

Date: 6/4/2020

DDSD COVID-19 Response Memo #19

From: Jason Cornwell, Acting DOH Deputy Secretary  
To: All DDSD Waiver Providers and Stakeholders:



As we grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to continue to communicate the most recent response plans that impact recipients of the DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, and Medically Fragile Waiver and Stakeholders:

1. DDSD COVID-19 testing for individuals receiving DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, and SGF services through June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020:

	Total Tests	Positive Tests	COVID 19 Related Deaths
DD Waiver	232	16	5
Mi Via Waiver	1	1	0
State General Fund	4	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>

2. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and Department of Health Secretary Kathy Kunkel announced that the Public Health Emergency Order has been amended effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Attached is the amended Public Health Emergency Order signed by NMDOH Secretary Kunkel dated June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.
3. DDSD is encouraged by the Governor and Department of Health Secretary's Phase I re-opening of New Mexico. However, it needs to be made clear that the amended Public Health Emergency Order does not impact or change the directives and guidelines issued by DDSD. All directives issued by DDSD remain in effect until further notice, at the very minimum, all directives remain in effect through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. DDSD is continuously monitoring and evaluating the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to individuals with developmental disabilities, the impact on their lives, and impact on the delivery of services. To understand what services will look like moving forward living and delivering services in a COVID world, DDSD is engaging multiple stakeholders to start "re-opening" discussions.
  - Those with intellectual and developmental disabilities are among the most vulnerable individuals. The issues around re-opening services are complex and sensitive. DDSD is working to address re-opening in a way that respects individual's rights and choices and protects health and safety.
  - DDSD has established an internal workgroup to organize and manage the re-opening of services and to provide guidance to providers and individuals. This workgroup is co-led by Jennifer Rodriguez, Chief, Community Programs Bureau, and Marc Kolman, Deputy

Director. The committee is meeting with constituents in a two-pronged approach; (1) a listening session will be held Friday June 5<sup>th</sup> with Advocacy Partners representing the multiple advocacy and professional groups, and (2) program-specific meetings are being held to address more detailed issues. These program-specific areas include, Residential, Employment and Day Programs, Therapies (BSC/PT/OT/SLP), Nutrition/Nursing, Case Management/Consultants, Training, and the Family Infant Toddler Program.

4. DDSD issued COVID-19 Response Memo #4 on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 which included the restriction of home access for all visitors including non-medical health care providers, vendors, case managers, consultants, clinicians, therapists, behavior support consultants, families, friends, and guardians. These restrictions remain unchanged and are still effective. All agencies are expected to adhere to this directive. DDSD fully recognizes the hardship this may place on individuals, family, friends, and overall support system for each person. However, continuing to Stay Home and limit all visits remains one of the most effective strategies to reduce and/or stop the spread of COVID-19. If a guardian or family member decides to “pick-up” or remove an individual from services, this has the potential to increase COVID-19 exposure to the individual and the housemate(s) of that individual. Provider agencies should inform guardians and family members that if they decide to remove someone from services (for any length of time) the individual will be required to remain with that individual or family member for a period of 10-14 days and not be able to return to the service Provider agency until the individual has been tested and receives a negative COVID-19 test result.
5. New Mexico Department of Health Rapid Response Team: The Department of Health has implemented a “Rapid Response Team” for all places of employment who have an employee that tests positive for COVID-19. For the purposes of services administered by DDSD, places of employment include any service delivery site including homes where an employee or agency sub-contractor tests positive for COVID-19. If an agency has an employee or sub-contractor test positive for COVID-19, the agency will receive the following information initiating the DOH Rapid Response Team process.
  - Email from DDSD informing the agency Director that an employee or agency sub-contractor has tested positive for COVID-19.
  - The agency will receive a letter via email (please see attached example) from DDSD providing instruction to the agency on how to respond to the COVID-19 positive test for the employee or sub-contractor. The letter will contain the following instructions:
    - That all employees have been tested for COVID-19 and that all employees will be re-tested in 7-10 days, if warranted by NMDOH. A list of employees’ first name, last name, and date of birth will be provided.
    - The agency has disinfected the work site and/or facility and/or home in accordance with the enclosed *COVID-19 Safe Practices for Individuals and Employers* handbook, and any additional OSHA or Centers for Disease Controls standards applicable to your particular industry prior to the recommencing of business activities; and
    - That an employee safety plan is in place to ensure employees are adequately protected from COVID-19 upon return to the workplace/home, including provisions for adequate personal protective equipment if necessary. The enclosed *COVID-19 Safe Practices for Individuals and Employers* handbook provides industry specific guidance to adhere to.

- The agency will also receive a second letter via email (please see attached example) titled *“Checklist for Business/Facility Compliance in Response to one or more COVID-19 Positive Employee(s) in the Workplace.”* The agency will need to complete this form verifying compliance and send it back via email to DOH and DDS (the letter will contain the specific email address for the person at DOH who must receive the form).
  - The agency will also receive a resource document via email (please see attached) titled *“All Together New Mexico COVID-Safe Practices for Individuals and Employers.”*
  - A follow up phone call will be made to agency from DDS (Regional Office) to verify receipt and completion of the process.
6. Internet services in Residential Settings: Although not always directly required by program rules, providing access to the internet via hard wire or WIFI is a cost of doing business that supports the person’s health and safety and enhances knowledge, performance and safety of Direct Support Personnel (DSP). These factors ultimately benefit the provider as well as the individual. Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020; DDS is requiring that Residential Providers (Supported Living, Intensive Medical Living, and Family Living) assure that all homes have internet capability. All Residential Providers must immediately initiate change to any internal practices or internal policies that cause barriers to internet access for the person in services and their support staff; changes must be completed no later than July 1, 2020. The DD Waiver Service Standards will list internet as a basic utility with the next issue of the Service Standards.
7. Resource Website: <https://nmhealth.org/about/dds/diro/ddcv/>
8. Should I be Tested? <https://cv.nmhealth.org/should-i-get-tested/>
9. Test Portal: <https://cvresults.nmhealth.org/>
10. HSD Portal Page: <https://nmmedicaid.portal.conduent.com/static/covid.htm>
11. New Mexico Crisis Line 855-NMCRISIS **1-855-662-7474**.
12. New Mexico Healthcare Worker and First Responder Support Line **1-855-507-5509**



Lastly, should stakeholders have specific questions, concerns, and/or scenarios, please contact your Regional Director. The COVID 19 situation is fluid and will evolve; additional guidance will be provided accordingly.