

The New Jersey Department of Human Services
Division of Developmental Disabilities

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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE
(COVID-19)
UPDATE FOR FAMILIES AND
PROVIDERS

March 4, 2021



Agenda

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- COVID-19 Statistics
- March Webinar
- Visitation
- Day Program
- FY22 Proposed Budget
- Vaccination Groups Update
- Masks with Layers
- Resources

New Jersey COVID-19 Current Statistics*

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State of New Jersey	
Positive	707,099
Deaths	20,990

**This update is as of Wednesday, March 3, 2021.*

For regular updates: <https://covid19.nj.gov/>

Consider downloading COVID Alert NJ on your Apple or Android smartphone:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/app>



DDD Specific COVID-19 Statistics*

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	Community		Developmental Centers	Total
	Licensed	Own Home		
Positive	1,769	487	671	2,927
Deaths	106	44	52	202

DDD-specific statistics are updated weekly. Community data includes individuals **actively under DDD services in settings such as group homes, supervised apartments, out of state, and own-home settings.*

Full detail, including data for individuals not under services for whom reporting is voluntary and provided for informational purposes only, can be found at [NJ Department of Human Services COVID-19 Information](#).

DDD March Webinar Schedule

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- March Update webinar:
 - Thursday March 18, 2021 – 10:30 am
- Use link below to register:
 - [Register Now for March 18 Webinar](#)

Group Home Visitation Guidance

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- The Division is working to update guidance on Group Home Visitation which will be released as soon as possible.
- One change that will occur is that indoor visitation in residential settings will be permitted when:
 - There have been no new positive COVID-19 cases of residents and staff assigned to the residence within the past 14 days;
 - The residence is not in the process of performing expanded viral testing of all residents and staff due to a recent COVID-19 positive test or high risk exposure; and
 - No residents or staff of the home are currently symptomatic.
- This previous timeframe was 28 days.
- Outdoor visitation, weather permitting, will occur when indoor visitation is not possible due to the above.

Day Program Re-Opening

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- At this time, DDD-funded congregate day service settings remain closed.
 - The Division will provide at least two weeks' notice once a re-opening date is identified.
 - At such time that a re-opening date is identified and two weeks' notice is provided, the Congregate Day Program Re-Opening Requirements will be updated as appropriate and be in effect.

FY22 Proposed Budget

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- The Governor's budget has prioritized initiatives at Human Services that support New Jerseyans in every stage of life, from birth through aging.
 - Expanded funding for women's healthcare.
 - Ensure Medicaid coverage for one full year after delivering a baby.
 - Ensure every child has healthcare.
 - Increase funding for residential providers for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
 - Make prescription drugs more affordable for seniors by expanding the pharmaceutical assistance for the Aged and Disabled Program.



FY22 Proposed Budget

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- How does this proposed budget impact DDD?
 - Direct Support Professional (DSP) Wages.
 - ✦ Governor Murphy's Administration recognizes that a fair wage for DSPs must be higher than the minimum wage.
 - ✦ The budget proposal builds on previous increases with about **\$42 million in new funding** to ensure DSPs, and their supervisors, are paid above the state's increasing minimum wage.
 - ✦ This funding maintains prior rate increases and, as of January 1st, 2022 will add an additional \$1.25 per hour for DSPs and their supervisors.

FY22 Proposed Budget

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- How does this proposed budget impact DDD?
 - Residential Providers.
 - ✦ Residential providers that operate programs such as group homes have been required to provide additional daytime staffing hours during the public health emergency.
 - ✦ To support the required staffing level, the Department increased the residential daily rate by 20 percent.
 - ✦ While the state is working to achieve widespread vaccination and to safely reopen day programs again as soon as possible, the need for this funding will continue for some time.
 - ✦ Governor Murphy's budget includes funding to maintain this enhanced residential staffing through December 2021.

COVID-19 Vaccine

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- Who is eligible for vaccination at this time?
 - Paid and unpaid healthcare workers;
 - Residents and workers of long-term care and high-risk congregate care facilities;
 - First responders including sworn law enforcement and fire professionals;
 - Individuals aged over 65;
 - Individuals aged 16-64 that have certain medical conditions that increase the risk of severe illness from the virus.

COVID-19 Vaccine

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- **Beginning March 15, 2021:**
 - Educators, including support staff, in pre-K through 12th grade settings;
 - Childcare workers in licensed and registered settings;
 - Public and local transportation workers, including bus, taxi, rideshare, and airport employees; NJ TRANSIT workers; and Motor Vehicle Commission staff;
 - Public safety workers who are not sworn law enforcement or fire professionals, including probation officers and fire safety inspectors;
 - Migrant farm workers;
 - Members of tribal communities;
 - Individuals experiencing homelessness and those living in shelters, including domestic violence shelters.

COVID-19 Vaccine

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- Beginning March 29th, frontline essential workers in the following categories:
 - Food production, agriculture, and food distribution;
 - Eldercare and support;
 - Warehousing and logistics;
 - Social services support staff;
 - Elections personnel;
 - Hospitality;
 - Medical supply chain;
 - Postal and shipping services;
 - Clergy; and
 - Judicial system.

Masks with Layers

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- The CDC has released recommendations on how to improve how your mask protects you.
 - The CDC recommends having two (2) or more layers of washable, breathable fabric, completely covering nose and mouth, fitting snugly against the side of your face without gaps, with a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask.
 - For more information, please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

Important Resources

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- Disability Rights New Jersey
 - 1-800-922-7233 (toll-free in New Jersey only)
- Ombudsman for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and their Families
 - 1-609-984-7764
- New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities
 - 1-800-792-8858

Important Resources

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- For assistance during this time:
 - For issues, call the Division Community Services office for your county or 1 (800) 832-9173.
 - When calling, you will be connected with the Division's answering service who will take information about the circumstance and have a Division staff person reach out.
 - For routine questions: DDD.FeeForService@dhs.nj.gov
 - For COVID-related questions: DDD.COVID-19@dhs.nj.gov
 - To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation: call 1 (800) 832-9173, then press 1.

Highlighted Resources

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- For individuals, families and caregivers
 - [Boggs Center COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
- For individuals:
 - NJ Self-Advocacy Project's [Stay Healthy at Home Webinar Series](#)
- For Direct Support Professionals
 - [National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals \(NADSP\) COVID-19 Toolkit for DSPs](#)
 - [CDC Guidance for Direct Service Providers](#)