



## DDDS Family COVID-19 Virtual Update Questions & Answers from April 18, 2020

The full video is available at

[https://ddds.zoom.us/rec/share/vc1HNrPQrn1LbInvz3OAVZMTO5a\\_eaa82yceq6cMxU3E3yU0tEr73Yls5c\\_kjvh3k?startTime=1587217650000](https://ddds.zoom.us/rec/share/vc1HNrPQrn1LbInvz3OAVZMTO5a_eaa82yceq6cMxU3E3yU0tEr73Yls5c_kjvh3k?startTime=1587217650000)

### **Questions about Benefits:**

Relief benefits through the CARES Act will not impact the person's Medicaid eligibility and there will be no redetermination of eligibility for Medicaid during the National Emergency. This means that relief such as the stimulus check, will not impact program eligibility. The Division of Developmental Disabilities follows the guidance administered by the Division of Medicaid in accordance with federal regulations and state policies.

<https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dmma/>

DDDS Representatives can not provide direct Benefits Counseling or Financial Planning advice to Individuals and Families- these are services, but rather can help you identify community resources to make an informed choice about the decisions you make that impact your life. These Services are available through the Pathways to Employment Program to those who are eligible. The Delaware Aging and Disability Resource Center has a guide that can help you identify professional resources to help answer complicated questions regarding benefits and financial planning.

**Find a Benefits Counselor and other resources:** <http://www.delawareadrc.com/>

**Learn about Impact Payments:** <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments>

**Learn about Social Security Administration:** <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>

**Action Needed?** [https://blog.ssa.gov/act-now-go-to-irs-gov-a-message-from-social-security-commissioner-andrew-saul/?utm\\_source=social&utm\\_medium=facebook&utm\\_campaign=smt-covid-20&utm\\_content=education%20](https://blog.ssa.gov/act-now-go-to-irs-gov-a-message-from-social-security-commissioner-andrew-saul/?utm_source=social&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=smt-covid-20&utm_content=education%20)

**Stand by Me is free to all Delawareans** <https://standbymede.org/>

**“My child started earning SSI this year, but I never received a tax form for him from last year. Will he be able to get any money from the stimulus package?”**

Social Security beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients who do not file tax returns will start receiving their automatic Economic Impact Payments directly from the Treasury Department soon. This information was released April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 by the SSA.

[https://blog.ssa.gov/act-now-go-to-irs-gov-a-message-from-social-security-commissioner-andrew-saul/?utm\\_source=social&utm\\_medium=facebook&utm\\_campaign=smt-covid-20&utm\\_content=education%20](https://blog.ssa.gov/act-now-go-to-irs-gov-a-message-from-social-security-commissioner-andrew-saul/?utm_source=social&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=smt-covid-20&utm_content=education%20)

(Following the Social Security Administration @socialsecurity on Facebook is another source for real time information and updates.)

**“If the stimulus payment put someone over the \$2000 asset limit, does it need to be spent immediately or can it be saved for this lengthy period of not being employed?”**

Recovery payments received through the CARES Act will not be counted as a resource towards eligibility-based programs such as Medicaid for up to 12 months following receipt. Medicaid eligibility will not be redetermined or suspended during the National Emergency.

**“My son is 20 and lives in a group home. Will he get a stimulus check? DDDS receives his social security payments, he only gets an allowance. So how does this work with any stimulus payment he may be receiving?”**

Social Security beneficiaries and Supplemental Security Income recipients who do not file tax returns will start receiving their automatic Economic Impact Payments directly from the Treasury Department soon. This information was released April 20th, 2020 by the SSA. You may follow up with the Support Coordinator to request more information specific to your loved ones stimulus benefit.

[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**“I signed up for unemployment. Was that a good choice? I work about 35 hours part time? I am wondering when they will open up where I work and if I will have a job?”**

Signing up for unemployment benefits through the CARES Act will not affect Medicaid eligibility. Speaking with your Employer or with your Supported Employment Provider would be a good place to start so you can talk through concerns about your employment status.

**“Would our son get any extra stimulus benefit since he lives at home and goes to a day program?”**

No, Stimulus benefits were not determined by setting.

<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments>

### ***Questions about Residential Habilitation/group homes:***

**“How is group home placement working in the coronavirus era?”**

**“How will the decision be made as to when DDDS will allow residential move ins to resume again? For example, will it follow when the Governor removes the State of Emergency, or when the State re-opens the schools, etc.?”**

Right now, DDDS has suspended residential placements due to COVID-19, unless there is an emergency crisis. As the State of Emergency and social distancing requirements are lifted, we will begin the process of residential move-ins again.

**“Are group home staff members wiping down everything that is being brought into the homes, including groceries and medication bottles?”**

Providers are following the CDC guidelines for hand hygiene and sanitizing high contact surfaces regularly. The CDC does not currently recommend washing groceries.

<https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/newsletter/food-safety-and-Coronavirus.html>

**“I am a nurse and am aware that quick testing is available for people who have major underlying conditions. Is the information given to the provider to make them aware that stat results are needed?”**

The Division of Public Health is working with the DDDS to facilitate testing of anyone with a known exposure who has symptoms. The test results are coming back quicker and quicker as time goes on.

**“This is really informative! Cory had mentioned ‘retention payments’ regarding services. What does this mean?”**

Retention payments are a way for providers who have had to suspend services (like our Day Habilitation programs) to receive payments from Medicaid to continue to pay their bills during COVID-19. Each provider is meeting individually with the Division to talk about their needs. Additionally, retention payments can be used to hold a person’s spot in a residential program if they are hospitalized or at home with family because of COVID-19.

**“For provider managed homes/apartments where several DSPs provide direct personal care (bathing, dressing, etc) do the DSPs (not in quarantine) have needed PPE? Is there enough PPE supply for all provider managed residence DSPs through Gov Carney's slow re-open of the state?”**

All providers have been preparing for COVID-19 and that means they have secured PPE for providing direct care to those who have tested positive for COVID (or are pending test results). There has been an increased awareness and focus on hand hygiene and sanitizing of common areas/high touch surfaces due to COVID-19. DSPs have access to gloves routinely. Some DSPs are wearing fabric masks, but we caution them to remember that fabric masks do not stop the spread of the virus. The Division has reminded providers that no one should do anything with a fabric mask on that they wouldn’t do without if they were not wearing the fabric mask.

**“Have you confirmed that all residential providers have thermometers and are checking individuals and DSPs temperatures twice a day? I heard that some homes do not have thermometers.”**

At this point, providers are taking temperatures of service recipients at least twice a day. Initially, there were a small number of sites where there was not a thermometer in the location (because people who live there do not take medications). Providers have worked to secure thermometers and any home where service recipients routinely take medicine already had thermometers in place. Providers have also required staff to screen before coming to work and many have started taking temperatures as staff arrive.

**“What are DDDS provider managed group homes and supported apartments considered under Gov Carney's re-open plan? Are they included under LTC facilities?”**

Neighborhood Group Homes and Community Living Arrangements are not under long-term care facilities. The Stockley Center falls under a long-term care facility.

**“If someone (staff or resident) in a group home is tested positive for COVID-19, will all parents be notified?”**

If a person tests positive for COVID-19, providers are notifying all people who had close contact with that person, including direct support professionals, the individual and their guardians, if they have them.

***Questions about the Columbus Organization:***

**“Are the Community Navigators regularly reaching out to families?”**

Yes they are. If you need to connect with your loved one’s Community Navigator or are not sure who your Community Navigator is, please see below for more guidance:

Delaware Community Navigation Main: 800-229-5116

New Castle County Supervisors:

Jennifer Moccia Cell: (302) 766-5794 Email: [jimmoccia@columbusorg.com](mailto:jimmoccia@columbusorg.com)

Devon Manley Cell: (302)509-9099Email: [dmanley@columbusorg.com](mailto:dmanley@columbusorg.com)

Cassandra DeStefano Cell: (302) 438-5383 [cdestefano@columbusorg.com](mailto:cdestefano@columbusorg.com)

Kent & Sussex County Supervisor:

Morgan Hovington Cell: (302) 766-0621 Email: [mhovington@columbusorg.com](mailto:mhovington@columbusorg.com)

Intake Specialist Benita Ramos Cell:302-766-5713 Email: [bramos@columbusorg.com](mailto:bramos@columbusorg.com)

Executive State Director Shenika Kirby Cell: (302) 438-5414 E-mail: [skirby@columbusorg.com](mailto:skirby@columbusorg.com)

Assistant Vice President Jacque Pulling Cell: (574)298-2355 Email: [jpulling@columbusorg.com](mailto:jpulling@columbusorg.com)

***Comment About Communication:***

**“The last communication on the DDS website to families is from 12 days ago. Please post more frequent updates on your website.”**

Thank you for this. We will work to put a letter out at least weekly to address the current situation.

***Accessing Health Care Access COVID-19 Question:***

**“If a person being taken care of at home is hospitalized / or if a person in a group home is hospitalized will the caregiver / family member will be allowed to visit the hospitalized person? If the current regulations do not allow this, will there be an effort made to change the regulations? “**

Currently, the Disability Law Program is working on advocating for this very issue. DDS has received approval in the Lifespan Waiver Appendix K amendment to allow DSPs or other professionals to provide

care to someone in a hospital, if they need care beyond what the hospital can offer (behavior support, communication etc). Right now, the health care systems still have the final say in limiting visitors.

***Transition to Adulthood Questions:***

**“Can a family have a referral for an agency without the client touring (example mom and dad toured) but not transitioning student?”**

Referrals can be submitted to an agency if a guardian has “toured” the agency, but if the parent is not the guardian the individual need to be part of that process. Many agencies are allowing virtual meetings and phone conferences to accommodate the COVID pandemic. All providers are still accepting referrals during this time.

**“Are there ways that families can virtually tour SE or day hab agencies so they can continue the process of looking for an agency during this time if they are slated to lose school services in August?”**

Yes, families should connect with individual providers that they are interested in to ask about virtual tours. Many providers have been accommodating virtual and remote meetings and tours.