

The New Jersey Department of Human Services
Division of Developmental Disabilities

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

April 15, 2021



Agenda

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- COVID-19 Statistics
- April Webinars
- Division-funded Congregate Day Services
- New Funding for Behavioral Health Stabilization Homes for Individuals with IDD
- Vaccine Eligibility
- Updated COVID-19 Travel Advisory
- Return to Normal Staff Onboarding
- Guidance on Marijuana
- New Guide on Self-Direction and Supports Brokerage
- Resources

New Jersey COVID-19 Current Statistics*

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State of New Jersey	
Positive	845,201
Deaths	22,414

**This update is as of Wednesday, April 14, 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	1,823	574	666	3,063
Deaths	113	52	59	224

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 April Webinar Schedule

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- April Update webinar:
 - Thursday April 29, 2021 – 10:30 am
- Use link below to register:
 - [Register for April 29 Webinar](#)

Division-funded Congregate Day Services

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- Division-funded congregate day services (i.e., day programs) remain closed due to the current COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) reflecting that all counties are designated as High.
- Programs are permitted to re-open at 50% capacity when the CALI designation is Low or Moderate.
- The Division understands that some participants and families are eager for programs to re-open as soon as possible. We appreciate all feedback received on the current guidance and actively working with NJDOH and other colleagues on updated guidance to provide additional flexibility.

New Funding for Behavioral Health Stabilization (BHS) Homes for Individuals with IDD

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- The Division is pleased to announce funding availability through a new Request for Proposals: RFP: Behavioral Health Stabilization Homes for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
 - ✦ Funding will be awarded to one provider to develop three, four-bedroom behavioral health stabilization homes for individuals with IDD.
 - ✦ Smaller variations may be proposed so long as the total number of beds provided is twelve.

New Funding for Behavioral Health Stabilization (BHS) Homes for Individuals with IDD

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- **Goals of BHS Homes:**

- Provide out-of-home stabilization and assessment services on a statewide basis to individuals with IDD under DDD services who present with intense behavioral and/or emotional challenges that cannot be effectively managed in their current living arrangement (e.g. aggression toward others, self-injurious behavior, property destruction, elopement).
- Create a short-term, highly structured, and nurturing environment with professional competencies to stabilize individuals and work to transition them back to their previous living arrangement, or to an alternate setting, as appropriate.

New Funding for Behavioral Health Stabilization (BHS) Homes for Individuals with IDD

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- **Goals of BHS Homes:**
 - Providers interested in bidding can propose to locate the homes in the same area of the state, but additional points will be awarded to locate one home in the Northern, one in the Central, and one in the Southern region of the State.
 - Homes will serve men, women, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals.
 - Staff employed by the program will be trained, at a minimum, in Crisis Intervention, Positive Behavioral Supports, Trauma Informed Care, and in the Development and Implementation of a Behavioral Support Plan.

New Funding for Behavioral Health Stabilization (BHS) Homes for Individuals with IDD

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Timeline

Posting of RFP and NOFA	April 13, 2021
Close of Question and Answer Period	April 27, 2021
RFP Submission Deadline	July 2, 2021
Preliminary Award Notification	August 6, 2021
Appeal Deadline	August 27, 2021
Final Award Notification	September 10, 2021
Deadline for Program Opening	September 16, 2022

Vaccine Eligibility

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Per [New Jersey Vaccine Eligibility Information](#):

- As of Monday, April 5, individuals ages 16 and up with intellectual and developmental disabilities are eligible for vaccination.
- As of Monday, April 19, all individuals ages 16 and up will be eligible for vaccination.
- The Department and Division encourage all persons eligible for vaccination to participate.

New Vaccine Scheduling Resource

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- The Division is pleased to share a new community resource, Vaccine Matchmaker, a project of the nonprofit organization [WGIRLS INC.](#)
 - ✦ WGIRLS INC volunteers across New Jersey are assisting residents age 55 and older and **people of all ages with disabilities** find and schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment.
 - ✦ Vaccine Matchmaker volunteers only ask for basic information (name, DOB, email, phone and address). They will never charge a fee or ask for insurance information, Social Security numbers, or credit card numbers.
 - ✦ You can [sign up here](#) to request Vaccine Matchmaker assistance securing a vaccine appointment.

Updated Travel Advisory

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- Following CDC updates to its [Domestic Travel During COVID-19](#) recommendations, the [New Jersey COVID-19 Travel Advisory](#) has been updated:
 - Fully vaccinated individuals and individuals who have clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past three months no longer need to quarantine after domestic travel outside of NJ.
 - ✦ An individual is considered to be fully vaccinated two weeks or more after having received the only dose in a single-dose vaccine or the second dose in a two-dose vaccine.

Updated Travel Advisory

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- Unvaccinated travelers and residents returning from any U.S. state or territory beyond the immediate region (New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) should self-quarantine at their home, hotel, or other temporary lodging:
 - ✦ If travel is unavoidable, travelers should consider getting tested with a viral test (not an antibody test) 1-3 days before the trip and again 3-5 days after the trip.
 - ✦ If travelers test positive, they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should postpone travel during that time.
 - ✦ If travelers test negative, they should quarantine for a full 7 days after travel.
 - ✦ If testing is not available (or if the results are delayed), travelers should quarantine for 10 days after travel.

Return to Normal Staff Onboarding

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- On April 5, the Office of Program Integrity and Accountability (OPIA) posted an [Updated Employee Onboarding Requirements](#) bulletin.
- Effective May 3, per the OPIA bulletin:
 - ✦ The Department of Human Services (DHS) is returning to the normal (pre-pandemic) onboarding requirement that all prospective agency staff and self-directed employees complete mandatory pre-employment screenings prior to being hired.
 - ✦ DHS Employee Controls and Compliance Unit (ECCU) will no longer process emergency requests for temporary clearance to hire.

Return to Normal Staff Onboarding

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- Effective immediately, agency staff and self-directed employees who began their employment based on temporary clearance from DHS ECCU are required to complete all pending onboarding requirements by **June 4, 2021** (60 days from the date of the bulletin), including:
 - Criminal background checks via fingerprinting;
 - Pre-employment drug testing;
 - Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) checks.
- There are presently no reported issues with appointment backlogs.

Return to Normal Staff Onboarding

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- **For Self-Directed Services Participants:**
 - Individuals/families participating in either the Vendor Employer/Fiscal Agent model with PPL or Agency with Choice model with Easterseals NJ must ensure that all onboarding requirements are completed by their self-directed employees (SDEs) by **June 4**, including fingerprinting, drug testing and submission of CARI check application.
 - SDE payments will be suspended for services delivered on or after June 5 by a self-directed employee who was hired through temporary clearance and who has not completed all onboarding requirements.

Return to Normal Staff Onboarding

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- SDEs, including family members, who received temporary emergency clearance from DHS ECCU to be hired *and who still need to complete onboarding requirements* should contact their Fiscal Intermediary (PPL or Easterseals) as soon as possible.
- The FI will be able to advise SDEs which of the onboarding requirements they are missing and provide instructions and email links for completing.
 - ✦ PPL Customer Service: 844-842-5891
 - ✦ Easterseals Customer Service: 800-471-3086

Updated Guidance on Marijuana

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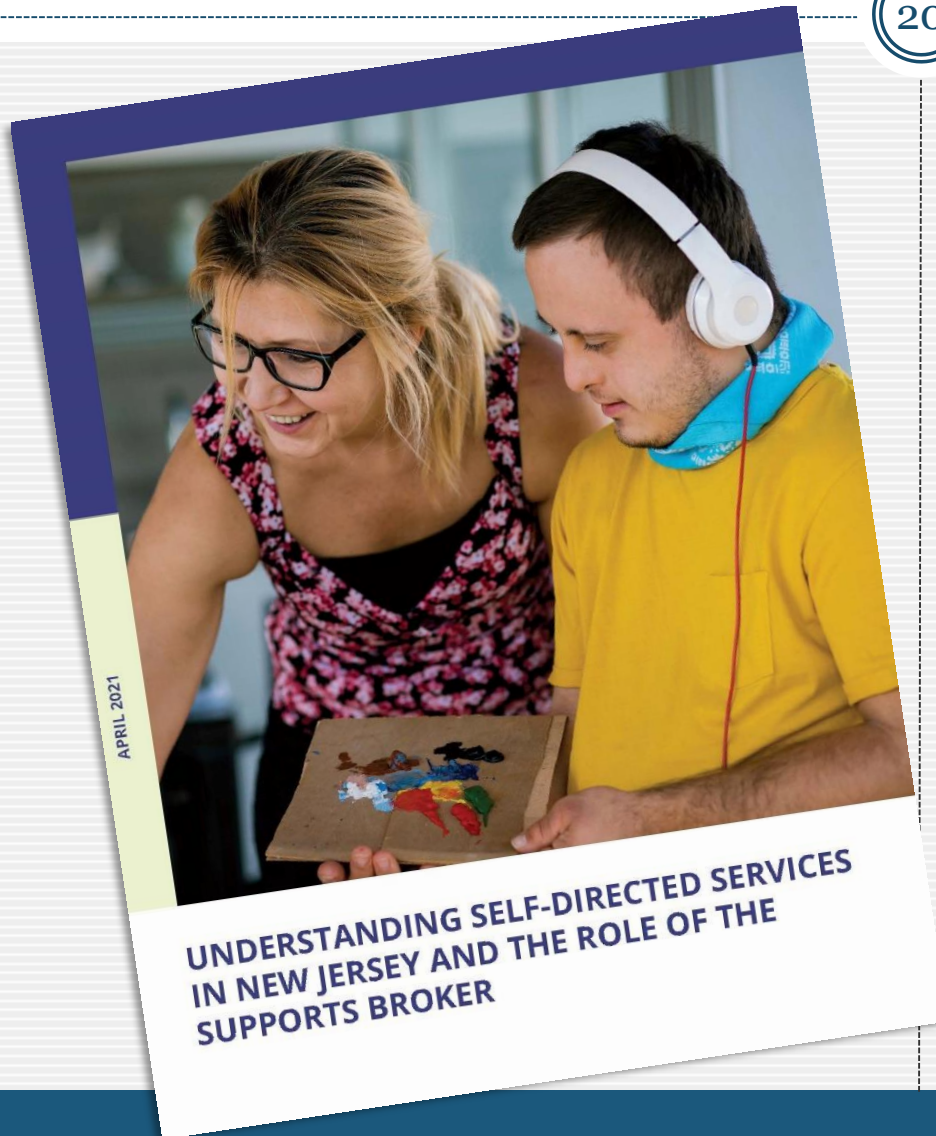
- OPIA also posted [Updated Guidance on Marijuana](#):
 - DHS will not take negative action against a provider/employer that does not take adverse employment action against an applicant, employee, or volunteer who tests positive for marijuana.
 - DHS may take negative action against a provider/employer that permits an employee or volunteer to use or be under the influence of marijuana (i.e., be impaired) while on duty.

NEW!

Guide to Self-Directed Services and the Role of the Supports Broker

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- We are pleased to announce that, in collaboration with the Division and the NJ Collaborative for Citizen Directed Supports, and with input from people with disabilities and families, [The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities](#) has developed a new resource for individuals and families: Understanding Self-Directed Services in New Jersey and the Role of the Supports Broker.



Upcoming Events

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- Thursday, April 29, 2021, at 10 a.m.
 - The NJ Division of Aging Services will hold a [State Plan on Aging Listening Session](#) to allow New Jersey residents to provide input into the state's plans for services to older residents for 2021-2025.
 - ✦ Questions or written testimony may be submitted to doas@dhs.nj.gov.
 - ✦ Individuals wishing to speak must [register here](#).
 - ✦ The listening session will be livestreamed on the [NJ DHS YouTube page](#).

Upcoming Events

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**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

Promoting Safety, Access, and Inclusion for Every Survivor

ASL and Live CC
provided

Expert panel discussion on fostering healthy and inclusive communities for all survivors of interpersonal violence. Findings from the New Jersey Needs Assessment for Survivors of Interpersonal Violence with Disabilities will be shared.

**TUESDAY JUNE 15TH
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM
ZOOM REGISTRATION TO COME!**

For more information or to request accommodations: training@ssw.rutgers.edu



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](#)