

LETTER TO FAMILIES



April 29, 2022

Dear DDDS Families and Service Recipients,

As is typical in Delaware, the spring weather ebbs and flows between warm sunny days and cool rainy days. That ebb and flow is similar to where we are with COVID-19 right now too. While March was a month of low case rates and stability, April hasn't followed that same course. My hope is May will get us back on track with case rates and continued efforts to move forward with living with COVID-19 amongst us.

COVID-19 Cases

As the state has seen an increase in new cases, the same is true for our DDDS network. Since March 31<sup>st</sup>, we have had 34 Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) test positive, bringing the total cases to 1151. There have been 21 additional cases among service recipients supported in residential habilitation as well, bringing the total to 549. The most recent mini-surge has been within the past two weeks primarily.

Operational Updates

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and anyone interacting in-person with service recipients will continue to be required to wear masks throughout the month of May. We will continue to monitor the spread of the virus in our network and modify masking as appropriate.

The mandate for masking on public transportation was lifted effective April 19<sup>th</sup>, so there is no longer a requirement for riders of Paratransit or DART fixed route busses to be masked. The Centers for Disease Control continues to encourage mask wearing on public transportation.

Testing and Vaccination Updates

The use of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) amongst our providers continues to be one of the tools used to combat the spread of the virus in our network. Having access to test results in 15 minutes has helped ensure operations can continue safely as we make our way through the pandemic.

Effective May 1<sup>st</sup>, Curative sites will begin billing insurance for all COVID-19 tests administered. This is a big change from the previous two years, so be sure to bring your insurance card with you when accessing a Curative site. You can visit [www.curative.com](http://www.curative.com) to find a site and schedule an appointment. The State also provides a listing of additional testing options, including free at-home test kits, at

[de.gov/gettested](https://de.gov/gettested). Note that some State testing locations have closed, so be sure to check that link for the most up-to-date list.

Vaccines and booster doses continue to be readily available throughout the state. Find information and locations at [de.gov/getmyvaccine](https://de.gov/getmyvaccine).

*Commemorating Where We've Been and Looking Towards the Future*

As we reflect on these unprecedented times and the collective experience the pandemic forced on us while looking towards the future, DDDS invites you to log onto our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Delawaredds](https://www.facebook.com/Delawaredds) on May 17th at 10:30am to watch a livestream Tree Dedication Ceremony to honor the dedication of our provider network, the strength and resiliency of service recipients and their families and the commitment of DDDS employees, while remembering those lives lost during the pandemic. We will be dedicating a magnolia tree on the campus of the Stockley Center to commemorate the last two plus years and celebrate the future growth and opportunity that lays before us. We hope you'll consider joining the livestream or watching it afterwards.

Here's hoping for sunnier, warmer days before us, and a move towards COVID-19 not dictating our lives or limiting services. We've come so far throughout the pandemic, and I thank you for your on-going flexibility and understanding.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP  
Director of Community Services