

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SUPPORTS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

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COVID-19 Status Report

Submitted by Scott Doan, Deputy Director and Marc Kolman, Deputy Director

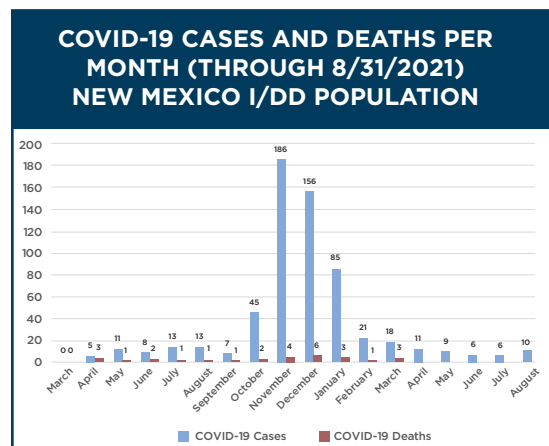
With the recent surge in the number of COVID cases due to the highly infectious “Delta” variant, this article gives an update on the number of infections and deaths due to COVID.

COVID Cases and Deaths

The following graph shows the number of confirmed cases and deaths due to COVID among those served in New Mexico’s Home and Community Based waivers (DD, Medically Fragile, Mi Via and Supports waivers). The data is current through August 31, 2021. There has been a total of 610 confirmed cases of COVID in New Mexico’s HCBS population. This graph

shows a recent, though small, increase in cases. Though small, this increase reflects the recent increase in COVID cases in New Mexico, resulting from the “Delta” variant.

The tables show the number of confirmed cases of COVID by Region, Type of Waiver, and Type of Services (DD Waiver only).



COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS THROUGH 8/30/2021 NEW MEXICO HCBS I/DD POPULATION

Confirmed COVID-19 Positive	610
Confirmed COVID-19 Deaths	28

COVID-19 COVID-19 CASES BY REGION

Metro	277
NERO	45
NWRO	84
SERO	95
SWRO	109
Grand Total	610

COVID-19 CASES BY TYPE OF WAIVER

DD Waiver	459
Medically Fragile Waiver	14
Mi Via Waiver	132
Supports Waiver	1
State General Funded Services	4
Grand Total	610

There has been a total of 28 deaths due to COVID. Note the last death was in March 2021.

For additional information on COVID cases in New Mexico's population, see <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>.

Epidemiology reports showing geographic trends, demographics, health and social characteristics, and variants of concern can be found by clicking on the link to Medical & Scientific reports at the top of the page.



COVID-19 CASES BY TYPE OF SERVICE (DD WAIVER ONLY)	
Case Management only	24
Community Integrated Employment and Customized Community Supports	14
Customized In-Home Supports	34
Day Services Only	1
Family Living	115
Intensive Medical Living	2
Respite Only	5
Supported Living	266
Other including Mi Via and SW	149
Grand Total	610

Update on COVID Policies Status Report: New Mexico

Submitted by Marc Kolman, Deputy Director and Scott Doan, Deputy Director

As hopeful as we were about COVID's declining numbers both in the State and across the county, the recent increase in cases is concerning. The State has recently been experiencing upwards of 800 cases per day, almost all of which are due to the highly infectious "Delta" variant.

Acting Department of Health Secretary, David R. Scrase, M.D., on August 17, issued two Public Orders. The first, temporarily re-implements a statewide requirement that facemasks be worn in all public indoor spaces, with only limited exceptions, and regardless of vaccination status. The second, is a requirement that all school workers, congregate care facility workers, and hospital workers in New Mexico either be vaccinated against COVID or submit to COVID testing on a weekly basis. The most recent and all Public Health Orders can be seen at <https://cv.nmhealth.org/public-health-orders-and-executive-orders/>.

Following these two recent Public Health Orders, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, on August 19, issued guidance on the Indoor Mask Mandate, Vaccine Mandate, Remote Visits, and COVID Screening for Visitors

for those receiving Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver services. The following summarizes this guidance:

Indoor Mask Mandate: For the purposes of programs administered by DDSD, individuals receiving services are not required to wear masks in their own homes. However, individuals receiving services are bound by the Public Health Order to wear a mask or multilayer cloth face covering in all public indoor settings except when eating or drinking.

DDSD's masking mandate for paid employees and/or sub-contractors remains unchanged by the Public Health Order. Masks are required to be worn at all times during delivery of all services, including when providing transportation by all Direct Support Professionals, Therapists, Behavior Support Consultants, Nurses, Case Managers, Consultants, Community Support Coordinators, Home Health Care, or any other discipline providing services, regardless of vaccination status. The mask mandate applies to all agency staff who may provide direct services such as an agency Director, Administrative Assistant, Supervisor, Manager, etc. The only exception to

this requirement is for employees or sub-contractors paid to provide services to immediate family members (i.e., Family Living Providers) who may choose to wear a face mask in their own home at their discretion.

Vaccine Mandate: For the purposes of programs administered by DDS, beginning Monday August 23, 2021; any agency employee and/or sub-contractor, who provides service in a Congregate Care Facility or Community Home must be fully vaccinated unless an exemption is granted by their employer or operator of the facility in which they work. If an employer or operator of the facility determines an employee and/or sub-contractor meets the requirements of an exemption, the unvaccinated exempt worker must provide adequate proof that the worker has tested negative for COVID-19 on a weekly basis in accordance with the Public Health Order.

Face to Face Visits: Due to the increase in cases related to the Delta variant and to further mitigate the spread of COVID-19, effective August 20, 2021, DDS is requiring that all face to face in person visits by DD Waiver Case Managers, Mi Via Waiver Consultants, Medically Fragile Waiver Case Managers, Supports Waiver Community Support Coordinators, Agency Service Coordinators and

Supervisors, including State General Funded programs; **cease and revert to remote monitoring visits. Therapists (OT, PT, SLP)** can continue to conduct clinical sessions/visits/assessments in the home, community, or remotely at the discretion and approval of the individual and/or their guardian. **Nurses and Registered Dietitians/Licensed Nutritionists** can continue to complete clinical visits/assessments in the home, community, or remotely at the discretion and approval of the individual and/or their guardian. **Behavior Support Consultants** can continue to conduct clinical sessions/visits/assessments in the home, community, or remotely at the discretion and approval of the individual and/or their guardian.

COVID Screening for All Visitors: DDS is directing all agencies to resume COVID-19 symptom screenings at all service locations for all visitors, including screening for COVID vaccination status.

The complete memo, including additional information, can be found at: [COVID-19 Information for DD Providers \(nmhealth.org\)](https://www.nmhealth.org)

If you have questions, please contact the following DDS Staff:

- DD Waiver Program Manager, Marie Velasco (marie.velasco@state.nm.us)
- Mi Via Waiver Program Manager, Aaron Maestas (aaron.maestas@state.nm.us)
- Medically Fragile Waiver Program Manager, Iris Clevenger (iris.clevenger@state.nm.us)
- Supports Waiver Program Manager, Jennifer Roth (jennifer.roth@state.nm.us)
- State General Fund Program Manager, Juanita Salas (juanita.salas@state.nm.us)
- Regional Office Director
 - o Metro: Michael Driskell (michael.driskell@state.nm.us)
 - o NWRO: Michele Groblebe (michele.groblebe@state.nm.us)
 - o NERO: Angela Pacheco (angela.pacheco@state.nm.us)
 - o SERO: Michelle Lyon (michelle.lyon@state.nm.us)
 - o SWRO: Angie Brooks (angie.brooks@state.nm.us)
- DDS Deputy Director, Scott Doan (scott.doan@state.nm.us)

NMDOH
NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

IS THE COVID-19 VACCINE SAFE?

GET THE FACTS AT [VACCINENM.ORG/FACTS](https://www.vaccinenm.org/facts)

The Supports Waiver

Submitted by Jennifer Roth, Supports Waiver Program Manager

DDSD is gearing up for the FY22 round of Supports Waiver offer letters to be sent out and returned.

As we head into fall, a few things that are important to keep in mind about the Supports Waiver:

- An individual will maintain their place on the DD Wait List if they accept or decline the Supports Waiver.
- Individuals who are not currently Medicaid eligible can also benefit from access to Medicaid when they are eligible and participate in the Supports Waiver.
- Individuals who decline the Supports Waiver may choose to select the Supports Waiver at a later date by contacting DDSD Intake and Eligibility.

Supports Waiver Listening Sessions and Information Sessions

Listening Sessions are for people who have already accepted SW and are establishing eligibility or are already in services:

Intended for individuals who have accepted the Supports Waiver Offer and are establishing waiver eligibility or are receiving services. Supports Waiver participant listening

sessions are scheduled for September 14th and November 16th from 12- 1PM. These virtual meetings will provide a forum for SW Participants to share the experiences they have had and to ask questions. Attendance through web link is encouraged as there may be visual information shared.

Information Sessions for people who are trying to decide how to respond to their SW offer:

Intended for individuals who have received a Supports Waiver Offer Letter and would like more information to make a decision about selecting the Supports Waiver. Information Sessions will provide an overview of the Supports Waiver and what to expect after accepting the Supports Waiver. Sessions will be virtual. Attendance through web link is encouraged as there may be visual information shared.

Interested in attending a listening session or information session? Or scheduling a Supports Waiver Information Session at an alternative time? Contact the Supports Waiver Program Manager, Jennifer Roth at (505) 629-7476 or Jennifer.Roth@state.nm.us to schedule.

Parents Reaching Out Forward@14 Workshop Series

Submitted by Steve Scarton, Statewide Transition Lead

Developmental Disabilities Supports Division's School to Work Transition Program recently began a new collaboration with Parents Reaching Out (PRO), New Mexico's Parent Training and Information Center. Forward@ 14 is a series of workshops for youth with disabilities, parents, guardians, and community members to gain more knowledge and understanding of the transition process into adulthood. The workshops include education on Disability Rights, How to Run Your Own

Individualized Education Plan/Individual Service Plan, Social Opportunities and more. Anyone who is interested in gaining information about options after high school can attend. The workshops are provided at no cost to attendees. For more information or to register, check the PRO website at parentsreachingout.org or contact Adam Shand at ashand@parentsreachingout.org or (505) 247-0192.

Need help? Drop us a RORA

Submitted by Daniel Lucero and Sally Karingada

At DDSD, we pride ourselves on delivering good customer service and working with our partners to remove obstacles to the delivery of outstanding care and service. If you feel you could benefit from DDSD assistance, we encourage you to submit a Regional Office Request for Assistance (RORA).

You are free, of course, to reach out to DDSD using the communication method of your choice; however, filing a RORA will better ensure that DDSD's response is timely, and your request is assigned to the staff member best able to help. Additionally, recent enhancements in our system increase our ability to use RORA data to identify emergent issues and opportunities for quality improvement.

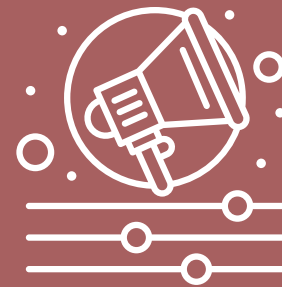
You can submit a RORA to obtain advice, request support, or simply raise a concern to DDSD. RORAs can be submitted for issues related to a specific individual in service: a provider of DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, Supports Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, or State General Fund services; a medical or specialty service provider; or a broad systems issue.

Filing a RORA is easy; and RORAs can be submitted by anyone. Here are three basic steps:

- Step 1: Access the RORA form and instructions on our website: [Regional Offices \(nmhealth.org\)](https://www.nmhealth.org).
- Step 2: Enter the pertinent information on to the RORA form
- Step 3: Submit the RORA form to the appropriate Regional Office via Therap SComm or Fax:
 - o METRO: Fax 505-841-5546 or SComm to Michael Driskell
 - o NERO: Fax 575-758-5973 or SComm to Angela Pacheco
 - o NWRO: Fax 505-863-4978 or SComm to Michele Groblebe
 - o SERO: Fax 575-624-6104 or SComm to Michelle Lyons
 - o SWRO: Fax 575-528-5194 or SComm to Angie Brooks

What happens next? Within five business days, a DDSD RORA Specialist will contact you to let you know we received your request and are gathering any additional information needed. The Specialist will then work to address the issues identified and you will receive notice when the RORA is closed.

So come on--let's work together to promote the provision of competent and caring services and supports to individuals receiving services funded by NMDOH-DDSD!



PLEASE BE AWARE: Filing a RORA is not the same as reporting Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation (ANE). If you suspect ANE you must report the incident immediately to the 24/7 toll-free Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Hotline at 1-800-445-6242.

As a reminder: for Individuals receiving DD Waiver Services, there are instances when a RORA is required, these include after unsuccessful attempts to resolve issues that affects a person's health or safety; after unsuccessful attempts to resolve issues related to access of specialty appointments, durable medical equipment or assistive technology devices, Therapy/BSC/behavioral health assessments and treatments, the implementation of the service plan (e.g., provision of timely reporting needed for planning, or monitoring. Inability to contact MCO Care Coordinator; no response from a provider agency; when there are no available provider agencies of a specific service type in a county or region). A RORA must also be filed for Specialty Services Requests (SSR) according to the applicable timelines specified on the RORA form.

Sharing Mindfulness

Submitted by Lynn Winters, LCSW, Bureau of Behavioral Supports

How we, as caregivers, interact with the people we serve makes a **huge** difference in those people's lives. Research has indicated, however, that effectively serving adults with IDD who have intense behaviors of concern can be difficult for caregivers, especially over time. "The caregiver...may become rigid and inflexible in his or her interactions with clients."

DSPs have too much on their plate and too little love from the system. Imagine learning **five** different health plans, a BSC plan, OT, SLP, CARMP, Mandt, etc. in addition to all of your preservice training! And then, **cross training on everyone else's plans that live in the home.** Talk about **total overwhelm!** People who are overwhelmed become reactive and irritable. It's hard to recall recently learned information. Self-confidence goes out the window. Little irritants become major issues.

You know as well as I, that agencies in our communities can experience a revolving door where staffing is concerned. Part of this issue lies in staffs' lack of coping skills. **Perhaps here is where mindfulness could come in.**

"Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us." It's being in the moment. It doesn't mean we're disconnected or indifferent; in fact, we're able to engage more in the moment when we're mindful. I always tell my private practice clients, "Anxiety and depression live in the past and the future. When we're present, we're less affected by those troubles." Mindfulness is a great way to remain in the present.

In fact, mindfulness is great for a number of reasons. Mindfulness can:

1. reduce stress, enhance performance, gain insight
2. spark innovation
3. make leaders more confident, improve creativity, reduce multitasking, and improve client satisfaction
4. help people address chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and other chronic issues
5. increase positive emotions, while reducing negative emotions
6. increase density of gray matter in brain regions linked to learning, memory, and empathy

"Though it has its roots in Buddhist meditation, a secular practice of mindfulness has entered the American mainstream in recent years, in part through the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn and his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, which he launched at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1979 (Greater Good.com)." Here's a link to Kabat-Zinn explaining mindfulness:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoLQ3qkhOw0&t=11s

Try this simple mindful breathing technique from Mindful.org. The whole process can take less than two minutes.

"Find a relaxed, comfortable position. Simply observe each breath without trying to adjust it; it may help to focus on the rise and fall of your chest or the sensation through your nostrils. As you do so, you may find that your mind wanders, distracted by thoughts or bodily sensations. That's okay. Just notice that this is happening and gently bring your attention back to your breath."

Now, ground yourself in the present moment with this technique from the book: Seeking Safety:

"Describe your environment in detail, using all your senses—for example, 'The walls are white; there are five pink chairs; there is a wooden bookshelf against the wall...' Describe objects, sounds, textures, colors, smells, shapes, numbers, and temperature. You can do this anywhere."

There are tons of You Tube videos on mindfulness. Reach out to your regional Behavior Specialist for help finding someone who can teach you and your DSPs mindfulness. There are apps for your phone and tablet like Calm and Headspace. Go to a yoga class online. Find a therapist who specializes in mindfulness. And then teach it. Teach it a lot. An old friend used to say to me, "We teach best that which we most need to learn."

Chancey, C., Wehl, C., Root, W. B., Rehfeldt, R. A., McCauley, D., Takeguchi, K., & Pritchard, J. (2019). *The impact of mindfulness skills on interactions between direct care staff and adults with developmental disabilities.* *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science, 12*, 160-169.

Mindfulness Defined. (n.d.). Retrieved March 17, 2021, from greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition

Najavits, L. M. (2002). *Using Grounding to Detach from Emotional Pain.* In *Seeking Safety* (pp. 133-135). The Guilford Press.

What is Mindfulness? (2020, July 8). Retrieved March 17, 2021, from www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/

Cheryl Frazine, Bureau of Behavioral Supports Chief, Retires September 1st

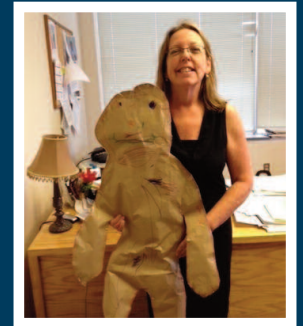
Submitted by Marc Kolman, Deputy Director

Cheryl Frazine is retiring on September 1st of this year after working in the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division for over 23 years and serving as the Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Behavioral Supports for the past 15 years. Cheryl leaves quite a legacy of providing supports for individuals needing behavioral and crisis supports as apparent from the quotes from colleagues, below. Cheryl's responsibilities included oversight of the division's behavioral specialists and crisis specialists, managing the Behavior Crisis Fund and supporting Sexuality Training and Positive Behavior Supports.

Jim Haaven, long-term consultant for the division, says, "It's not uncommon to find initial resistance and less than open arms to a 'stranger' coming from another state suggesting changes to an existing system. This was not the case with Cheryl. She was engaging, enthusiastic, and very knowledgeable in areas that I had little understanding of regarding the existing system and its culture. Cheryl became one of my 'go to' persons in those first years. Her actions and personal support helped me get an affective jump start on the project and certainly made my task easier."

Heather Clark, BBS Statewide Clinical Director says, "Cheryl is a very compassionate and kind human being. She's been one of the most caring people I have ever had as a direct supervisor. I'm going to miss her patience and kindness the most. Being a gracious person comes easy to her, or at least she makes it look easy. She will be missed." Jason Buckles, Talkabout, Inc. and former DDS employee,

Cheryl pictured with "Scott", a creation of her granddaughter Miranda, whose "homework" was to take Scott different places and photograph him doing different activities. One day, he came to work with Cheryl.



says, "To me, Cheryl Frazine has been a consistent source of support, a supervisor, a lunch partner, a contract manager, a sounding board, and a friend for close to 20 years. Most importantly she has been a tireless advocate for human rights for people with intellectual disability. She has seen BBS through multiple waiver re-writes and at each point in the background - whether we realized it or not - she steadfastly worked to maintain and improve our one-of-a-kind system of behavioral supports in New Mexico. Without her - our jobs and people's lives would be markedly different. If she ever wonders, "Did I make a difference?", the answer from me is a resounding "YES" and we thank you for it."

Training Updates

Submitted by Teresa Tomashot, Statewide Training Manager

UNM/CDD and DDS Training Unit have been working hard to identify all **DDSD Training Requirements by Job Classification**. Through this link, located on the main page, <https://www.cdd.unm.edu/other-disability-programs/disability-health-policy/ddsd-courses/index.html> you can find the current training requirements as well as the new requirements once DDS receives CMS approval for the DD Waiver Service Standards.

As a friendly reminder for people in the following job categories (*DDW Direct Support Professionals, DDW Direct Support Supervisors, DDW Case Managers, DDW Service Coordinators, DDS, DHI, and IMB staff*) and identified in the link above, unless you have taken Advocacy 101 or Advocacy Strategies in 2021, you will need to successfully complete the new course **Advocacy in Action** (a 45-minute online training) by **9/1/2021**.

Helping Daniel Put His Best Foot Forward

Submitted by Deborah Lassiter, SW Region Community Inclusion Coordinator and John Mann, DVR, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Daniel Hein is a new employee of Lowes Home Improvement store in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He works at least four mornings a week from 6:00 am-11:00 am, with one break during his shift. Daniel works in the garden shop. His duties include watering flowers inside and outside, gathering and organizing the carts for customer use, moving and organizing plants, and other tasks as assigned. He enjoys talking to customers and helping them find items in the store, “which helps him also learn the store, where everything is”, stated his manager. Daniel states that he likes working in the garden shop and watering the plants, but the part of his job he dislikes most are the mandatory weekly trainings on safety and store policies, which he completes on the computer. His job coach, Emilia Lopez from Community Options, helps him with these trainings.

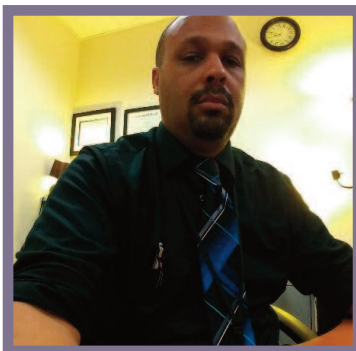
Daniel’s story began last year in the midst of the Covid 19 Pandemic. Daniel was employed but was not receiving enough hours or utilizing his many skills at his former employment. He decided to go to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) for assistance to find other employment that would fit his employment preferences. John Mann, DVR counselor, was assigned to assist Daniel. However, before Mr. Mann could finish the eligibility process, Daniel, with the assistance of his father, secured a job at Lowes. Mr. Mann jumped into action and expedited a plan to ensure employment supports were in place. He

contracted with an employment provider who was able to start supporting Daniel the very next day. Unfortunately, this company did not provide transportation. John worked with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) Supported Living Provider, Quality Life Services (QLS), to see if they could drop off and pick up Daniel at work until transportation was secured. John worked with Nancy Talamantes, DDW Case Manager, to find options for transportation. Both Mr. Mann and Nancy also contacted Deborah Lassiter, DDSD Community Inclusion Coordinator and requested her presence at a team meeting to discuss transportation needs and Community Integrated Employment (CIE) providers. At this vital team meeting, it was decided that QLS would continue to support Daniel with transportation, so that he would not lose his job. Daniel’s mother and father also assisted with transportation on the weekends. Between QLS and Daniel’s parents, transportation was provided for a month until Community Options Inc. was able to contract with DVR to provide both job coaching and transportation.

Without the support and creative thinking of all these organizations, Daniel may have lost his job. Contracting with an agency that could provide both supported employment and transportation was the best solution for Daniel. Working together to ensure maximum support for those we serve truly is a testimony to collaboration and team process.



Emilia Lopez/COI, Daniel Hein, Nancy Talamantes/CM



John Mann/DVR



Marshall Ellis, Daniel Hein, Adam Villegas

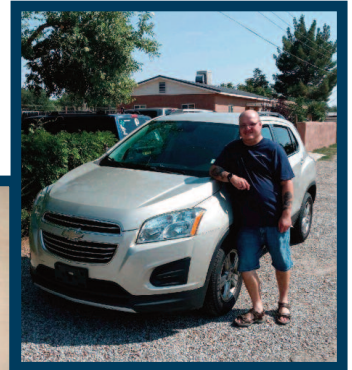
Meet Colt Sanders

Submitted by Angela Ortega and Traci Salgado LifeROOTS

Colt Sanders has been a valued member of LifeROOTS since February of 2005. He is currently an employee of Southern Glazier Wine and Spirits. He has been employed with the company for 13 years as of June 4th, and continues to maintain meaningful employment. Colt started as a box maker and has advanced throughout the years. Colt has obtained certification as a Forklift Operator and is also skilled using additional machinery such as the bailer and compactor.

Colt was laid off from his position due to the pandemic; SGWS demands dramatically decreased. Colt took this time to strengthen his bond with his two-year old daughter. As COVID restrictions decreased, business at SGWS slowly picked up, and Colt was called back to work. Colt has had no issues returning to work or complying with SGWS's implemented COVID safety precautions and protocols.

Job Coach Supervisor, Traci Salgado, has had the pleasure of supporting Colt for the last five years. As Colt's Job Coach, Traci has seen him grow out of his shell tremendously -- despite all of the obstacles that were thrown his way. Colt takes great pride in his job. He is deeply appreciated by all SGWS staff as "He is a hard worker, always shows up and gets the job done".



Colt Sanders



NDEAM & Employment First!

Submitted by Casey Stone-Romero, Community Inclusion Manager

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is celebrated every year during the month of October. The theme for 2021 is "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion". NDEAM is supported by the US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). ODEP offers great resources and a plan for how to celebrate NDEAM Every.Single.Day during the month of October. For ideas and resources visit [National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2021 | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#). New Mexico is an Employment First State, which means all working age adults should have access to valued employment options and that employment is the preferred service in New

Mexico over other day service types. Access to competitive integrated employment enables people to engage in community life, control personal resources and receive services in the community. DDSD also celebrates NDEAM by sharing Employment Success Stories. Please enjoy our features this year including a story about Daniel Hein who works at Lowe's Home Improvement and Colt Sanders who works at Southern Glazier Wine and Spirits.

For more information on employment services and supports available through DDSD please visit our web page [Supported Employment \(nmhealth.org\)](#).

Public Consulting Group to Work with DDSD Again

Submitted by Jennifer Rodriguez, Community Programs Bureau Chief

DDSD has asked Public Consulting Group (PCG) to provide assistance related to rates for two waivers to assure that the programs' rates of reimbursement allow agencies to be compliant with the upcoming state and local required minimum wage increases and required sick leave.

· Mi Via Waiver

○ Homemaker/Direct Support	99509	\$7.50-14.60/hour
○ Community Direct Support	H2021	\$1.88-15.48/15 min.
○ Employment Supports	T2019	\$2.15-6.93/15 min.
○ Customized Community Group Supports	S5100	\$1.36-8.82/15 min.
○ Respite Standard	T1005SD	\$3.38/15 min.

· Supports Waiver

○ Customized Community Supports Individual	AB= H2021	PD=H2021	\$28.72/hour
○ Customized Community Supports Group	AB= T2021	PD = S5100	\$10.72/hour
○ Employment	AB= T2019	PD = T2019	\$27.72/hour
○ Personal Care Services	AB= 99509	PD = 99509	\$14.60/hour
○ Respite	AB= T1005	PD=T1005SD	\$13.52/hour

*AB=Agency-Based

*PD=Participant Directed

DDSD is seeking recommendations for increased rates that consider the following:

- State minimum wage rate increases.
- City and County minimum wages, for all New Mexico jurisdictions.
- Any paid time off requirements such as The Bernalillo Employee Wellness Act for employers who have more than two employees and the Health Workplaces Act and applicable to Medicaid Programs.
- Factors that differentiate participant-directed from agency-based service delivery to consider whether different rate models are needed for each service delivery model.
- The Supports Waiver Assistive Technology Purchasing Agency Rate - Determine if the 15% administration rate available through the agency-based service model is appropriate and sustainable by answering the following questions:
 - Is 15% an equitable and sufficient fee for the administrative work the Fiscal Management Agent might cover on the self-directed side?
 - Is 15% the most appropriate way to pay a purchasing agent vs flat fee for the duties?

- The Mi Via Waiver Individual Budgetary Allotment (IBS): the maximum amount of funding for each participant determined by age and assessed Level of Care, will need to be increased according to rate increases.
- The SW \$10,000 budget and preserving equity across tracks in terms of services that can be purchased with the same budget, as well as analysis of extent of potential decrease in the amount of services able to be purchased if \$10,000 stays the same.

Providers can expect that PCG will:

1. Develop and distribute a survey to providers.
2. Conduct peer state research for up to 4 states.
3. Conduct up to 2 focus groups.
4. Conduct up to 2 virtual stakeholder meetings.

Know Your Rights Campaign on the National Stage!

Submitted by Jennifer Rodriguez, Community Programs Bureau Chief

New Editions, a Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) contractor, is developing a webinar about Creative Collaborations about how states have worked with stakeholders to develop Statewide Transition Plans and implementation of the 2014 CMS Final Rule Home and Community Based Services Settings Requirements. The planned webinar will be hosted by CMS with state presenters. New Editions identified States that have examples of successful stakeholder collaboration experiences that they are willing to share. New Mexico was sought out to participate, highlighting our Know Your Rights Campaign!

In October, DDSD and HSD are presenting at a state-only webinar highlighting information about our Know Your Rights Campaign. This includes information on how the campaign has progressed, has been accepted by, and benefited stakeholders to implement HCBS rule criteria.



CMS Final Rule and NM Statewide Transition Plan Updates

Submitted by Jennifer Rodriguez, Community Programs Bureau Chief

Next steps to ensure compliance:

1. Work with providers to ensure full compliance with applicable HCBS settings
2. Monitor
 - a. CMs/Consultants/CSCs-updated site visit tools
 - b. QMB updated survey tools
 - c. Office of Internal Audit reviews
 - d. DDSD site visits-updated tools
 - e. Community Inclusion monitoring (targeting facility-based group agency settings)
 - f. CQL Network Accreditation
 - g. Stakeholder engagement and TA sessions
 - h. Provider application revisions
 - i. Provider attestations

****We all play a role in ensuring and monitoring compliance!**

DATE	ACTIVITY
08/09/2021	Tribal Notification Sent
09/09/2021	Notice of Public Hearing sent; newspaper release
10/12/2021	Public Hearing
10/15/2021	Submission to CMS
March 2022	NM compliance with Final Rule Deadline

Mi Via Waiver Updates

Submitted by Aaron Maestas, Mi Via Program Manager

Mi Via In-Home Assessment (IHA) expectations

The State would like to remind you that In-Home Assessments (IHA) are a **requirement** for the Mi Via Waiver and are being resumed as they were prior to the pandemic. Goodwill Industries will continue to contact you by phone to schedule your IHA virtually. If you have any changes to your contact information, please notify your consultant to ensure you receive a call from Goodwill.

The State Public Health Emergency orders are being followed and all IHA's will be completed virtually through "Zoom".

Zoom is an online audio and web conferencing service that people use for video conference meetings. Although the IHA's are done using Zoom, we do ask that the participant be in their home for the assessment and be available on screen by computer or mobile phone screen.

Mi Via Therapy Requests

Therapies can be accessed under the Mi Via Waiver; however, as per our New Mexico Administrative Code, they must be habilitative in nature, not rehabilitative. Therapy services that are rehabilitative must be accessed through the state plan, Managed Care Organizations (MCO). If it is not clear that the service is habilitative in nature, the Third-Party Assessor (TPA) is required to request a denial from the primary payer source. MCOs will not give denial letters for something they are not providing habilitative care for. Consultants must work with Request for Information's from the TPA and should not request vendors to get denial letter from MCO's.

DD Waiver Updates

Submitted by Marie Velasco, DD Waiver Program Manager

Greetings Developmental Disabilities Waiver (DD Waiver) Community. The Community Programs Bureau (CPB) would like to provide updates on the DD Waiver. The DDS DD Waiver Program in collaboration with our partners at the Human Services Department (HSD) have been working on the renewal process with stakeholders and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for the past two and a half years. At this time, the DD Waiver application is still under review with CMS. The DD Waiver continues to work under the extension of the previously approved waiver.

For over two years our stakeholders, partners, and internal DDS staff have been working diligently on the DD Waiver Application, as well as updating and improving the DD Waiver Service Standards and Clinical Criteria. Once HSD and DDS receives approval from CMS please look out for the release of the new DD Waiver Service Standards and Clinical Criteria.

The DD Waiver Service Standards Draft was released for Public Feedback on 5-20-21 and Chapter 13 (Nursing) Draft was released for Public Feedback on 7-20-21. There were 165 comments/feedback provided and answers to Public Feedback was released on 8-19-21. DDS would like to give a special "Thank You" to all who provided feedback. These documents can be found on the DD Waiver Webpage: [Developmental Disabilities Waiver \(nmhealth.org\)](https://www.nmhealth.org). As a reminder the DD Waiver Service Standards are the foundation for quality services and health and safety of the participants in the DD Waiver. I would like to take this time to thank every single individual and committees (internal and external) who worked tirelessly on providing input, feedback, and suggested areas for improvement. Your review and input are much appreciated and valued. We at DDS CPB could not have done it without you.

Submitted by Lisa Storti, Constituent Supports Manager

During these times, it can be especially challenging to keep up with expenses, or make a move. It is important that individuals and their families know that there is some help available regarding housing, and how to register for these benefits - as there are often waitlists. The following are some resources for housing assistance:

Subsidized Apartments

HUD helps apartment owners offer reduced rent to low-income tenants. To apply, contact or visit the management office of each apartment building that interests you.

https://www.hud.gov/states/new_mexico/renting

Public Housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)

To apply for either type of help, visit your local Public Housing Agency (PHA).

- Questions? Email (HUD-PIHRC@tngusa.net) or call the Public and Indian Housing Information Resource Center toll-free at (800) 955-2232.

Some PHAs have long waiting lists, so you may want to apply at more than one PHA. Your PHA can also give you a list of locations at which your voucher can be used.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) -

<https://www.renthelpnm.org/>

- DFA received \$170 million of federal funding to administer rental/utility assistance.
- Eligible individuals/households are those that have been financially impacted by COVID and are at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).
- AMI is county-specific, and a link to check AMI is <https://housingnm.org/new-mexico-homeowner-assistance-fund>
- Up to 15 months of rent can be paid with this assistance.
- The assistance can also cover utilities.
- The application is online and can be submitted online.

NM Homeowner Assistance Fund -

<https://housingnm.org/new-mexico-homeowner-assistance-fund>

- The Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) administers this assistance.
- There is a temporary halt on applications right now, but the program should re-open, date unknown.
- Eligible individuals/households include those impacted by COVID and at or below 100% of AMI (link above).
- Up to \$10,000 in assistance per eligible individual/household; the original home loan cannot exceed \$417,000.

Submitted by Joseph Anaya, Human Resources & Labor Specialist

New Hires:

Rosa Lopez Madrid, Clinical Services Bureau Administrative Assistant, Albuquerque, started 6/12/21
Jaekisha Lewis, Social & Community Service Coordinator-O, Albuquerque, started 7/10/21
Jason Rodriguez, Training & Development Specialist-A, started 8/7/21 Las Cruces SWRO office
Jacob Kualapai, Dental Hygienist-A, started 8/7/21, Albuquerque Special Needs Dental Clinic
Frank Gaona, Social & Community Service Coordinator-Supervisor, Albuquerque, starts 9/4/21
Tiffany Morris, Social & Community Service Coordinator-O, Albuquerque, starts 9/18/21

Retirements:

Linda Ramos, Staff Manager, retiring 6/1/2021
Dave Brunson, Generalist, retiring 6/1/2021
Shirley Macias, CPB Administrative Assistant-A, retiring 8/1/2021
Cheryl Frazine, BBS Bureau Chief, retiring 8/31/21

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

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Marc.Kolman@state.nm.us.