


Date: December 22, 2021

To: All DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, Supports Waiver, State General Fund Agencies and Stakeholders

From: Jason Cornwell, Director 
Developmental Disabilities Supports Division

Subject: Resumption of In Person Monitoring Visits and In Person Training delayed until February 1, 2022

DDSD continues to monitor the impact COVID-19 is having on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Due to the continued increase in cases related to the Delta and Omicron variants and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, DDSD has made the decision to delay the effective date of resuming all in person monitoring visits and DDSD core/classroom in person trainings to February 1, 2022. DDSD will continue to assess the situation on a month-to-month basis. As a reminder, any Tribal orders issued supersede requirements in this memo.

Please note, during the month of January 2022, DDSD will continue to allow in person monitoring visits and/or remote monitoring visits at the preference of the individual and/or guardian. The months of December and now January 2022, will serve as “transition” months to return to exclusively in person monitoring visits with a target date of February 1, 2022 (date subject to change). If the individual and/or guardian elect to continue with remote monitoring visit(s) during the month of January 2022, an exception approval from DDSD is not necessary or required.

Preparing and Planning for the Return to In Person Monitoring Visits:

1. All agencies must have a COVID-19 Safe Practice Plan that includes:
 - Communication.
 - Addressing a COVID-19 outbreak.
 - Screening routine for employees and sub-contractors.
 - Screening procedures for all visitors to office prior to in-person meetings.
 - COVID-19 safe training for employees and sub-contractors.
 - Accessing Personal Protective Equipment for employees and sub-contractors.
 - Alternate plan to complete in person visits when employees and sub-contractors are unable to conduct in-person visits when required.
 - Support for telehealth and teleconferencing based on individual health and safety concerns.
2. Guidance for health care workers applies to Case Managers, Consultants, Community Support Coordinators, Agency Service Coordinators and Supervisors including wearing masks throughout the entirety of the in-person visit and should be included in the agency’s COVID-19 Safe Practices Plan.
3. Frequency and location of in-person visits must follow applicable Waiver Service Standards. In DD Waiver, when visits during Customized Community Supports and Community Integrated

Employment services are provided at home or virtually, count the in-home visit during those hours as a day services visit.

4. Agency COVID-19 Safe Practices Plan must be available to DDS immediately upon request.

In Person Safeguards

1. In person visits should not include any physical contact and may take a variety of forms depending on risk level and need.
2. Visits must include wearing masks, covering the nose and mouth, throughout the entirety of the visit, and following screening protocol of host home agency or family. If the individual does not have a screening protocol, the screening routine defaults to that of the visiting agency.
3. Social distancing and number of people present must be considered for individual safety at in person meetings. In person meetings must include wearing of masks throughout the entirety of the meeting.

Waiver Participant Choice

1. Safety of in person visits must be continually assessed and can change from day to day, week to week and should include the preference of the waiver recipient and their family.
2. Effective February 1, 2022, if a waiver participant and/or their guardian requests that a required in person visit be conducted telephonically, via telehealth or in a setting other than the setting required, an exception to standards may be submitted to the DDS Regional Office and will be reviewed within 10 business days. Exceptions requests should be based on how an in-person visit might jeopardize a waiver participant's health and safety, not the agency or staff person's need.

IDTs in person or remote: IDTs can continue to be held in person or remotely based on the preference of the guardian and/or individual. If the IDT is held in person at a Congregate Care Facility (defined as any facility based Day or Group Employment service offered within any of the DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, Supports Waiver, or State General Funded programs) or Community Home (defined as DD Waiver Supported Living, Intensive Medical Living Services, and State General Funded residential homes), IDT members attending meetings in person in these locations must be fully vaccinated unless they have received an exemption from their employer and submit to weekly COVID-19 testing with negative tests results.

DDS Required Core/Classroom Training:

The DDS Training Unit is delaying the effective date of in person training from January 1, 2022, to February 1, 2022. Certified agency trainers may conduct DDS core/classroom trainings in-person effective February 1, 2022. We want to encourage remote on-line trainings/livestreaming trainings when possible. This announcement also rescinds all other memos regarding in-person or face-to-face trainings of DDS Core courses, and the Crisis Prevention and Intervention Systems guidance issued March 15, 2021. Following COVID-19 Safe Practice Plan Individual Specific Training can resume. Please follow the COVID-19 related guidance in this memo for all DDS core/classroom trainings.

COVID-19 Vaccinations:

Pursuant to the most recent Public Health Order issued December 2, 2021, by Acting Department of Health Secretary, Dr. David Scrase, *"All hospital workers, congregate care facility workers, and employees of the Office of the Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they qualify for an exemption. Further, all such individuals are required to*

receive a booster dose of the vaccine, if eligible according to the FDA, unless they qualify for an exemption. If an individual does not qualify for an exemption, the individual shall:

- a. Complete their primary series of vaccination by October 6, 2021, and, if eligible, receive a booster dose no later than January 17, 2022, or within four weeks of becoming eligible; and
- b. Provide proof of vaccination to the appropriate person or supervisor:
 - i. Hospital workers and congregate care facility workers shall provide proof of vaccination or exemption to their respective supervisors....”

According to the PHO, Congregate Care Facility, “means nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult day cares, hospice facilities, State correctional facilities, juvenile justice facilities, residential treatment centers, the New Mexico Veteran’s Home, and community homes.” Congregate care facility worker, “means any paid or unpaid individuals working in a congregate care facility. This includes workers providing services who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or residents in a congregate care facility. A congregate care facility worker includes contractors who perform services on-site at the congregate care facility.”

DDSD is requiring that any Case Manager, Consultant, Community Support Coordinator, Agency Service Coordinator, and/or Supervisor must be fully vaccinated as defined by the December 2, 2021, PHO, to render in person face to face monitoring visits in any setting for any Waiver or State General Funded service unless an exemption has been granted by the employer.

Mobile Vaccine Clinics:

Churches, Community Organizations to include Waiver Providers and agencies, neighborhood groups, and others can sign up for Mobile Vaccine Clinics.

- To request a mobile vaccine clinic, go to GetVaxNM.com
- To request promotional support for your event, go to BetterTogetherNM.com

Public Health Orders:

Each agency is expected to monitor compliance with the COVID-19 indoor mask mandate and vaccine mandate as outlined in the Public Health Orders to include weekly monitoring of COVID-19 testing for those employees and/or sub-contractors who have been granted an exemption by their employer. Any entity who violates the Public Health Order, is subject to civil administrative penalties available at law.

If you have not done so already, DDSD strongly encourages everyone to register to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, for those who are eligible now to receive the COVID-19 vaccine booster shot, DDSD encourages everyone eligible to register to receive your booster. Together we can limit the opportunities for the virus to spread and by doing so we have a better chance of keeping each other safe.


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

- DD Waiver Program Manager, Marie Velasco (marie.velasco@state.nm.us)
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Additional Resources:

- NM DOH COVID-19 Site: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
- DDS COVID-19 Site: <https://nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/>
- NM DOH COVID-19 Safe Practices: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/covid-safe-practices/>
- Report a Public Health Order Violation: <https://www.newmexico.gov/2020/03/25/how-to-report-non-compliance-within-a-business-a-violation-of-the-mass-gatherings-ban-or-other-violations-of-the-public-order/>
- NM DOH COVID-19 Vaccine General Information: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/covid-vaccine/>
- NM DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Site: <https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org/>
- New Mexico Notify [NM Notify | Help New Mexico Stop The Spread](#)
- Vault COVID-19 Testing Resource learn.vaulthealth.com/nm/.
- COVID-19 testing at Curative sites, which can be located through the NMDOH website: <https://findatestnm.org/>
- New Mexico Crisis and Access Line | www.nmcrisisline.com
- Crisis and Access Line | 1-855-NMCRISIS | 1-855-662-7474
- Peer-to-Peer Warmline | 1-855-4NM-7100 | 1-855-466-7100
- Healthcare Worker and First Responder Support Line | 1-855-507-5509


 Do you want to pre-register for your COVID-19 Vaccine?
 Visit cvvaccine.nmhealth.org to register today.