



**DELAWARE HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DIVISION OF
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES**

COMMUNITY SERVICES

June 16, 2020

Dear DDDS Families,

I hope everyone is doing well and getting into a routine with the now-normal of living in COVID-19 times. Thanks to those families who were able to participate in the Family Town Hall on June 6th. The video can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/DDDSFamilyTownHallJune2020>. The transcript is also available on our DDDS Facebook page.

I wanted to touch base about the State's Phase Two re-opening and how it relates to DDDS' services. While today marks Delaware's Phase Two start, the order remains in effect for vulnerable populations to shelter in place. Because of that, day services where social distancing is not possible will remain suspended. There is a lot of energy being put into coming up with creative plans to get as many people back to their programs as safely as possible. DDDS and the providers continue to work together to determine how to best safely support service recipients while maintaining social distancing, facemask wearing and extreme hygiene and sanitization practices.

For those of you with loved ones living in provider managed residential settings, we are still limiting visitor access as we did in Phase One but allowing them to occur where they can be done safely. Since most family visits did not occur until the weekend of June 6th and 7th, I want to be able to observe what happens over the ensuing 14-day period during which COVID-19 symptoms are typically seen for infected individuals. This will enable us to see whether the visits resulted in higher COVID-19 positive cases among our DDDS service recipients. If things continue to go well, I plan to allow visits in other settings than outdoors, if everyone practices social distancing and wears facemasks. So please hang tight with me, as we wait for the results and hopefully next week I'll be able to share a move into the next phase of visitor access.

If you or your loved one is interested in getting tested for COVID-19, I encourage you to visit <https://delaware.curativeinc.com> to find one of the free testing locations all over the state. These test sites do not require a physician's order and use a self-administered cheek swab test, so it's relatively painless. Because COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future, I think we will all get to a time when we have been tested multiple times. A lot of research has been conducted to demonstrate that many people are totally asymptomatic and unknowingly spread the virus while they are in the contagious period, so getting tested makes sense.

Please be sure to practice social distancing when out in public. Continue to wear your facemask and encourage your loved one to as well. Wash your hands often with soap and water, and if that is not available use hand sanitizer. We are all in this together and will get through it together.

Be well,

Handwritten signature of Cory Ellen Nourie in black ink.

Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP
Director of Community Services