

The New Jersey Department of Human Services **Division of Developmental Disabilities**

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

August 20, 2020



THANK YOU!

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~ Direct Support Professionals ~
~ Self-Directed Employees ~
~ Support Coordinators ~
~ Individuals/Families ~
~ Providers ~

Today's Webinar Will Provide Information on...

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- State and DDD-Specific COVID-19 Statistics
- September Webinar Schedule
- Staff Screening and Universal Masking
- Day Program Re-Opening Update
- COVID Case Note Update
- Clarification on Modified Day Services
- Clarification on SDE Wage Range
- SDE Service Documentation Update
- Register Ready
- Resources



New Jersey COVID-19 Current Statistics*

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State of New Jersey	
Positive	188,427
Deaths	14,097

**This update is as of 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 19, 2020.*

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

DDD Specific COVID-19 Statistics*

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	Community		Developmental Centers	Total
	Licensed	Other		
Positive	665	292	419	1,376
Deaths	56	93	35	184

**DDD-specific statistics are updated every Monday. Information is based on incident reporting data entered at time of publication.*

Community data includes settings such as group homes, supervised apartments, own-home settings, nursing facilities, etc. Full detail available at [NJ Department of Human Services COVID-19 Information](#).



September Webinar Schedule

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- September webinars will be held on:
 - September 3, 2020 – 10:30am
 - September 17, 2020 – 10:30am
- New registration required:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7798372390977465103>

Staff Screening and Universal Masking

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- There has been an uptick in COVID-19 positivity across the state recently.
- Screening and Universal Masking continue to be required for all staff:
 - Residential Screening Policy
 - Universal Masking Policy
- Programs found not to be in compliance with Staff Screening, Universal Masking or other COVID-19 related areas will experience negative actions.

Day Program Re-Opening Update

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- The Day Program Re-Opening Work Group has submitted its recommendations to DDD.
- The Department and Division want to thank the Work Group for its time and thoughtful recommendations, and we appreciate the advocacy of the community as we work on a plan to safely reopen.
- The Division will be releasing guidance in this important area shortly.



COVID Case Note Update

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- In-person visits by Support Coordinators remain suspended.
- When a date for resuming in-person visits is identified, advance notice will be provided.
- If a family requests an in-person visit from a Support Coordinator and the Support Coordination Agency is in agreement, the Division would not preclude a visit where PPE is worn and social distancing occurs.
- In-person visits are strictly voluntary on the part of the Support Coordination Agency and **not** required.

COVID Case Note Update

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- The Division released guidance on July 14 related to State Supplemental Payments.
- This guidance indicated that the Support Coordinator of an individual engaging in modified day services must complete a COVID case note documenting this.
- A deadline of August 21st was provided.

COVID Case Note Update

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- An auto-generated COVID case note has been added by the Division to all current iRecord plans, which allows for limited flexibility around the August 21 deadline for entry of the consumer-specific COVID case note.
 - Please note that the consumer-specific COVID case note identifying the service, why the service has been modified (e.g., due to COVID-19 precautions) and how it will be delivered (e.g., remotely through telephone, FaceTime, etc.) **still must be entered as soon as possible.**

COVID Case Note Update

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- The auto-generated case note that was entered is as follows:
 - *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division of Developmental Disabilities advised Support Coordination Agencies and Providers that effective March 18, 2020, face-to-face/in-person requirements may be waived for the period of the pandemic. Additionally, due to the pandemic and CMS Appendix K waiver, individuals may experience a change in services or transition to remote service provision during the pandemic period.*

Clarification on Modified Day Services

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- Requests to change or update day services can be initiated by the individual/guardian or by the provider agency as long as the agency has contacted the individual/guardian and they have agreed to participate in modified day services.
- Support Coordinators should not change or update day services without contacting and receiving consent from the individual/guardian.

Clarification on Modified Day Services

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- In cases where an individual will receive modified day services and the day service line was kept open by the SC and remaining weeks zeroed out, SC can do either of the following:
 - Revise the service, enter the anticipated modified units that are expected to be delivered, and enter a COVID case note.
 - Leave the zeroed-out service as-is and provide explanation in the service description box that rollover units will be used for current services, the number of units expected to be delivered, and the expected start and end date.

Clarification on Modified Day Services

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- In cases where an individual declines modified day services, the service should be stopped in the plan and a COVID case note should be added indicating that modified services were declined but services may resume when programs re-open.
- Whether modified day services are declined or approved, an ISP Revision Worksheet can be completed but is not required.

Clarification on SDE Wage Range

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- Per the Supports Program and Community Care Program policy manuals, self-directed employees (SDEs) may be compensated at a **reasonable and customary** wage.
- Based on research, the Division identified an uppermost reasonable and customary SDE wage threshold of \$20-\$25 per hour.
- The majority of SDE wages fall below or within the this threshold.
- This amount leaves the potential for incremental wage increases for staff longevity.

Clarification on SDE Wage Range

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- The threshold of SDE wages was first published on April 9, 2020 through the release of the Temporary Service Modification document.
- Other elements of this document were updated again in August 2020. However, there were no changes to the SDE wage range.
- Inclusion of this information was to streamline SDE hiring during the pandemic.

Clarification on SDE Wage Range

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- The uppermost reasonable and customary SDE wage range threshold is informed by:
 - Review of and parity with standard hourly wage for agency-hired direct support professionals (DSPs) in New Jersey delivering the same service, currently at \$11-\$13 per hour.
 - SDE wages paid in the DDD Self-Directed option.
- New SDEs with a wage falling within the \$20-\$25 range have been approved.
- No changes have been made to existing SDE wages, including those exceeding the threshold.

SDE Service Documentation Update

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- The soft rollout date of the service documentation submission process for participants in the Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent model has been pushed ahead one to the **August 24-September 6** payroll period, with submission deadline of **September 7**.
- The correct fax number for PPL self-directed employees (SDEs) to submit service documentation is: **609.341.2226**
- Updated information is available on the Division's [Self-Directed Services](#) webpage.



Register Ready

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- Tropical Storm Isaias recently impacted New Jersey.
- That experience was another example of the importance of private residences and provider managed settings (Group homes, supervised apartments, etc.) where individuals with I/DD live utilize Register Ready.

Register Ready

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- NJ Register Ready was created to help people with a disability in times of emergency. NJ residents with special needs are encouraged to add their personal information to this special needs registry.
- The information provided will be shared with emergency response agencies so that responders will be better equipped to serve registrants in the event of an emergency or evacuation in their area.
- No one else will have access to the information.
- To learn more and register, please visit <https://www.nj211.org/special-needs-registry>



Important Resources

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- NJ Department of Health
24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-222-1222
- NJ Department of Human Services COVID-19 Information
- Contact information for local health departments in NJ
- Contact information for County OEM Coordinators in NJ

Important Resources

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- For assistance during this time:
 - For vital 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](#)