

Today's Quotes: *"If you choose to focus on the power of you and what you are capable of, you will develop an unshakable belief that no matter what the circumstances, you can make it. You may bend, like a tree in a strong wind, but you will not break." Scott Chesney, Speaker, Life Coach from NJ who is paralyzed.*

Rollout begins of College of Direct Supports to Providers

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has begun a rollout of the College of Direct Supports (CDS), which is an online education program to increase professionalism and reduce turnover among direct support staff serving individuals with developmental disabilities. Enrolled agencies, along with their staff, are reporting they are pleased with the program.

"The rollout eventually will cover the entire state, beginning from the south on up to the north," said Joe Bongiovanni, DDD's liaison for CDS. "We expect to have every agency in the state that holds a DDD contract to be enrolled by September 1, 2011."

The program's launch during a special September ceremony appeared in the DDD Today, October 2010 issue. Bongiovanni stated that the actual program rollout began on October 1 in DDD's Southern Region (Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties). On January 1, DDD began to implement CDS in its Lower Central Region (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean counties).

"During the initial rollout, our goal is to get every agency up and running smoothly," Bongiovanni continued. The first step is a mandatory training on how to use the CDS system.

The training is provided by staff of the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. Agencies are trained on how to track both online and classroom training in order to ensure that their DSP staff complete mandatory

pre-service training courses within the 120 days of the date of hire, per federal requirements. Agencies also will have use of this system to track CPR certifications and receive alerts when an employee's certification is about to expire.

Bongiovanni shared that many agencies already enrolled in the program have told DDD they are pleased for a number of reasons. "From the perspective of someone already using it, they love it," he said. "It is easier to track trainings staff has undergone, and it is user-friendly. There is some administrative work required upfront, but once it's done, it's done."

The online educational trainings are part of a new initiative called the New Jersey Partnership for Direct Support Professional Workforce Development, or simply the NJ Partnership. The goal is to promote professionalism among DSPs, reduce turnover, and ensure consistency of training across the state.

Bongiovanni said that CDS represents a significant investment in the system's infrastructure at a time when dollars to do those types of things are disappearing quickly. "This initiative shows a real commitment by DDD to grow and develop community-based infrastructure as we move people out of institutions."

For information, see www.state.nj.us/human-services/ddd/programs/cds.html; or contact Joe Bongiovanni at 609-631-6392 or email Joe at joe.bongiovanni@dhs.state.nj.us.



Tips for Caregivers

When the Flu Hits



While it may seem like we have already endured the worst of the cold and flu season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that flu activity will likely reach its peak in January or February and can continue into May.

For this reason, “it is especially important for the young, the elderly, and health care workers to get flu shots to protect themselves and their families,” said Dr. Poonam Alaiigh, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). “Flu is a serious illness that can lead to hospitalization and, unfortunately, death. Because flu activity peaks in January and February, now is the ideal time to get a flu shot.”

Since this year’s flu shot includes the H1N1 strain, individuals only need to get one flu shot and should contact their doctor as soon as possible, if they haven’t already received the vaccine.

Aside from getting the flu shot, caregivers and health care workers are encouraged to follow the below listed tips* put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention when working with someone who has a cold or the flu:



- Avoid being face to face with the sick person. If possible, it is best to spend the least amount of time in close contact with a sick person.
- When holding sick children, place their chin on your shoulder so they will not cough in your face.
- Wash your hands often and the right way. Sing the “Happy Birthday” song two times or count slowly to 20 as you wash.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Make sure to wash your hands after touching the sick person, or wash after handling their used tissues or laundry.

For more information about seasonal flu, visit the DHSS website at www.nj.gov/health/flu. Materials are available for the general public and for healthcare workers on preventing the spread of flu, respiratory hygiene, and hand washing. Area residents interested in getting an influenza vaccination can click on the “Find a Flu Shot” button on the DHSS “Flu web page.”

(*Tips appear as verbatim on the CDC’s website at www.cdc.gov/flu/homecare/caregivertips.htm.)

Choking Alert

Arizona residents will soon benefit from information developed at DDD to alert individuals with developmental disabilities and their caregivers about the dangers of choking. The guidance is contained in DDD's Health and Safety Alert on Choking, which the Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities plans to use as part of its Direct Care Workforce Initiative.

DDD developed the Alert because people with developmental disabilities frequently have medical conditions or take medication that causes them to have a greater risk of choking. The goal was to prepare staff and caregivers should they ever need to assist someone who is choking.



The Alert was created by DDD's Office of Risk Management, with assistance from DDD's regional nurses and members of the NJ Statewide Training Network. The Training Network is comprised of trainers from some of the state's largest provider agencies and is facilitated by Bill Gaventa, Director of Community and Congregational Supports at the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities.

The four-page Alert covers:

- the signs of choking
- food commonly connected to choking incidents
- risk factors (including diagnosis and eating style)
- actions to be taken if someone begins choking
- preventative measures

To review the tips listed in DDD's Health and Safety Alert on Choking, visit www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/alerts/ and select the choking bulletin towards the bottom of the webpage.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Autism New Jersey (ANJ)

ANJ Workshops - Healthcare Resources:

Access and Funding for Autism. Click [here](#) for details.....

Parent Link

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services has launched a new website for parents called Parent Link, the Early Childhood, Parenting and Professional Resource Center: <http://www.njparentlink.nj.gov/>. ***NJ Parent Link*** is the new "central station" for receiving early childhood updates, events and networking opportunities.

The Family Support Center of New Jersey (www.fscnj.org)” has re-established “The Training Calendar,” an online resource for information about training opportunities, lectures, and other activities for caregivers and receiving support and care.

**Please visit,
www.thetrainingcalendar.org
for more information.**