



ARIZONA
— DEPARTMENT OF —
ECONOMIC SECURITY

Division of Developmental Disabilities

May 07, 2026

Agenda

- Heat & Water Safety-Sondra Fields, BSN, RN, CCM
- Preventing Dehydration-Sondra Fields, BSN, RN, CCM
- Announcements



Heat and Water Safety

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Heat and Water Safety

Protecting Yourself in the Summer Months

Heat-related deaths in Maricopa County have decreased significantly in recent years, highlighting the importance of heat safety measures.

- **Fatality Rates:** In 2023, Maricopa County saw an increase in heat-related deaths, with 645 reported fatalities.
- 2024 there was a decrease to 608 deaths and currently 427 (confirmed/preliminary for 2025)
- These are trending down with increased education and interventions [Maricopa County Department of Public Health](#).

By prioritizing heat safety measures and fostering a culture of preparedness and resilience, we can work together to reduce the incidence of heat-related illnesses and fatalities in Arizona.

Heat and Water Safety

Heat Safety Tips Recommended by Maricopa County Department of Public Health

To stay safe during extreme heat conditions, the [Maricopa County Department of Public Health](#) recommends the following tips:

- **Stay Indoors with Air Conditioning:** Find air-conditioned spaces to escape the heat and reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drink water regularly, even BEFORE you feel thirsty, to prevent dehydration. Always carry a water bottle outdoors and ensure access to clean drinking water throughout the day.
- **Check Your Car:** Double-check to ensure no children or pets are left inside before leaving your vehicle. Never leave children or pets unattended in a parked car, even with open windows.

By following these heat safety tips, you can protect yourself and your loved ones from the dangers of extreme heat and reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses and fatalities in Maricopa County.

Heat and Water Safety

Understanding Heat Sensitivity: *Health Conditions and Medications*

It's essential to recognize if you are more sensitive to heat due to underlying health conditions or medications. Here's what you need to know:

- **Health Conditions:** Certain health conditions can make individuals more susceptible to heat-related illnesses.
- **Medications:** Some medications can affect the body's ability to regulate temperature or increase sensitivity to heat.

By understanding your individual risk factors and taking proactive measures to mitigate them, you can better protect yourself from heat-related illnesses and ensure your well-being during hot weather conditions.

Heat and Water Safety

Recognizing Heat Exhaustion: *Signs and Symptoms*

Be vigilant for signs of [heat illness](#) and seek medical attention promptly if symptoms arise.

- **Heat Exhaustion** is a milder form of health illness and could become heat stroke if not treated.

Here are the signs to watch for:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness

By staying watchful for signs of heat illness and taking appropriate precautions, you can protect yourself and others from the dangers of extreme heat and ensure a safe and enjoyable summer.

Heat and Water Safety

Recognizing Heat Stroke: *Signs and Symptoms*

Heat stroke is a severe heat-related illness that requires immediate medical attention as it can be life-threatening. Here are the signs to watch for:

- High Fever: A core body temperature above 103°F (39.4°C).
- Mental Confusion
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Throbbing Headache

By recognizing the signs of heat stroke and taking swift action, lives can be saved, and serious complications can be prevented. Stay vigilant during hot weather conditions and prioritize heat safety measures to protect yourself and others from heat-related illnesses.

Heat and Water Safety

Drowning Prevention: Protecting Children's Lives

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). Here's what you need to know:

- **Alarming Statistics:** The CDC reports that drowning poses a significant risk to young children, with fatal incidents most commonly occurring in swimming pools, bathtubs, and natural bodies of water.
- **Vulnerable Age Group:** Children between the ages of 1 and 4 are at high risk for drowning incidents due to their limited swimming abilities, lack of water safety knowledge, and tendency to wander unsupervised near water sources. They can drown in very small amounts of water if their face is submerged.

Heat and Water Safety

Water Safety Tips from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC)

To stay safe around water, the CDC recommends the following tips:

- **Learn to Swim:** Take swim lessons and learn basic water safety skills.
- **Pool Fencing:** Install fences around pools to prevent easy access, especially for young children. Ensure the fences fully enclose the pool area and have self-closing, self-latching gates.
- **Close Supervision:** Always supervise children closely when they are around water, including in bathtubs, swimming pools, and natural bodies of water.
- **Life Jackets:** Wear a properly fitted life jacket when near natural bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers, or oceans. This includes boating, fishing, and other water-based activities.

By following these water safety tips, individuals can reduce the risk of drowning incidents and enjoy water activities safely. Remember that water safety is everyone's responsibility, and proactive measures can save lives.

Heat and Water Safety

Water Safety Tips from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC)

To ensure safety around water, the CDC recommends the following guidelines:

- **Avoid Alcohol:** Do not drink alcohol before or during water activities. Alcohol can impair judgment and coordination. Caregivers should avoid alcohol while supervising children near water.
- **Breath-Holding Caution:** Avoid holding your breath underwater for too long, as it can lead to hypoxia (low oxygen in the brain and body) and cause you to faint or lose consciousness which increases the risk of drowning.
- **Swim with a Buddy:** Always swim with a buddy and never swim alone. Swimming with a companion enhances safety by providing assistance in emergencies. Whenever possible, choose locations with lifeguards on duty for added security.
- **Seizure Disorder Awareness:** Individuals with seizure disorders should follow their doctor's advice and take appropriate precautions around water.

By adhering to these water safety recommendations, individuals can minimize the risk of accidents and enjoy aquatic activities responsibly. Remember that vigilance and preparedness are key to preventing water-related incidents.



Dehydration

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SOME FACTS about DEHYDRATION:

DEHYDRATION means the body does not have as much water and fluids as it should. Dehydration occurs when the amount of fluid leaving the body is greater than the amount going back into the body.

- Approximately 60% of total body weight is water based.
- By the time a member is thirsty, the body has already started the process of dehydration.
- For members with developmental disabilities and older individuals, the need to drink fluids may go unrecognized.

RISK FACTORS (Causes):

Recognition of the following conditions will help alert you to potential risks:

- Needing assistance with drinking
- Unable to get drinks without help
- Unable to communicate thirst to someone
- Refusing food and fluid
- Members who may drool or have fluid falling from their mouth
- Any loss of body fluid: vomit, sweat, diarrhea
- Medications such as diuretics that cause loss of fluid
- Medical conditions such as kidney disease where fluid loss can possibly cause dehydration

WHAT to WATCH FOR:

- Dry skin
- Dry mouth
- Extreme thirst
- Weakness
- Light headed
- Decreased urine
- Dark colored urine
- Feeling tired or less alert
- Increase in the smell of urine due to concentration

WHAT TO DO:

- NOTIFY DOCTOR to the possibility of dehydration
- ASK HOW MUCH FLUID the member should have each day
- FREQUENTLY OFFER FLUIDS to members who have the ability to drink safely
- IF REFUSING FLUIDS AND ABLE TO DRINK, offer food items high in fluid content such as gelatin, watermelon, pudding, yogurt or ice cream
- Certain members with heart or kidney disease may need less fluid -- speak with their doctor for specific fluid intake requirements

EMERGENCY

If the member is unable to take fluids safely, has extreme thirst, confusion, little or no urine output; notify the doctor immediately!



ARIZONA

Thank You

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Announcements



Current Status of HNT / ECR

HCBS Needs Tool and Extraordinary Care Review

- AHCCCS held public forums on Friday, April 10 and Tuesday, April 14
- AHCCCS is doing Rulemaking based on the emergency Rule posted last year.
- This allows them to continue policy development and gives authority to develop ECR.
- They have requested and received an extension to emergency Rulemaking so regular Rulemaking can be completed.
- Rulemaking allows AHCCCS to revise the HNT and establish the ECR process.



HCBS Needs Tool and Extraordinary Care Review

Timeline

- **April 2026:** Emergency Rule renewed; Regular Rule for another 180 days (through October 15, 2026) while filed with the Secretary of State.
- **April-May 2026:** 30-day public comment period on the Regular Rule opens.
- **May 2026:** AHCCCS hosts a public hearing on the Rule.
- **May-June 2026:** AHCCCS reviews public comments and refines Rule language.
- **July-August 2026:** Governor's Regulatory Review Council reviews and formally approves the Rule.
- **August 2026:** Policies finalized; health plans begin readiness work.
- **Early Fall 2026:** New HNT and ECR policies go live. Families should begin planning now in case service hours change.



HCBS Needs Tool and Extraordinary Care Review

- AHCCCS is proposing to amend the age limits for some activities in the HNT from those published last year.
- AHCCCS has created a table on its [ALTCS web page under Assessing Care Needs for ALTCS Members](#) that compares the October 2025 HNT versus what they propose for the future revised HNT.
- AHCCCS said that families who believe services for their child might be affected should start planning now.
- No changes are being made to the current assessment process at this time.



HCBS Needs Tool and Extraordinary Care Review


Rulemaking

- [Proposed rule](#)
- Comments can be submitted to AHCCCSRules@azahcccs.gov
- Public Meeting on May 19, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Additional Resources for Families

- [AHCCCS HNT/ECR FAQs](#)
- [ALTCS webpage - Assessing Care Needs for ALTCS Members](#)
- Email PPCG@azahcccs.gov with questions





Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Update

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Update

AHCCCS forums were held:

- Wednesday, April 15 - [ABA Providers and Provider Associations](#)
- Thursday, April 16 - [Families, Caregivers and Community Partners](#)

AHCCCS is updating the ABA Policy to:

- Align with national standards and clinically based best practices
- Enhance provider oversight
- Focus on member safety and consistency
- Standardize clinical and administrative requirements
- Avoid service duplication



Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Update

There are no hard limitations on service hours being proposed - all medically necessary services will be authorized. With that said, there are several situations that would require additional documentation. These include:

- When greater than 25 hours of services per week are requested, the requesting provider must explain why this service intensity is needed for the member's level of functional impairment.
- When greater than 15 hours of services per week are requested for full-time students (who are in school 30-35 hours/week), the provider must explain why this time intensity is needed and how the member will have all of their needs met (including other services, time for free play, and rest) while participating in ABA.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Update

Next Steps

- April 17 - [Draft AMPM 320-S is posted for public comment](#)
- June 2, 2026 - Public comment closes
- June 2 - July 9, 2026 - AHCCCS will review the public comment
- Late summer to early fall - Finalize and publish the policy

How to Engage

- [Provide public comment](#)
- [Visit the AHCCCS website](#)
- Email AHCCCS - ABA@azahcccs.gov





Questions?



Thank you
Next Town Hall
Thursday
June 4, 2026