


Date: January 21, 2022

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 DDSD Core Classroom Trainings delayed until March 1, 2022

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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 March 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 February 2022, DDSD will continue to allow in person monitoring visits and/or remote monitoring visits at the preference of the individual and/or guardian.** If the individual and/or guardian elect to continue with remote monitoring visit(s) during the month of February 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 March 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 and boosted 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 DDS Core Classroom in person training to March 1, 2022. Certified agency trainers may conduct DDS Core Classroom trainings in-person effective March 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 Classroom courses.

#### **COVID-19 Vaccinations:**

The New Mexico Department of Health issued a Health Alert Network Notice on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, extending the deadline for enforcement of the booster vaccine mandate for congregate care facility and hospital workers to **February 4, 2022**. (The booster deadline originally set by Executive Order 2021-066 was January 17, 2022.)

DDS is requiring that any Case Manager, Consultant, Community Support Coordinator, Agency Service Coordinator, and/or Supervisor must be fully vaccinated and boosted as defined by the Public Health Orders 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.

### **Free At Home COVID-19 Testing Kits:**

Please use the following link to order free at home COVID-19 testing kits <https://www.covidtests.gov/>. Every home in the United States is eligible to order four (4) free at-home COVID-19 tests. The tests are completely free. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days.

### **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](http://GetVaxNM.com)
- To request promotional support for your event, go to [BetterTogetherNM.com](http://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](mailto:marie.velasco@state.nm.us))
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- Supports Waiver Program Manager, Jennifer Roth ([jennifer.roth@state.nm.us](mailto:jennifer.roth@state.nm.us))
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- Regional Office Bureau Chief, Angie Brooks ([angie.brooks@state.nm.us](mailto:angie.brooks@state.nm.us))
- Deputy Director, Scott Doan ([scott.doan@state.nm.us](mailto:scott.doan@state.nm.us))

### **Additional Resources:**

- NM DOH COVID-19 Site: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
- DDSD 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/](https://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](http://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
- Link to free at home testing kits <https://www.covidtests.gov/>



Do you want to pre-register for your COVID-19 Vaccine?

Visit **[cvvaccine.nmhealth.org](https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org)** to register today.