

April 8, 2020

To my fellow New Mexicans:

Almost a year ago, New Mexico embarked on a federally mandated Rate Study to examine whether the reimbursements rates currently paid to providers equaled the cost of providing those services for individuals receiving support on either the DD, Mi Via, and Medically Fragile Waivers. Rate studies are required every five years and was performed by the Public Consulting Group. It can be found in its entirety here:

<https://nmhealth.org/publication/view/report/5025/>

The findings were stark. The report showed that each waiver would need a significant investment to bring reimbursements levels equivalent to the actual cost of providing those same services **today**. The percentage values of the required investment is listed below. Page 36:

Developmental Disabilities	19%
Medically Fragile Waiver	37%
Mi Via	17%

The Second Session of the 54th Legislature yielded 5.9 million to apply to these waivers. While it was not the total amount requested, DDSD will continue to advocate for additional appropriations over the next four years to reach the total amount recommended. This incremental approach is a fiscally prudent and responsible method to invest in these programs while keeping an eye on the state's total financial picture. Especially considering recent events and the absolute havoc COVID-19 has wrought across the globe, the Legislative and Executive branches appear prescient. But the question remains, **where do we apply the funds we have to do the most good?**

At the onset of the rate study process, a work group was formed that represented many of the various stakeholders who touch and support our system. After the session concluded, that work group was reconvened and each member was afforded the opportunity to voice their concern and make concrete recommendations as to where this money should be allocated. The consensus was clear- improving pay, working conditions, and retention strategies for the Direct Support Professional was paramount.

The challenges are apparent. Turnover and vacancy rates are unacceptable. Pay is too low and not competitive with other markets. Choosing to serve individuals with disabilities and their families should not consign someone to a life of struggle.

Our leadership recognizes this important opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of our most vulnerable, and the lives of the people who spend the most face-to-face time with the individuals we are sworn to support. To that end, we have increased every service in the Medically Fragile Waiver and attempted to increase rates for every DD Waiver service provided by Direct Support Professionals to include an increase for Case Managers. **It is the intent and expectation that all providers receiving these new funds use them to improve the compensation package of DSPs. To be clearer, the Division expects that DSPs will benefit from this increase, and we fully expect to see that the total compensation of DSPs across our state will rise due to this investment.**

We know there are more priorities still: Family Living, Therapies and Behavioral Support Consultation, In Home Living and Consultant Services were unable to be increased. Next session promises to be more difficult, but it is imperative that we remain united in our advocacy if we are to successfully obtain future monies to allocate additional increases. The anticipated implementation date for the rate increases is October 1st, 2020 and the full list of impacted services are located post signature.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason Cornwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" and last name "Cornwell" clearly legible.

Jason Cornwell
Acting Cabinet Deputy Secretary
New Mexico Department of Health

Developmental Disabilities Waiver

SERVICE	RECOMMENDED RATE	CURRENT RATE
Case Management (On-going) DD	\$ 314.35	\$ 254.91
Respite (Group)	\$ 3.28	\$ 2.67
Nutritional Counseling	\$ 21.10	\$ 12.96
CCS - Group (Cat 1)	\$ 2.68	\$ 2.68
CCS - Group (Cat 2)	\$ 5.21	\$ 4.02
CCS - Group (Small Group)	\$ 5.73	\$ 4.00
CIE Group (Cat 1)	\$ 2.22	\$ 1.99
CIE - Group (Cat 2)	\$ 3.69	\$ 3.01
CIE - Self Employment	\$ 15.30	\$ 6.78
CIE - Job Aide	\$ 34.44	\$ 18.03
CIE - Intensive	\$ 56.42	\$ 42.64
Crisis Supports (Alternative Resid)	\$ 465.49	\$ 352.07
Crisis Supports (Individual's Resid)	\$ 9.70	\$ 9.23
Supported Living Cat. 1 (Basic)	\$ 210.35	\$ 195.52
Supported Living Cat. 2 (Moderate)	\$ 258.69	\$ 232.76
Supported Living Cat. 3 (Extensive)	\$ 339.09	\$ 293.52
Supported Living Cat. 4 (Extraordinary)	\$ 435.81	\$ 392.25
Intensive Medical Living Services	\$ 468.00	\$ 429.18
Preliminary Risk Screening	\$ 26.94	\$ 20.32

Medically Fragile Waiver

SERVICE	RECOMMENDED RATE	CURRENT RATE
Case Management Assessment (MF)	\$ 100.72	\$ 55.06
Case Management On-Going (MF)	\$ 581.94	\$ 475.00
Home Health Aide (MF)	\$ 30.46	\$ 16.32
Home Health Aide (Respite) (MF)	\$ 30.46	\$ 16.32
Nutritional Counseling (MF)	\$ 84.40	\$ 42.83
Speech Therapy	\$ 2.22	\$ 22.90
Private Duty Nursing—RN Respite	\$ 24.36	\$ 19.23
Private Duty Nursing—RN	\$ 24.36	\$ 19.23
Private Duty Nursing—LPN Respite	\$ 16.59	\$ 13.92
Private Duty Nursing—LPN	\$ 16.59	\$ 13.92
Physical Therapy	\$ 25.75	\$ 22.90
Occupational Therapy	\$ 25.75	\$ 22.90
Out of Home Respite (MF)	\$ 468.00	\$ 315.07
Behavior Support Consultation – Clinic Based	\$ 13.08	\$ 11.63
Behavior Support Consultation	\$ 22.06	\$ 19.62