Division Update for Individuals, Families, and Providers

March 24, 2022
NJMentalHealthCares

If you’re concerned about your mental health or the mental health of someone you love, **NJMentalHealthCares** can help. The **free helpline** offers telephone counseling, emotional support, information and assistance.

866-202-HELP (4357)
7 days per week, 8am - 8pm
Agenda

- COVID-19 Statistics
- April Webinar
- Employee Onboarding
- Residential and Day Program Screening Policy
- Support Coordinator Field Visits
- Resources
New Jersey COVID-19 Current Statistics*

*This update is as of Wednesday, March 23, 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of New Jersey</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>1,891,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>30,204</td>
</tr>
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For regular updates: [https://covid19.nj.gov/](https://covid19.nj.gov/)

Consider downloading COVID Alert NJ on your Apple or Android smartphone: [https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/app](https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/app)
DDD Specific COVID-19 Statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Developmental Centers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Licensed</td>
<td>Own Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>3,317</td>
<td>1,483</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*DDD-specific statistics are updated weekly. Community data includes individuals actively under DDD services in settings such as group homes, supervised apartments, out of state, and own-home settings.

Full detail, including data for individuals not under services for whom reporting is voluntary and provided for informational purposes only, can be found at [NJ Department of Human Services COVID-19 Information](#).
COVID-19 Update Webinar Schedule

• April Update Webinar:
  • Thursday April 28, 2022 – 10:30 am

• Register for the April Webinar
Employee Onboarding

Per the Office of Program Integrity and Accountability’s January 20th Updated Employee Onboarding Requirements

- On January 20th, the Employment Controls & Compliance Unit (ECCU) began providing expedited approval of emergency hiring requests for 90 days. This included Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Self-Directed Employees (SDEs).
- Fingerprinting and drug testing are mandatory for all DSPs and SDEs, including parent, spouse or guardian.
  - Temporary clearance from DHS ECCU is time-limited.
  - Within 90 days of employment the DSP/SDE must:
    - Complete criminal background checks via fingerprinting; and
    - Complete Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) checks.
  - Within 60 days of employment the DSP/SDE must:
    - Complete pre-employment drug testing.
Employee Onboarding

• SDEs, including family members, who received temporary emergency clearance from DHS ECCU to be hired and still need to complete onboarding requirements should contact their Fiscal Intermediary (PPL or Easterseals) as soon as possible.

• The Fiscal Intermediary will be able to advise the SDEs which of the onboarding requirements they are missing and provide instructions and email links for completing.

• Failure to complete the onboarding requirements may negatively impact SDE payments.

• Public Partnerships (PPL) Customer Service: 844-842-5891

• Easterseals Customer Service: 800-471-3068
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

• Providers are reminded that licensed community residences for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), certified day programs for individuals with IDD and support coordinators are required to comply with Executive Order No. 283 and Executive Order No. 290.

• This requires them to be at least two weeks past having completed their primary vaccine series and up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations (including booster).

• Employers may consider exemptions as applicable.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

- On March 24, the Division updated its Residential and Day Screening Policy.
- This policy incorporates two previously separate policy documents.
- As a result, the following stand alone policies are now rescinded:
  - Congregate Day Program COVID-19 Operating Requirements.
  - Guidance for Residential Providers on Visits with Family and Friends.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

- Day and/or residential providers render services in a variety of settings and may specialize in serving populations with specific medical and behavioral needs.
- The CDC has updated its Use and Care of Masks guidance.
- This new guidance has been adopted by the Division as described Residential and Day Screening Policy.
- Day and/or residential providers may elect to follow this policy, or require a more restrictive policy, based on the population being served in a specific location.
- In no circumstance shall an alternate policy be less restrictive than the parameters outlined in the Residential and Day Screening Policy.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

• If a day or residential provider elects to follow the new Residential and Day Screening Policy or a more restrictive one, the following must always be present:
  • A voluntary masking option if masking is not required;
  • Daily screening of staff and persons served;
  • All staff and persons served continue to be advised to stay up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations;
  • All persons are tested if they display symptoms; and
  • All staff who are not up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations shall be required to mask while indoors, including those who have been granted an exemption from workplace vaccination mandates.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

• Prior to adopting the new Residential and Day Screening Policy, providers should:
  • Conduct an analysis of the population served in their specific location(s) and determine that the new protocols do not pose an undue risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to the underlying health conditions of the persons served at the location.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

• The provider should regularly monitor the CDC COVID-19 Community Levels for the county in which the program is located.

• COVID-19 Community Levels are determined by assessing hospital beds in use, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

• Providers located in counties with a low (green) COVID-19 Community Level should:
  • Ensure that staff, visitors, and persons served wear a mask and socially distance based on their personal preference, informed by their personal level of risk; and
  • Require that all staff who are not up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations wear a mask while indoors, as well as visitors not up-to-date or elect not to share their COVID-19 vaccination status.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

- Providers located in counties with a moderate (yellow) COVID-19 Community Level should:
  - Ensure that staff, visitors, and persons served who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider about taking additional precautions, such as wearing surgical masks or respirators (i.e., N95) indoors and social distancing; and
  - Require that all staff who are not up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations wear a mask while indoors, as well as visitors not up-to-date or elect not to share their COVID-19 vaccination status.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

- Providers located in counties with a high (orange) COVID-19 Community Level should:
  - Ensure that all staff/visitors wear a mask indoors and socially distance from persons served based upon their care needs;
  - Require that all persons served, regardless of vaccination status and based on their ability, wear a mask indoors and socially distance from others. Masking and social distancing in the person’s residence would be based on their personal preference and guidance from their healthcare professional; and
  - Ensure that staff, visitors, and persons served who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe illness wear a mask that provides them with the greatest protection, as recommended by their healthcare professional. Please note that masking for persons served would be based on their ability.
Residential and Day Program Screening Policy

- Persons served/guardian(s) should be advised to speak with their healthcare professional to determine recommendations in times of Low, Medium and High COVID-19 Community Levels on:
  - Social distancing; and
  - What type of mask will offer the person the greatest level of protection.

- Providers should notify all persons served of changes to their masking/social distancing policy at least five business days before the change goes into effect.
Support Coordinator Field Visits

- On March 24, the Division updated Support Coordinator Field Visits.
- The updates to the policy are not substantive, and were made to better align with Residential and Day Screening Policy.
Important Resources

- **Disability Rights New Jersey**
  - 1-800-922-7233 (toll-free in New Jersey only)

- **Ombudsman for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and their Families**
  - 1-609-984-7764

- **New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities**
  - 1-800-792-8858
Important Resources

• For assistance during this time:
  • For issues, call the Division Community Services office for your county or 1 (800) 832-9173.
  • For routine questions: DDD.FeeForService@dhs.nj.gov
  • For COVID-related questions: DDD.COVID-19@dhs.nj.gov
  • To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation: call 1 (800) 832-9173, then press 1.
Highlighted Resources

• For individuals, families and caregivers
  • Boggs Center COVID-19 Information and Resources
  • COVID-19 Materials for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Care Providers

• For individuals:
  • NJ Self-Advocacy Project’s Stay Healthy at Home Webinar Series

• For Direct Support Professionals
  • National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) COVID-19 Toolkit for DSPs
  • CDC Guidance for Direct Service Providers