

NOTICE: All provider agencies that receive this publication are **REQUIRED** to distribute this update in a timely manner to **ALL** therapy practitioners and/or case managers contracted or employed by your agency. Thank you so much for all you do!

Please note – During the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to work in a very fluid situation and directives can and do change **rapidly**. This *Therapist Updates* is current as of the time of release, but therapists and readers should follow the latest guidance available.

Therapy Services Information

2.1.2021

February finds us taking a deep breath and closely watching the variable daily reports in COVID-19 infections. The steady interest in vaccinations is positive and we are hopeful that available vaccine supplies will increase and stabilize. As of this writing, New Mexico continues to focus on vaccinating people in Category 1a and has started to vaccinate people in the top two tiers of Category 1b. In a very positive development, changes have recently been made to the criteria for Category 1b. Down Syndrome had been listed as a risk factor. However, that language has been expanded for New Mexico to read “*Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities including Down Syndrome*”. With this change, individuals with developmental disabilities including Waiver participants are now included in the top two tiers!

Here are some additional reminders about signing up for vaccines. The on line DOH vaccine website was updated a few weeks ago. If you signed up early, I recommend that you go back into the site (use your code) and see if you need to update or complete any sections. Families can elaborate that they are primary caregivers to someone with IDD. The “other” category can be used to identify diagnoses that increase risk.

Note that the system randomly selects qualified people in tiers 1a - the first two tiers of 1b. Each locale has a different amount of vaccine. If someone gets a message about a vaccination slot, they should respond immediately. Additional sites are starting up in many locations like pharmacies, or stores.

Remember that the vaccine triggers your immune system to respond. With the first vaccine you may not feel great, have chills, body aches and a sore arm. People report a variety of responses to the second vaccine, for some it’s like the first dose. Others may feel worse with the second shot. I’ve heard people say it feels like “a bad flu” but lasts about 24 hours. Take it easy and know that this is just your immune system doing its job. Please see page 3 for critical COVID-19 updates and reminders.

As always, many thanks for everything you do! Please take care of yourselves and be safe. Betsy

Protected Health Information (PHI) and HIPAA

- Is the Google Calendar app considered HIPAA compliant? Should DDW therapists be storing full names/info about individuals on Google calendars? Here’s a link to an article that explains more about Google/HIPAA compliance: <https://www.hipaajournal.com/google-calendar-hipaa-compliant/>

¹ “Therapist Updates” will be sent via e-mail to DD Waiver Therapy and CM Providers on a periodic basis from the CSB or DDSD. **Please distribute to all providers in your agency in a timely manner!** Thank you!

- Documents containing Private Health Information (PHI) should NOT be sent in regular email. Per DDSD numbered memo 2020-01, therapists are required to use Therap/Scomm for CARMP and it is preferred for sharing any other DD Waiver documents containing PHI.
- PHI explained: <https://www.hipaajournal.com/considered-phi-hipaa/>
- If you need access to Therap/Scomm, contact Justin Stewart (new Therap Manager): justin.stewart@state.nm.us or Hernando Martinez: Hernando.martinez@state.nm.us

QA/QI Agency Reports – ALL Agency Quality Improvement Reports for 2020 due Feb. 15th!

- Therapy agencies are highly encouraged to use the Therapy Agency Annual Quality Improvement Report Template V.2 6/2019 when submitting their Therapy Agency QI Report as the template includes all DD Waiver Standards QI requirements.
- Information may be incorporated into a comprehensive agency QI report per agency preference, but the QI Therapy Report must be submitted separately to the Provider Enrollment Unit.
- You can find a PDF copy of the template and the instructions at: <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/pgsv/clinical/therapy/>
 - Please contact one of the therapy consultants if you need a WORD copy.
- Individual Agency Annual Quality Improvement **Plans** are to be submitted with your Provider Agency Recertification packet.

NEW therapy consultant Virtual “Office Hours”

- The therapy consultants would like to offer a regular time for therapists to brainstorm, ask questions, “share” a cup of coffee/tea, or to discuss any topics that might be on your mind related to providing therapy within the NM DDW.
- These will be offered as discipline specific meetings, however, we will continue to have regularly scheduled therapy “all-calls” with representatives from DDSD, as well.
- **Friday, February 12, 2021** “office hours”:
 - Occupational Therapy: 1 - 2pm
 - Physical Therapy: 2 - 3pm
 - Speech Therapy: 3 - 4pm
- A link for the meetings will be shared within a week of the date.

Specialty Seating Clinic (SSC) Virtual Office Hours

- The Specialty Seating Clinic would like to announce monthly virtual office hours the second Tuesday of each month starting **February 9th from 3pm-5pm**.
 - A link for the meetings will be shared within a week prior to the date.
 - Each month we will do a short presentation of 20-30 mins on a topic related to wheelchair mobility, seating, and positioning.
 - Therapists are encouraged to use the time after the presentation to ask questions specific to their clients and the seating clinic staff will provide guidance and input to support the clients we all work with.
 - Office Hours will be hosted by Scott Hubbard, MPT, and/or Mary Beth Schubauer, PT, MS, ATP. Please contact either of them if you have specific questions that you would like addressed through this type of forum.

COVID-19 Information

Department of Health COVID-19 Policies Updated January 21, 2021

<https://cv.nmhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EPI-COVID19-Containment-Policies.1.21.21.pdf>

- Helpful guidance and clarification related to exposure, testing, isolation, employee/employer responsibilities, and more

The DDSD COVID-19 site <https://nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/>

- Consolidated information especially relevant to DDSD providers including: all DDSD COVID-19 Numbered Response Memos; Guidance Documents; Policies; and a variety of very helpful Resource Documents. Please check this site often for updates!

New Mexico - Statewide Vaccine Dashboard <https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org/public-dashboard.html>

- Vaccine provider locations, maps, and registration information
- Up-to-the-day statistics about the state’s vaccination effort, including vaccines received in New Mexico, vaccines administered, vaccines administered in the last seven days
- Healthcare workers are now eligible for vaccination (Phase 1a)
- Register here <https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org>
- *Note:* If you get a text/email from DOH to schedule and you have already received your first and/or second doses elsewhere, please log on and provide date(s) so your ‘dose’ will be released for another person

- Please refer to the DDSD memo dated 10/1/2020 for a summary of the current guidance. Except for the mass gathering limit decreasing from 10 to 5 persons, all information remains current.

- Tammy Barth, in the DDSD Provider Enrollment Unit, usually distributes memos to the field on the 1st and 15th of each month. PLEASE share any memos and other announcements from Tammy with your staff and visit the DDSD COVID-19 website for the most current updates.

Therapy Services during COVID-19

- Therapists can provide services remotely and in-person based on the wishes of the person or their guardians. Teams should have already met to address plans for providing therapy services.
- Therapists are not prohibited from visiting with clients outside the home. Remember, COVID-Safe Practices must be followed at all times.
- Therapists and BSCs should continue to follow the Therapy and BSC Clinical Session Requirements memo (8/1/20) and the DDSD COVID-19 Response Status Update (10/1/20).
- When unique circumstances occur, teams may request exceptions for delivery of services through their Regional Office. This may include two therapists being present in the home together. Please specify why the exception is needed, treatment goals, and the estimated number of visits needed.

Having Difficulties? *Are you finding barriers to providing telehealth for an individual?*

- Reach out to Case Manager, Residential Agency, and/or IDT members directly to problem-solve
- Contact the Case Manager and guardian to request a conference call/IDT meeting. Try offering a few possible meeting times vs. leaving it open-ended
- If unsuccessful, contact one of the Therapy Consultants
- Contact your Regional Office for assistance

How to access General Event Reports (including COVID-19 testing and vaccination information)

- See ‘How To’ Guide emailed 12/18/20. Contact a Therapy Consultant if assistance is needed.

WiFi Access:

- All DD Waiver Residential (Supported Living, Family Living, and Intensive Medical Living) agencies are required to provide WiFi access to individuals as a “basic utility.”
- If the WiFi does not reach all areas of the home, the agency may need to install a ‘booster’ or similar device to support access to telehealth in all areas of the home.
- If you continue to experience difficulties with compliance, please contact your therapy consultant, Felicia Vidro, or file a RORA.

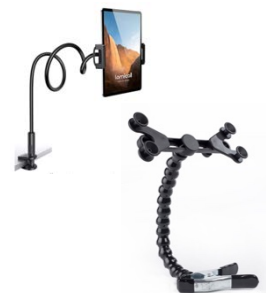
Appendix K (COVID-19): Assistive Technology for telehealth access through DD Waiver

- **DEADLINE EXTENDED:** The timeline to apply for COVID-19 related AT to support telehealth services has been extended to six months after the end of the federal public health emergency (PHE) for COVID-19.
- The decision for purchase of AT items continues to require an IDT meeting.
- The additional \$250 is available one-time only during the PHE.
- Reference the AT Guidance document issued 10/16/20, “Assistive Technology Guidance for DD Waiver Providers and External Reviewers”.
- To avoid delays, please be sure the AT application that is submitted is accurate, complete, and the calculations include the 10% fee where applicable. Be sure the address for the Contact Person (if receiving a check for purchase of AT) is accurate.
- Reminder: The individual is responsible for paying taxes on AT purchases. AT funds cannot be used to pay taxes. Please determine how taxes will be paid before items are requested.

Therapy Practice-Related Resources

Assistive Technology: Tablet holders may be useful for telehealth sessions in different locations in the home or community. A few options are linked here.

- Lamicall Gooseneck:
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07Y84SCR6/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_Og-1Fb4JFVSHE
- Modular Hose with Spring Clamp:
<http://modularhose.com/Assistive-Technology/mh-at-kits/110721.html>
- Elitehood Bike Mount:
https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08CDCWLDW/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_kOZcGbV9YF4JN?encoding=UTF8&psc=1



- LUCI is a new device to assist individuals who use power wheelchairs: <https://luci.com/>
“LUCI prevents tips, collisions and falls before they happen, so we can see a curb like this for what it really is: just a harmless little piece of concrete separating the sidewalk from the street.”

CARMP Process and Training

- CARMP development and review must include all team members. It is important that therapists and nursing communicate so information is consistent with medical orders and clear for the individual, FLP, DSP, and other team members.
- Note: CARMP training needs to be at skilled level and documented on a competency-based roster. Residential agencies remain responsible for ensuring staff training is current. Flexibility from therapists related to training times and availability is always appreciated – especially with the staff shortages many agencies are experiencing.

Telehealth Spotlight

Positives of the Pandemic:

We have had the opportunity to rapidly spin up the use of telehealth services in the DD Waiver and have learned a great deal. DDSD is including telehealth in our DD Waiver renewal and Standards revisions. The pandemic has given us a jumpstart to learn about and use this valuable tool in our rural state. I am hopeful we will continue to learn and grow with the use of this technology. - Betsy

Telehealth Resources from national organizations:

AOTA: <https://www.aota.org/Practice/Manage/telehealth.aspx>

APTA: <https://www.apta.org/your-practice/practice-models-and-settings/telehealth-practice>

ASHA: <https://www.asha.org/about/telepractice-resources-during-covid-19/>

National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers: <https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/>

Clinical Resources

Articles:

How thousands of people with disabilities shape the technology you probably use every day

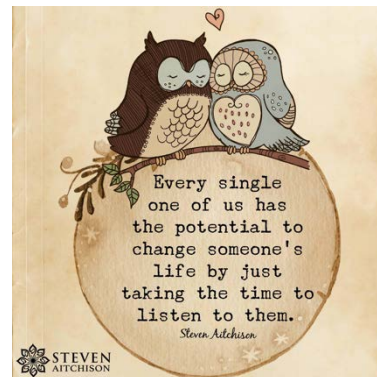
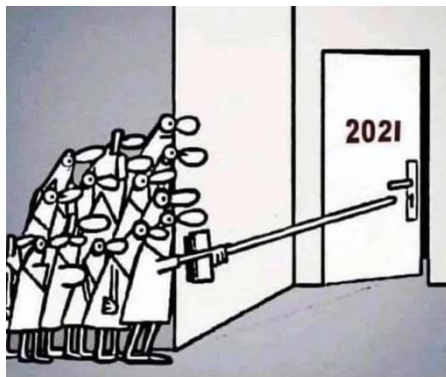
<https://news.microsoft.com/features/how-thousands-people-disabilities-shape-technology-you-probably-use-every-day/?ocid=lock>

COVID-19 Relief Leaves Out People with Disabilities

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2021/01/05/advocates-covid-19-relief-leaves-out-people-with-disabilities/29138/>

As Hospitals Fear Being Overwhelmed By COVID-19, Do the Disabled Get The Same Access?

<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/14/945056176/as-hospitals-fear-being-overwhelmed-by-covid-19-do-the-disabled-get-the-same-acc>



Aspiration Risk Management Resources in the New Mexico DD System

Betsy Finley, RN Clinical Services Bureau Chief; December 2020/January 2021

Many people with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) are at risk for aspiration because they have difficulty with swallowing (dysphagia). When someone has dysphagia, food or fluids, including saliva, can slip into the lungs instead of going into the stomach. When this occurs, the person usually begins to cough to clear their airway. Some people cannot adequately cough to clear their airway. In addition, sometimes very small amounts of fluids or saliva may enter the lungs without triggering a cough. This is known as “silent” aspiration. Aspiration may also occur if someone has gastric reflux. This means the contents of the stomach can go backwards up the esophagus and enter the lungs. This can occur in anyone, including people who have a feeding tube.

People who aspirate may develop chronic inflammation of their lungs and are at also risk of developing an acute infection called aspiration pneumonia. Aspiration pneumonia is a serious illness and, although many people recover, it is known to be one of the leading causes of death for persons with I/DD nationally and in New Mexico. Some people with I/DD may have unique or highly individualized signs of illness or infection, including when they have aspiration pneumonia. These signs may be obvious or subtle and may occur slowly or suddenly. Examples include leaning to one side or not being able to complete typical daily tasks. Being aware of these individualized signs of illness is very important since it allows families and support staff to identify an illness quickly and get prompt medical treatment.

Aspiration cannot be totally prevented but there are some things that can manage or minimize the risk of it occurring. The New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) has prioritized awareness about aspiration risk management for many years. Key elements in the DD Waiver system include providing ongoing Aspiration Risk Management training for providers and using two tools: the Aspiration Risk Management Screening Tool (ARST) and the Comprehensive Aspiration Risk Management Plan (CARMP). These tools are used to identify the level or severity of the person’s aspiration risk and guide planning and supports to meet their individualized needs.

Resources: New Mexico also has multiple resources available for people with known or suspected aspiration risk. These are available to anyone in the New Mexico DD system. The DDSD Regional Offices, the Bureau of Behavioral Supports (BBS) and the Clinical Services Bureau (CSB) are available to provide consultation and contact information about a variety of available resources. For information about your local Regional Office or specific waiver program areas, visit: <https://www.nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/>. Key contacts are listed below.

Aspiration consultation: Jacoba (Kotie) Viljoen Ph.D., MSN-Ed, RN, CCRN-K, CDDN is the Clinical Services Bureau Aspiration Risk Management Nurse. She may be contacted for general information about aspiration risk management and all available resources at Jacoba.viljoen@state.nm.us.

We hope you find this overview helpful. Please reach out if additional assistance is needed. elizabeth.finley@state.nm.us

CSB TRAININGS			<i>ALL TRAININGS ARE ON-LINE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE</i>		
Aspiration Risk Management					
		9:00am – 4:30pm	3/5/21, 5/7/21		
Participatory Approach/Standards					
		9:00am – 4:30pm	3/1/21, 4/30/21		
Pre-register for on-line trainings at: https://ddsdtrain.cdd.unm.edu/Calendar.aspx					
Please use your own email when registering to ensure you get the meeting link and documents					
Other trainings required for Therapists <i>Please see the Clinical Services Training: Therapist Training Requirements to learn more about the training requirements for all therapists.</i>					
Person-Centered Planning for Therapists		DDSD CDD Online Courses (available anytime) http://www.cdd.unm.edu/other-disability-programs/disability-health-policy/ddsd-courses/index.html			
Indications of Illness and Injury					
ANE REFRESHER Training ‘ANE Awareness’					
Effective Individual Specific Training Techniques - “EIST-Live Stream” (<i>not</i> the Effective Trainer Techniques Part 1 course)		Upcoming dates: 2/17/21, 3/25/21 (not recorded) https://ddsdtrain.cdd.unm.edu/Calendar.aspx			
ANE Training DOH – Live Stream Course		https://ddsdtrain.cdd.unm.edu/Calendar.aspx			
<i>Note: All versions of the DOH - ANE courses will count during the COVID-19 PHE.</i>					
TALK TO US - Clinical Services Bureau Contact Information					
Elizabeth Finley	CSB Bureau Chief	Elizabeth.Finley@state.nm.us			
Felicia Vidro	CSB AT/Therapy Coordinator	Felicia.Vidro@state.nm.us			
CSB Clinical Consultants <i>Contact us via e-mail, text, or phone call</i>					
Mary Beth Schubauer	Physical Therapy	MaryBeth.Schubauer@state.nm.us 505-238-2247(c)			
Demarre Sanchez	Speech Therapy	Demarre.Sanchez@state.nm.us 505-417-5264 (c)			
Robin Leinwand	Occupational Therapy	Robin.Leinwand@state.nm.us 505-239-1768 (c)			
RESOURCES - CLINICS					
Specialty Seating Clinic					
Jason Lavy	Specialty Seating Clinic Manager	specialty.seating@state.nm.us (505) 222-4610			
Referrals for wheelchair, positioning, and adaptive equipment are being processed and appointments made for remote and in-person evaluations or wheelchair fittings, dependent on the need of the individual as assessed by SSC clinicians.					
SAFE Clinic					
Jacoba (Kotie) Viljoen	CSB ARM Coordinator, SAFE Clinic Coordinator	(505) 841-6188 (office) Fax# (505) 841-2987 Jacoba.Viljoen@state.nm.us			
Any adult with I/DD who is experiencing challenges related to oral eating and/or tube feeding can be referred for specialized assessment and recommendations regarding eating/feeding, nutrition, positioning, and associated medical needs to support health, safety, and independence. SAFE Clinic appointments are currently occurring via remote technology.					