitigation strategies to protect other members and staff. Mitigation Strategies are not rights violations

Governor's Executive Order – Pausing of Arizona's Reopening – Slowing the Spread of COVID-19

April 29, 2020

June 15, 2020

June 29, 2020

April 22, 2020

May 16, 2020

June 17, 2020

Announced temporary incentive rate adjustments for specific services in order to retain and recruit direct care workers.

Rates were extended to 8/31/20

Governor Ducey's Executive Order – Stay Healthy, Return Smarter, Return Stronger. Includes specific guidance for vulnerable populations.

Governor's Executive Order – Containing the Spread of COVID-19 Continuing Arizona Mitigation Efforts

- Published information on updated training requirements

Changes in DDD Regarding COVID-19

Guidance for Congregate Settings (Group Homes/Developmental Homes) and Direct Care Workers (DCW)

- Mitigating Risk of Spreading COVID-19
- Cleaning and Disinfection
- Environmental Measures
- Agency Preparedness
- Anticipatory Member Protections
- Guidance on Suspected and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 in Staff and Members
- Providing Care to Members Confirmed with COVID-19
- Reporting Cases of COVID-19
- Appendix 1: Social distancing to limit further spread
- Appendix 2: Room isolation
- Appendix 3: Caregiver guidance
- Appendix 4: Supporting members who have confirmed cases of COVID-19
- Appendix 5: Non-Emergency Transportation
- Appendix 6: Summary of Changes

Guidance can be found at DDD COVID-19 webpage: <https://bit.ly/DDDProviderGuidance>

COVID-19 Update

Assessing Risk

- Targeted toward vendors and planning teams
 - Members who live with other members
 - Either they are high risk or another member in home is high risk or they need extra precautions
 - Planning team must work together to develop strategies that mitigate risk of COVID-19 exposure to the home
 - Vendor can implement mitigation strategies to protect other members and staff
 - These mitigation strategies are not considered a rights restriction
- The CDC has recently updated its Guidance for Direct Care Workers
 - DDD has updated the Congregate Care Guidance Document to include Direct Care Workers in all settings.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/direct-service-providers.html>

CDC Guidance for People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness

Underlying health conditions for vulnerable individuals include:

- [Risk for Severe Illness Increases with Age](#)
- People living in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
- People of any age with the following conditions:
 - Cancer
 - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
 - Immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant
 - Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
 - Serious heart condition
 - Type II Diabetes Mellitus
 - Chronic kidney disease (and undergoing dialysis)
 - Hemoglobin disorders such as Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassemia

CDC Guidance for People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness

The following health conditions might be at increased risk:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from
 - blood or bone marrow transplant,
 - immune deficiencies,
 - HIV,
 - use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Smoking
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
- Type I Diabetes Mellitus

CDC Guidance for People- Extra Precautions

People with Disabilities:

- People who have limited mobility or who cannot avoid coming into close contact with others who may be infected, such as direct support providers and family members
- People who have trouble understanding information or practicing preventive measures, such as hand washing and social distancing
- People who may not be able to communicate symptoms of illness

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-disabilities.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

Positive COVID-19 Reporting and Technical Assistance

- Requires the vendor to submit an incident report and tells the vendor how the Quality Management Unit and Health Care Services Teams will support the vendor
- Guidance was updated to provide additional information to vendors regarding negotiated rates in DDD Group Homes to provide care for members who are positive for COVID-19.
- Requires vendor to report to current members, prospective members, and next of kin (defined as involved family members who are not legally responsible) and legally responsible persons/guardians including updated clarification on who must be informed and when

COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 Reporting – July 27, 2020

Residential Setting	Total Members	Positive COVID-19 Cases	Member Deaths
Family/Own Home	39,064	389	9
Licensed Residential Setting	4,973	356	25
Total	44,027	745	34

Data gathered from:

- Incident Reports submitted to the Division
- Arizona Health Information Exchange
- Monday Close of Business Data Posted each Tuesday.

Payment Strategies for COVID-19

Temporary Incentive Rates *(April 13, 2020 - August 31, 2020)*

- The Division is providing additional funding by temporarily adjusting rates for select services through an alternative payment model
- The rate adjustments assist Qualified Vendors in retaining and recruiting direct care staff
- In order to receive the incentives:
 - Qualified Vendors must agree to distribute at least 80% of the incentive adjustment amount to the direct care staff in the form of a temporary increase in salary, wages, stipends, and related ERE costs.
 - Apply for the Provider Relief Fund from Medicaid by August 28th
 - Or Attest the Vendor Agency is not eligible for Relief Funds

Remote Learning

The topic of school aged DDD members who are not able to attend in-person school and who need support to engage in remote learning continues to be a national issue that we are also working through.

DDD has engaged with AHCCCS, the Arizona Department of Education, and the Attorney General's Office to determine whether exemptions will be allowable during the pandemic.

For now, DDD is not changing service plans for the purposes of supporting remote learning, until DDD receives further guidance.

[Benchmarks for Safely Returning to In-Person Instruction](#)

What's Next for DDD

DDD does not have a defined end date for its Service Flexibilities.

We have seen some Vendors re-opening.

- DDD is monitoring Vendor reopening plans. DDD Quality Management staff reviewing Providers' Policies, Procedures and Mitigation Strategies before reopening.
- DDD required Qualified Vendors to attest to following the CDC, ADHS, and DDD guidelines.

Behavioral Health Support for Members

Behavioral Health Support for Members and Families

- Peer and family support agencies are equipped to quickly provide virtual behavioral health support, tips and guidance.
- They are able to assist a member who may have unique worries associated with the fear of COVID-19 as well as difficulty with adjustments to normal activities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Agencies are able to evaluate the member to determine if a behavioral health referral is needed in addition to their current supports.
- Families or staff can contact these agencies directly

DDD has resources available on its COVID-19 webpage under the “Resources for Families and Members” section: https://bit.ly/DDD_COVID19Actions

DDD Resources

DDD COVID-19 Actions Website: https://bit.ly/DDD_COVID19Actions

- General Resources
 - CDC Activities and Initiatives Supporting COVID-19
 - Past Town Hall Presentations and Upcoming Town Hall Information:
https://bit.ly/COVID_TownHall
- Qualified Vendors and Providers
 - Provider FAQs: https://bit.ly/DDD_COVIDFAQ
- Members and Families
 - Links to Additional Resources
- List of Service Delivery Changes
- COVID-19 Temporary Provider Payment Strategies
- Qualified Vendor/Provider Surveys

What is Aug Comm?

Augmentative and Alternative Communications (AAC or Aug Comm) systems are used to establish functional communication when natural speech methods are insufficient to achieve daily communication goals and meet communication needs.

AAC is augmentative when it is used to supplement existing speech. It is alternative when it is used in place of speech that is absent or not functional.

Current State of AAC at DDD

- Aug Comm services and supplies (training, evaluation, and device supply) are specialty contracts that are not part of the Qualified Vendor System.
- Services and devices are issued based on medical necessity and cost effectiveness as required by DDD contract with AHCCCS.
- DDD is currently working through a backlog of AAC decisions and conducting an outreach campaign to provide accurate and understandable information to members and families so they can take next steps as appropriate.

Transition of AAC to DDD Health Plans

Public Comment Notice issued on June 29, 2020.

DDD proposes to transition the Aug Comm benefit to the DDD Health Plans (Mercy Care & United Health Care Community Plan) on October 1, 2020.

Comments reviewed closely and feedback taken into account. As a result, the implementation will be moved to January 1, 2021.

Why is AAC moving to the DDD Health Plans?

- DDD believes that the transition of the benefit will allow for an improved member experience and will support a timely, streamlined, and efficient prior authorization process for AAC services.
- DDD Health Plans currently manage all other Durable Medical Equipment (DME) benefits with the exception of AAC. They can leverage this experience plus their broad network of providers and clinical and operational resources for the best result for members.
- DDD will still oversee and monitor Health Plans' administration of this benefit to ensure provision of medically necessary, cost effective, and timely delivery of services.

Next Steps

- Website has been established:
<https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities/augmentative-and-alternative-communication>
- Updates (such as an expanded FAQ, detailed timeline, etc.) will be posted to website in the days and weeks ahead.
- Significant readiness activities will occur ahead of the transition.
- Training of staff, providers, member outreach, etc.
- DDD will continue to administer all requests for services and devices initiated before January 1, 2021.
- DDD Health Plans will administer all requests for services and devices including repairs and replacements after January 1, 2021.

Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA)

Customer Service Center
1-844-770-9500 option 1
DDDCustomerServiceCenter@azdes.gov





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Questions?