

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SUPPORTS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

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COVID-19 Status Report

Submitted by Scott Doan, Deputy Director (Acting Director) and Marc Kolman, Deputy Director

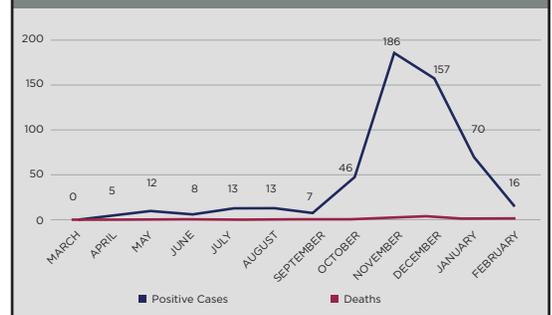
It is almost a full year since the first COVID-19 case was identified in New Mexico on March 11, 2020. And, followed closely less than four weeks later on April 6, 2020 by the first COVID-19 case identified for someone served by any of the Medicaid waiver programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Since that time, we know of 533 individuals served by our waivers who were confirmed as positive and infected by COVID-19, including 25 who have died (statistics effective as of February 18, 2021). Fortunately, both the number of infections and the number of deaths has declined dramatically in New Mexico’s I/DD communities from a high of over 60 cases per week in early December, decreasing to less than 10 cases per week by the end of January. See the attached charts for additional information.

New Mexico instituted its Red to Green framework on December 2, 2020. The most current statewide COVID-19 map was updated on February 10. In a Press Release issued by the Office of the Governor, “for the two-week period beginning Feb. 10, with 15 New Mexico counties at the Yellow Level and four at the Green Level, reflecting an improving overall COVID-19 outlook for the state. Every county saw improvements in their average daily per-capita rate of new cases over the last two weeks, and 30 counties saw improvements in their test positivity rate.” “New Mexicans have been working hard to get this virus back under

COVID-19 VACCINATION STATUS THROUGH 2/8/21 NEW MEXICO HCBS I/DD POPULATION

Declined	73
Moderna dose 1	1,090
Moderna dose 2	330
Pfizer dose 1	109
Pfizer dose 2	33

COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS PER MONTH (THROUGH 2/18/2021) NEW MEXICO I/DD POPULATION



COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS THROUGH 2/18/2021 NEW MEXICO HCBS I/DD POPULATION

Confirmed COVID-19 Positive	533
Confirmed COVID-19 Deaths	25

control,” said Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. “The state’s efforts to continue our aggressive testing while efficiently distributing vaccines have contributed to the improving outlook for New Mexico. We’re not out of the woods yet, and vigilance is the only way to make sure we keep making progress. I ask all New Mexicans to please continue the hard work and continue making the right, and safe, choices each and every day, so we can see more of our state get into the Yellow and Green, and so we can keep ourselves, our families and our state safe.” The Red to Green Framework is available at

<https://cv.nmhealth.org/public-health-orders-and-executive-orders/red-to-green/>.

Vaccines for COVID-19 have been available since mid- to late December. In New Mexico, individuals with disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, are encouraged to register for COVID-19 vaccination.

According to a press release issued February 8, 2021, the Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTS) and Department of Health (DOH) announced that individuals 16 years or older with intellectual and developmental disabilities are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine. This group is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and includes individuals who utilize the DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, Supports Waiver, as well as any New Mexican on the waitlist for these services.

“If you are a New Mexican with an intellectual or developmental disability, you are now eligible for vaccine whether you receive services or not. Please register at <https://cvs.vaccine.nmhealth.org/> The Department of Health will reach out when vaccine is available,” said DOH Deputy Secretary Jason Cornwell. Of those served by any of the Medicaid waiver programs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, more than 360 have been vaccinated through 2/8/2021 - indicating at this point those who have received both doses. See the attached graphic. Also see Step-by-Step instructions for registering for COVID-19 vaccine elsewhere in this newsletter.

In line with the Governor’s instructions, DDSD continues to ask that all direct service providers, vendors, therapists, behavior support consultants, case managers, consultants, community support coordinators, families, guardians, and individuals receiving services heed the Governor’s instructions to stay home and only access outings that are absolutely necessary for your health, safety, and welfare. This includes limiting travel, limiting face-to-face visits, and limiting person-to-person contact to only what is necessary for your health, safety, and welfare. It is important that we all work together to mitigate the spread of the virus, to protect each other, and to protect ourselves.

COVID-19 COVID-19 CASES BY REGION	
Metro	235
NERO	35
NWRO	76
SERO	89
SWRO	98
Grand Total	533

COVID-19 CASES BY TYPE OF WAIVER	
DD Waiver	413
Medically Fragile Waiver	12
Mi Via Waiver	104
Supports Waiver	0
State General Funded Services	4
Grand Total	533

COVID-19 CASES BY TYPE OF SERVICE (DD WAIVER ONLY)	
Community Integrated Employment and Community Supports	11
Customized In Home Supports	25
Family Living	101
Intensive Medical Living	2
Respite	1
Supported Living	248
Case Management Only	22
No services (new allocation)	1
Grand Total	411

DDSD’s COVID-19 guidance can be found at: <https://nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/>

Additional resources can also be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

COVID-19 Vaccine Registration Step-by-Step Checklist

Submitted by Marc Kolman, Deputy Director

Please keep in mind the supply of vaccine is currently limited. The Department of Health's mission is to vaccinate New Mexicans swiftly, efficiently and equitably. NMDOH is using a phased vaccine approach. Currently groups 1A and 1B are eligible. That includes people 75 or older and people 16 or older who have high-risk medical conditions to include individuals who have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities including Down Syndrome. However, everyone who wishes to get a vaccine is encouraged to register now. For updates on COVID-19 visit <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

The New Mexico Department of Health will notify a pool of eligible members within your community that vaccine is available with a special event code. This opportunity to schedule an online appointment is offered on a first come, first served basis. If you are not able to schedule an online appointment by selecting a specific location, date, and time, please do not show up at the event. Please, do not worry. This will not be your only opportunity to schedule an appointment. The department will reach out and notify you of additional opportunities in the future. Event codes are linked to a specific registration and can't be shared.

Although the vaccine itself is free, the administration of it is not, so you will be asked if you have Medicaid, Medicare, or other insurance, and to provide your card at your appointment. Regardless of whether or not you have insurance there will be no cost to you for the shot. You will NOT be asked to provide your Medicare number while registering, and there is no charge to register. If you are asked for your Medicare number or told you must pay to be put on a list you may be the target of a scam and should disengage and call the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 1-800-432-2080 to complete your registration.

For more information or assistance call the New Mexico Department of Health at 855-600-3453 or the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 800-432-2080.

To register online:

1. Go to **www.vaccinem.org**
2. Click on **"I want to create a new profile"**
3. Put in basic information (your registration is **NOT** complete at this point)
4. Check text or email **for confirmation code**
5. Go to **vaccinem.org**, select **"I want to access my registration"**
6. Use **confirmation code and DOB** to access your registration
7. **Complete registration** (personal information, chronic medical conditions, demographic information, employer, and insurance information will all have green check marks)
8. You will get a **confirmation when your registration is complete**
9. **Check text and email regularly** for event code

When you receive your event code:

1. **Immediately go to vaccinem.org, don't hesitate**, and select **"I want to access my registration"**
2. Use **confirmation code and DOB** to access your registration
3. Select **"Make Appointment"**
4. Enter **event code** to schedule appointment
5. **On the day of your appointment, go to vaccinem.org**, use your confirmation code to access your registration, and **complete the medical questionnaire**

To register if you don't have a computer or internet access:

1. Call the Aging and Disability Resource Center at **1-800-432-2080**
2. You will be asked to provide your name, DOB, address, and information about high risk medical conditions
3. Options counselor will complete your registration on your behalf
4. A **representative of DOH will contact you** to provide event code and information about how to schedule appointment **when vaccine is available in your area**
5. You will be provided a medical questionnaire to **complete on the day of your appointment**

COVID-19 Guidance and Directives

Submitted by Scott Doan, Deputy Director (Acting Director) and Marc Kolman, Deputy Director

Guidance and directives issued by DDSD are required to be followed by agencies and individuals served by the home and community-based (HCBS) Medicaid waivers. The following are several important directives that must continue to be followed and are published again here for your information.

New Mexico's Public Health Order

All individuals who receive services administered through DDSD must follow the Public Health Order that states "all New Mexicans should be staying in their homes for all but the most essential activities and services. When New Mexicans are not in their homes, they must strictly adhere to social distancing protocols and wear face coverings to minimize risks. These sacrifices are the best contribution that each of us can individually make to protect the health and wellbeing of our fellow citizens and the State as a whole. In accordance with these purposes, this Order and its exceptions should be narrowly construed to encourage New Mexicans to stay in their homes for all but the most essential activities".

Outdoor Family and Guardian Visitation

Beginning August 1, 2020 outdoor visitation may begin for Family Members and Guardians for individuals in Supported Living and Intensive Medical Living Services. Indoor visitation is not permitted at this time.

Therapy (OT, PT, SLP) and Behavior Support Consultant (BSC) Requirements for conducting essential health care face to face clinical session using COVID-19 Safe Practices Beginning August 1, 2020 Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, and Behavior Support Consultants may resume face to face therapy (clinical sessions) in the home. Therapists and Behavior Support Consultants must wear appropriate PPE, maintain social distancing if possible, and abide by COVID Safe Practices. Clinical sessions must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance with the Provider.

Provider Agency Nurse Visits

Beginning August 1, 2020 Provider Agency Nurses may resume face to face visits in accordance with DD Waiver Standards. It is required that the notes resulting from these visits must be entered in Therap in accordance with March 20, 2020 Guidance Document (please see the attached document). Provider Agency Nurses must wear appropriate PPE, maintain social distancing if possible, and abide by COVID Safe Practices.

Planning Meeting Requirements

It is the expectation that DD Waiver Interdisciplinary teams (IDTs) and Medically Fragile Waiver teams meet to discuss and plan for COVID-related needs and changes to service delivery. The same expectation applies for Supports Waiver and Mi Via Waiver participants and their identified supports. Consultants and Community Supports Coordinators, along with any other support the participant chooses, should discuss and make changes and or requests, as appropriate.

For additional information, see the following sites:

- State of New Mexico COVID site <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
- State of New Mexico COVID Vaccine site <https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org/>
- COVID Safe Practices <https://cv.nmhealth.org/covid-safe-practices/>
- Public Health Orders and Executive Orders <https://cv.nmhealth.org/public-health-orders-and-executive-orders/>
- DDSD's COVID site <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/>
- CDC COVID site <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

As always, please contact your DDSD Regional Office if you have questions or concerns.

The poster features the NMDOH logo at the top left, with the text "NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH" below it. To the right of the logo is a large, stylized world map composed of small blue squares. The main text in the center reads "REGISTER TODAY FOR YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE" in large, bold, black letters. Below this is an orange button with the text "VACCINEM.ORG". On the right side, there is a smartphone displaying the NMDOH COVID-19 Vaccine Registration app interface. The app screen shows the NMDOH logo, the text "New Mexico Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccine Registration", a welcome message, a language selection dropdown menu, and a section titled "What would you like to do?" with a button that says "I have an event code and want to schedule a vaccination appointment".

COVID-19 Vaccine Resources

Submitted by Marc Kolman, Deputy Director

New Mexico Resources:

NM Department of Health Vaccine Registration System: <https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org/>

NM Department of Health COVID-19 site: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>

CDC and Federal Resources:

CDC COVID-19 Toolkit for People with Disabilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/toolkits/people-with-disabilities.html>

CDC COVID-19 site on Vaccine Considerations for People with Disabilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/disabilities.html>

CDC COVID-19 vaccine site: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

CDC site on Understanding the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/retail-pharmacy-program/index.html>

Other Resources:

Georgia Tech's Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation accessible COVID-19 resources, including plain language fact sheets, developed under contract with the CDC: <https://cidi.gatech.edu/covid>

Johns Hopkins University Disability Health Research Center dashboard tracking the prioritization of people with disabilities in all 50 states: <https://disabilityhealth.jhu.edu/vaccine/>

ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources) site on vaccine prioritization offers a quick visualization of which states have identified people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and direct support professionals (DSPs) in high-priority tiers for receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. ANCOR also offers State Vaccine Allocation Plan Tracker. <https://www.ancor.org/>

NCD (National Council on Disability) letter to the National Governor's Association on vaccine allocation: <https://ncd.gov/publications/2021/ncd-letter-nga-re-vaccine-allocation>

DDSD's Technology Vision Statement

Submitted by Christina Hill, Community Programs Bureau Deputy Bureau Chief and Casey Stone-Romero, Community Inclusion Manager



To continue momentum to support the use of enabling technology for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, DDSD has developed and adopted the following Technology Vision Statement.

DDSD supports a system-wide culture that embraces person-centered, equitable access to a range of enabling technology that has the flexibility to promote independence, individual choice, and respects rights and values privacy for people with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities, regardless of level of disability.

Stay tuned as we continue our work to support the use of technology in NM!

Thea Kavanaugh Announced as New Statewide Socialization and Sexuality Education Project Contractor

Submitted by Cheryl L. Frazine, Chief Bureau of Behavioral Support

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division would like to welcome Thea Kavanaugh, MPH, CTRS, CHES, owner of REAL Therapeutics LLC, as the Statewide Socialization and Sexuality Education Project Contractor. She was awarded the contract in October and has already begun to build a collaborative statewide team of SSE Providers to strengthen the scope and capacity of this valuable Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver service.

Thea's background includes over 20 years of professional experience providing direct services to individuals with disabilities as a nationally certified recreational therapist (CTRS). She has worked in a variety of settings, including the public schools, behavioral health, physical rehabilitation, long-term care, and in various community-based settings. Thea also holds a Master of Public Health degree and is also nationally certified as a Community Health Education Specialist (CHES). Her professional experience and educational background distinguish her as being an expert in utilizing various interventions and evidence-based strategies and modalities to focus on improving physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development based on a personalized plan specific to individual interests, abilities, and needs.

Thea has actively supported and participated in SSE services since 2011 in various capacities, including as a support-person for individuals with IDD taking the Friends and Relationships Course (FRC) Class, a FRC student-teacher, a Bureau of Behavioral Supports (BBS)-Certified Lead FRC teacher, and as a DD Waiver Provider of SSE services. Thea is a strong advocate for a proactive approach to SSE services versus a reactive approach. A responsive proactive approach invites ALL adults receiving DD waiver services to access SSE services because every FRC series is a course on life; the FRC supports individuals who want to become self-aware, educated, and knowledgeable as a proactive measure in preparation for the natural course and development of identity and sexuality within the frameworks of socialization, friendships, and romantic relationships. Additionally, the FRC curriculum is designed to encourage collaboration between the individuals and the people who support them, thus paving the way for a positive interdependent relationship; mutual respect and understanding where both parties feel comfortable in their collaborative role to ask questions, ask for help, share feelings, and evaluate choices in order to promote self-determined decision-making about important aspects of their lives.



Thea resides in Las Cruces and is an active member of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) and currently serves as the President of The Arc of NM Board of Directors. Thea shares her life with her husband and their two boys. Thea enjoys tent camping with her family, hiking, volunteering, and journaling during her free time.

Socialization and Sexuality Supports through “Friends and Relationships Classes” Available to Mi Via Participants

Submitted by Jen Rodriguez, DDSD Community Programs Bureau Chief

Socialization & Sexuality supports are now being offered to Mi Via participants throughout the state. Mi Via participants can access this support service by enrolling in their local Friends & Relationships Course (FRC). The FRC is a community education course designed to increase awareness, understanding, and knowledge of healthy relationships, human sexuality, and sexual health education.

The FRC is offered in a series format and includes 16 hours of class instruction. An FRC series follows a class schedule with specific days and times. FRC classes are offered in a group format and include a peer mentor with I/DD who serves as a role model and leader. In classes, participants learn from observing, discussing, and practicing skills. Some class topics include asking for what I want, conversations/trading information, planning get-togethers, dating, saying no, social media, attraction, healthy/unhealthy relationships, assertive communication, body image, sexual health, birth process, and working with a support person you trust. There is no minimum knowledge or necessary behavioral or functional skills to enroll. All Mi Via participants over the age of 18 are welcome to attend FRC classes. The FRC teachers use a variety of strategies to help all participants learn such as videos, discussions, role playing, games/activities, and visual supports. The FRC teachers provide a welcoming,

safe space so all students feel accepted, supported, and comfortable learning factual information while exploring personal values, wants, and goals.

The FRC fosters the continuous development of lifelong socialization and sexuality skills and knowledge needed for community inclusion and personal fulfillment. The FRC supports students to reflect on their own cultural, religious, and moral values to promote informed-decision making with respect to relationships and sexuality. The goals of the FRC are to 1) increase social connections to form healthy and meaningful relationships; and 2) increase personal safety and awareness to prevent unhealthy relationships that may result in violence, sexual victimization, exploitation and abuse. Participants who have attended FRC classes have indicated increased fulfillment and satisfaction in their lives in addition to increased interest and participation in community life. An FRC series can be accessed through participants' budgets by using Related Goods. Currently, all FRC classes are offered virtually via Zoom and classes can be found in every region. Please contact Thea Kavanaugh, the DDSD Socialization and Sexuality Education Project Contractor, for any questions and/or for additional information on upcoming Spring FRC classes (March - June) and Summer FRC classes (May - August) in your area; theak@realtherapeuticsllc.com; or 575.635.9013.



CARMP Draft Reminders

Submitted by Jacoba (Kotie) Viljoen Ph.D., MSN-Ed, RN, CCRN-K, CDDN, Aspiration Nurse

It has been eight months since you started using the CARMP Draft in Questionnaire in Therap. Overall, I think you are doing an awesome job using this process. Please keep calling me by using the telephone number listed below, not my office, if you need any additional assistance with this process.

I do want to share a few reminders as mid-term updates for CARMP Draft in Questionnaire in Therap.

- Using the CARMP Draft in Questionnaire in Therap is required. Please do not use a password-protected CARMP document.
- If the CARMP needs to be revised, a NEW session must be started with the previously submitted/finalized CARMP from the previous session. It came to our attention that teams are using the previously submitted CARMP Draft session to start new revisions, which is not allowed. **The submitted CARMP Draft signifies a finalized CARMP.** If the finalized CARMP is changed randomly, it will cause safety and logistical issues.
- If revisions to the submitted/finalized CARMP are needed after the annual was finalized, the entire team must be notified via SCOMM. This will ensure the entire team is informed about the upcoming change, and if any team member wants to make changes, they can do so during the same session. This may reduce the number of times the CARMP is changed, and follow-up training is needed.
- If a team member indicates that they do not have to make any changes, they do not have to participate in this session. However, if the team member participates each time for any revision, it will be a great way to show evidence/documentation that they did the review if questioned later.
- After the revision, the Case Manager will review any changes made with the person and guardian before dating and submitting the session to finalize the CARMP. The entire team must be notified of the new CARMP after it was finalized.

The training webinar and handout are still available on the Therap website and can be used as a refresher or new training for new providers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any assistance at Jacoba.viljoen@state.nm.us or (954) 726-7420.

What is SELL??

Submitted by Casey Stone-Romero, Community Inclusion Manager

Do you work in Supported Employment? Are you a leader in your community, or would you like to learn how to become a leader in your community? If you answered yes or even maybe to these questions than SELL is for you! SELL is short for Supported Employment Local Leaders. Each region in New Mexico has a SELL team and is looking for valuable feedback and input from providers just like YOU! SELL is a platform for you to network with other service providers, brainstorm how to educate local businesses, learn how to be more effective job developers and job coaches, and collaborate with staff from DVR and DDSD. SELL Meetings are held every other month. For more information on SELL click here [Welcome to SELL! on Vimeo](#). To find the next SELL Meeting closest to you, visit the Partners for employment Events page, <https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/other-disability-programs/partners-for-employment/events-calendar.html>.

Partners for Employment offers several opportunities to connect including our annual Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment Conference. Mark your calendars, the conference will be held the 4 Fridays in May 2021. More details to come! To stay in touch on the most up to date Partners For Employment Offerings [Sign up for our newsletter!](#), or visit the PFE Website at <https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/other-disability-programs/partners-for-employment/>.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Community Resources

Submitted by Lisa Storti, Constituent Supports Coordinator

There are some wonderful resources for individuals with disabilities & their families in New Mexico. In this newsletter, we are highlighting access to information and resources regarding Guardianship, and Alternatives to Guardianship - such as Power of Attorney, or Health Care Decision-maker, and Representative Payee.

Guardianship removes considerable rights, and should only be considered after alternatives have proven ineffective or unavailable. The legal processes are complicated and can lead to overstepping and family fights, and families and individuals are strongly encouraged to get expert help.

Under New Mexico Law, if a person is incapacitated and has not given power in writing to an agent, a court can appoint a guardian over the person and a conservator over financial matters. This can be a family member or corporate guardian. A guardian can then make residential placement and health care decisions and a conservator can make financial decisions. A court can also appoint a temporary guardian or conservator if needed to prevent immediate and irrevocable serious harm. A court can also limit the powers of the guardian and conservator depending on the person's capacity and needs.

Alternatives to Guardianship include Power of Attorney, while the individual is still capable and understands what they are signing, Representative Payee - managing Social Security/SSI payments, Surrogate Decision-maker for healthcare, and informal arrangements with family members.

(source: DDPC-OOG)

For Information on Guardianship, and Alternatives to Guardianship, the following resources are some excellent sources of information and support. Individuals, Families, and current Guardians are urged to look into these resources, and develop solid plans to ensure proper support, and/or succession of guardianship, as applicable.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PLANNING COUNSEL - OFFICE OF GUARDIANSHIP

625 Silver Av. SW, Suite 100
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 841-4519 www.nmddpc.com

THE NEW MEXICO GUARDIANSHIP ALLIANCE info@GuardianshipAllianceNM.org

THE NEW MEXICO GUARDIANSHIP ASSOCIATION www.nmguardianassoc.org



**PROTECT YOURSELF.
PROTECT NEW MEXICO.**

REGISTER AT VACCINENM.ORG

Project SEARCH - Interns Wanted!

Submitted by Nathan Reiman, Director, State Operations & Programs, Best Buddies International

Attention youth, age 18-21! Best Buddies in New Mexico (BBNM) is looking for Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) students who are preparing to complete their final year in school and who are looking to go to work. We want these individuals to join us to learn about life, have fun, and to receive a paid internship. Participants need to have completed graduation requirements for high school, have a documented intellectual or developmental disability, apply for Project SEARCH by April 8th, and most importantly - an eagerness to work and earn a paycheck! Six other Project SEARCH sites in New Mexico - Gallup, Rio Rancho, Farmington, Alamogordo, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces-- are also recruiting Project SEARCH interns, and we would welcome the opportunity to connect non-Albuquerque residents directly with one of these sites.

Project SEARCH Embassy Suites Hotel graduate and BBNM Advisory Board member, Vanessa, shared the following: "Project SEARCH is the most wonderful experience! You will enjoy learning new skills, some of which you didn't even know existed. In addition to learning new skills, Project SEARCH is a great place to meet friends who you can hang out with outside of the program and who you can communicate with by phone whenever you want to."

In addition to supporting Project SEARCH, Best Buddies also hosts various virtual events including our upcoming April (virtual) Friendship Walk, and these events are open to everyone—with or without an intellectual or developmental disability. To learn more about our events or to apply for Project Search, visit <https://www.bestbuddies.org/newmexico/>.

Vanessa's advice to all interested parties is as follows: "Best Buddies is one of the best programs in New Mexico. You should get involved with their activities [beyond Project SEARCH] like the Friendship Walk and you will love these activities as you will make new friends and get involved with them."

BBNM is here for YOU, and you are welcome to reach out to newmexico@bestbuddies.org or to call 505-299-2552 to learn more.

Joint Cohort Class Themes

- Mindful Monday
- Tabata (exercise) Tuesday
- Wellness Wednesday
- Threshold (exercise) Thursday
- Fun Friday



What the ACQ Means to Me: Words from Executive Committee Members of the Advisory Council on Quality (ACQ)

Submitted by Executive Committee, Advisory Council on Quality

Lisa Blue Co-chair (Parent): I am the mother of a young man with severe disabilities who is on the Mi Via waiver. It is important for me to be involved in making sure that the waivers for people with developmental disabilities and for those who are medically fragile remain active and funded and useful for the people who need them. I put my name in the ring for co-chair because nobody else, but Daniel, was stepping up and I thought we would make a good team. I believe we will make the council a more involved, interactive, action-oriented group of people who truly want to make a difference.

Daniel Ekman Co-chair (Parent): There are a lot of changes taking place within the DD service system and the ACQ itself. With these changes comes a great opportunity for the disability community to make a long-lasting impact on that system. That is why the ACQ is an important body to me. I was honored when I found out that I was being considered to serve as a co-chair. I truly believe that if positive change is going to happen, it is going to take multiple stakeholders working together and giving their input into the system. I believe that my role on the Executive Committee is to help facilitate the types of interactions that will lead to meaningful systems change. The ACQ can help create a system that is more flexible and able to adapt to the needs of its stakeholders and consumers. It can also create a venue where various concerns can be aligned and addressed as a whole. It is the one organization that brings together self-advocates, family members, providers, and community organizations across various waivers into a cross-disability coalition.

Virginia Lynch at-large member (Zia Therapy Center, Alamogordo): I was appointed to the ACQ and attended my first meeting in October 2016. As a Service Coordinator who also sometimes provides direct services, I wanted to be a voice for people with I/DD and their families as well as for our Direct Service Providers – the foundation upon which we all stand.

At first, I was reluctant to serve on the Executive Committee because I have anxiety when speaking in front of people. With assurance I would not have to run an ACQ meeting, I accepted. The EC is charged with developing the agenda for the ACQ meetings and being responsive to requests and guidance from the full Council, including follow up. I think it's important for each of us to do what we can when we can. Each of us is here because we heard the call to serve, and it's no different being a part of the EC.

I'm hopeful that ACQ will one day reach its full potential. One way to help accomplish this is to have the full participation of every single member of the Council. My hope is that everyone who serves on the ACQ will participate in subcommittee meetings even to the extent that action items or advisory statements come out of those subcommittees. Perhaps one way to accomplish this is to have a Council member co-chair for each subcommittee who will guide on items which would benefit from discussion and vote at the full ACQ. We are not here just to absorb information; we are here to advocate. Collectively, we hold a treasure trove of knowledge and experience – let's rededicate to joining our voices with those we support - to their fullest benefit.

Tracy Perry at-large member (CEO of Direct Therapy Services, Las Cruces): I feel that being on the ACQ gives me a voice to help advocate for changes that our healthcare system so desperately needs. I have found the ACQ to be an effective way to make changes in systems, policies and procedures that affect the daily lives of our individuals. I'm very appreciative for the opportunity to serve on the ACQ. I will continue to advocate to combat discrimination and keep fighting for equal rights for individuals with disabilities.

1 

REGISTER AT VACCINEM.ORG

Fill out the registration form at vaccinem.org and receive a confirmation code.

» 2 

COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

Use your confirmation code to access your profile and enter your chronic medical conditions, employer, insurance, and demographic information.

WAIT FOR NMDOH TO NOTIFY YOU OF VACCINE AVAILABILITY

3 

SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT

Once you receive an invitation from DOH, enter your event code and select a location, day, and schedule your COVID-19 vaccine appointment.

» 4 

RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE

On the day of the appointment you will be able to complete the medical questionnaire. Attend the appointment at the location and receive your vaccine.

Back in Use Provides Wheelchairs

Submitted by Iris Clevenger, Medically Fragile Waiver Program Manager

In January, DDSD was tasked with obtaining wheelchairs for the COVID-19 vaccination events at the NM State Fairgrounds. Mike Kivitz volunteered to provide wheelchairs from Adelante's Back in Use program. Anthony Montoya had 8 wheelchairs inspected, cleaned and ready for use. Each chair was cleaned in the "scrubber" and then treated with Ultra-Violet light. Within two days of the request, the chairs were loaded into a truck and delivered to the large-scale vaccination site at Tingley Coliseum on the campus of the State Fairgrounds.

BackInUse.com is dedicated to helping New Mexican's with disabilities get the equipment they need either free or at very little cost. The statewide program specializes in acquiring, repairing and distributing Assistive Technology (AT) / Durable Medical Equipment (DME) statewide. Through the program's website, individuals are able to look at what equipment is available, request needed equipment and also post their usable equipment for donation or sale. See <https://backinuse.com/>.

A very special thank you to Back in Use staff for their assistance!



Supports Waiver is Moving Forward in 2021

Submitted by Jennifer Roth, Supports Waiver Program Manager

The Supports Waiver continues to move forward in 2021. New Supports Waiver participants are getting started with their selected Community Supports Coordinators to plan for Supports Waiver services. Examples of Supports Waiver services that have been requested and approved are Assistive Technology, Respite and Personal Care Services.

DDSD Supports Waiver Liaisons are available in each DDSD Regional Office.

The Supports Waiver Liaison team is:

Metro

Jaclyn Sanchez (505) 841-5528
Fleur Dahl (505) 841-5818

Southeast

Debra Medina (505) 840-5080
Juana Bravo (575) 840-4997

Southwest

Jaime Lopez (575) 636-5731

Northeast

David Naranjo (505) 551-2509

Northwest

Katherine Johnson Herrera (505) 592-2672

Jennifer Roth

Program Manager (505) 683-7476

The Medically Fragile Waiver Renewal, Know Your Benefits!

Submitted by Iris Clevenger, Medically Fragile Waiver Program Manager

The Medically Fragile Waiver is renewing for another 5-year cycle beginning July 1, 2021. The public comment period ends on February 22. If you did not have an opportunity to participate in the discussions of new benefits, you can view the Townhall Presentation on the DOH website Medically Fragile Waiver Family or Provider pages.

While it is great to know what changes to benefits are being proposed, it is very important to know your current benefits. If you are not sure which benefits come from the waiver and which benefits come from Centennial Care, you can always reach out to your case manager and care coordinator.

You can read or download the Member Handbook from your Managed Care Organization's website. These manuals provide benefit information as well as how the plan works. If you need to request information or make a complaint, these manuals will tell you how.

Here are links to the member handbooks.

Blue Cross Blue Shield:

<https://www.bcbsnm.com/community-centennial/pdf/cc-member-handbook-nm.pdf>

Presbyterian Health Plan:

http://docs.phs.org/idc/groups/public/documents/communication/pe_00954531.pdf

Western Sky:

https://www.westernskycommunitycare.com/content/dam/centene/newmexico/Medicaid/PDFs/WSCC_Member%20Handbook_v7_NCQA%20EDITS_%20GAfax_NOT%20APPROVED.pdf



**STEP UP
TO RECEIVE
YOUR
VACCINE.**

**REGISTER AT
VACCINENM.ORG**



E-Blasts sent out on January 1, 2021 thru February 28, 2021

Submitted by Tammy M. Barth, Provider Enrollment Manager

DDSD COVID-19 Vaccine GER Reporting, DOH Call Center, Electronic Visit Verification, Appendix K Update, and 2021 ARM Schedule – Sent 1.7.2021

New Training Opportunity! - New Mexico Training Associates Program – Sent 1.11.2021

RORA Deliverable Process for Care Coordination – Sent 1.14.2021

DDSD Documents – Sent 1.15.2021

Appendix K Approval from CMS – Sent 1.19.2021

DDSD Documents regarding EVV, GER COVID-19 Vaccine Reporting, ARC Scholarship and BBS Risk Management Strategies – Sent 1.21.2021

Post-Go-Live Q&A – Sent 1.27.2021

DDSD Documents and Reporting Requirement Reminders – Sent 2.1.2021

Psychotropic Medication Use for Persons for Persons with I/DD – Sent 2.11.2021

DDSD Documents and Reminders – Sent 2.15.2021

EVV Provider Communication – Sent 2.18.2021

Public Comment Notices for DD Waiver and Medically Fragile Waiver Extended to February 26, 2021 – Sent 2.18.2021

New Hires & Retirements

New Hires:

Selina Leyba, Social & Community Service Coordinator-A, Santa Fe, 1/9/21

Justin Stewart, Healthcare Surveyor-S/Therap Manager, Albuquerque, 1/23/21

Ernest Martinez, Social & Community Service Coordinator-O, Albuquerque, 2/6/21

Felicia Griego, Registered Nurse-Advanced, Albuquerque, 2/20/21

Retirements:

Kathy Baker, Healthcare Surveyor Supervisor/Therap Manager, Albuquerque, 12/19/20

Doug Wooldridge, Training & Development Specialist-A, Santa Fe, 2/1/21

Edward Santiago, Training & Development Specialist-A, Las Cruces, 2/12/21

Hernando Martinez, Social & Community Service Coordinator-O, 2/28/21

About Us

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If you would like to write an article for the next issue of the DDSD Newsletter, have suggestions or comments, please contact Marc Kolman, DDSD Newsletter Editor-in-Chief at 505-476-8839 or

Marc.Kolman@state.nm.us.