

Cory Nourie: So let's just wait until my official clock says 10am now. So we'll get started. So good morning, everyone. Thank you so much for your time this morning and for calling in for our first ever DDS family forum. So we have a combination of people who are available right now on Zoom, who were logged in, and also a handful of people who are called in on a telephone line so thank you for getting to us, no matter how you logged in this morning I'm Cory Nourie, the director of Community Services for DDDS and then along with me today. We have Jennifer Tozer, manager of family engagement for the division and Shenika Kirby, the executive director of The Columbus organization for Delaware on this morning's forum. We have just some housekeeping things as we get started. So the first thing is that if you do get disconnected or logged off you can hit rejoin and come right back into the meeting. If you have any questions, we are asking that you use the Q and A box that is on the zoom for you to type your questions in. One of the things we want to make sure we're doing during these for this forum is to try to answer questions generically as much as possible. One of the beauties of the division is that we have such a wide array of services and options that it's hard in a big group like this to address everyone's specific issues. And so for privacy reasons as well. We don't want to have any information shared that might be identifying for you or your loved one, so if we do not address your question in the forum today, we will be following up offline with you and if you have any questions that you think of afterwards you or you want to know something we will share the contact information. Shenika is going to share information about contacts through the Columbus organization and then Jennifer Tozer is our lovely contact for the division, who can field out who the question needs to go to, to get a response for you. So we appreciate your interest in the questions and we will work with you to make sure we get things addressed for this morning's purposes, we're going to try to answer the questions that were emailed in ahead of time. Thank you for everyone who did that as well as more are coming to the Q & A box. Some of the questions are things that are outside of the division's purview, but we can help try to facilitate to get you the answers that you need; lots of questions around the stimulus package and that kind of stuff. And so we want to make sure that we give you accurate information in what is obviously a trying time. So to get started, for today's forum and we do have exactly 30 minutes together. So I want to first just acknowledge that obviously COVID-19 these are really tough times. And this is something that I've used the phrase uncharted and unprecedented so many times in the past six weeks, it seems, but every day it really is a brand new thing to us. We are working really hard to maintain some level of normalcy as much as possible, and also to make sure that we are offering supports and services.

To help your loved ones through this really difficult time but I also just want to take a second to acknowledge that kind of the sadness and loss and fear and anxiety is going on right now because it's part of everyone's life. It's okay to feel that way and we want to acknowledge that, you know, we know routines are upended. We know that people were excited for graduation, you know, as a person who transition to adulthood is near and dear to my heart. I know that people were excited about those things happening and weddings have been canceled and layoffs and you know that we had bad weather this past week. So there are so many things going on. I just want to acknowledge that you know, we're, we're in it with you and we are working together with you and hoping that you know as COVID-19 eventually comes to an end and we move back into a new normal that you feel confident that the Division and Columbus are working together with you to support your loved one. And getting back into whatever life will look like post COVID-19.

One of the most important things I want to do is just make sure that you know that we are following the CDC guidelines around COVID-19 and how we were dealing with COVID-19. We are, we have prepared for this along with the providers. And again, this is another thing about the division is we have people who are living in provider managed settings. We have a lot of individuals who live at home with their families or on their own. And so, for people who are living in a provider managed setting or who have a loved one who is using a provider managed services or job training programs and things like that, the providers have been working to prepare for COVID and the response. And I can say that in dealing with them every single day multiple times a day now, the providers really have taken this very seriously are working really hard to make sure that they can ensure the health and safety of loved one as much as possible for people who are living in a provider managed setting, we do have PPE available to people to support it, for the DSP to support individuals in the home if they do test positive for COVID 19. And I have to actually give a major acknowledgement to the DSP who were showing up every day and working really hard to support your loved ones in a situation that is we know nerve racking for them, but also you know they are so committed to the population who they work with every day. And so I just want to give a little bit of acknowledgement to them; knowing that they are coming in doing hard work every day and then going home and trying to make sure that you know they can support their families as well. So just a little bit of acknowledgement to the DSP as well.

I want to get to the details about where we are in the Division itself. We do have some people who have tested positive in provider managed settings. Again, it's a very small population of people, small number of people. If your loved one has been in one of those settings where someone has been exposed as tested positive the provider is notifying you as guardians, as family members, and any DSP who potentially were exposed.

One of the things that happened in this attempt to flatten the curve, as much as we were preparing for COVID 19 what would be happening and how we support people when the governor's orders came out for the state of emergency to basically suspend day programs that you know initially had 50 people together and then down to 10 people by having those programs close, while I know it was a complete disaster as far as routine disruption, it has tremendously helped limit the number of people who DDDS serves who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. So again, we do have a very, very small number of people who have been tested positive, the vast majority of those individuals are staying at home in quarantine. The providers have all kinds of strategies in place to keep the person isolated as much as possible. We have several providers, where they actually have one particular DSP who has volunteered to go into quarantine with, you know, the individual who's tested positive to provide their one on one support to them long term. There's lots of strategies in place to help keep people as isolated as possible to reduce the spread. We have worked with public health so that way if someone does test positive, then we can get their roommates tested or their house mates tested if they're showing any symptoms. Every single provider in the DDDS network right now is taking the temperature of every single person living in a provider managed setting at least twice a day, if not three times a day. And the vast majority of them are also taking the temperature of every DSP who comes into the home or other professional. So for instance, if a DDDS Investigator has to come into the home for some reason before anyone enters their home, they're taking their temperature every day. So we are monitoring all of those best practices from the CDC and any symptoms that are unusual or that seemed potentially out of the norm for anyone. We are using heightened scrutiny in relating that to the primary care doctor but also if they have had any exposure, somebody with a confirmed COVID-19 test, we do have the

opportunity to have them facilitate getting a COVID test immediately through public health so some of those people when they have been tested the results, sometimes are taking four or five days to come back to us. Initially, a couple weeks ago was taking over seven days.

So we are working with providers and the providers are communicating with me on a regular basis, sometimes you know 15- 20 times a day now, when someone's being tested. Just to let me know someone's been tested and then the results of that test and what the strategies are in place to support and helping keep people's health and safety as possible.

One of the things that we've had a lot of questions about that when I addressed, that I tried to initially address to when my very first letters, I think, to the families was um, you know, we know that they're from a provider standpoint that there are restrictions in place as far as accessing or allowing visitors into the home. And that is again very intentional to try to reduce the number of people that potentially have exposure. I do know that there are DSP are coming and going every day. And that's a required service, obviously, but for the families who I've spoken to individually and now send emails I completely understand the routine has been broken and it's very challenging. And I appreciate your patience as we work through trying to support everybody in reducing the number of people who will be COVID-19 positive. As soon as we have guidance and clearance from the governor or from the CDC about being able to lift restrictions, the very first thing that I will work to do is to work with providers to allow our visitors back into the homes. We know what an important relationship you have with your loved one, and we would love for you to ideally be able to see them in person you know, face to face, while that restriction is in place, we're encouraging you to use technology. So zoom Skype Google Hangouts face time whatever methodology you have to use as technology to connect with your loved one, we want to fully encourage that. We also have offered to providers that if they do not have an account like a zoom account that has the different bells and whistles, then we will be able to be offer from DDDS side of things to support setting up those meetings on your behalf so that way you can have a zoom interaction with your loved one.

Additionally, we are encouraging providers so day service providers to consider setting up weekly or some routine check in with people who typically are together. So again, we keep some continuity in someone's life and say, you know, I'm missing Jen I used to see her every day and I hadn't seen her for a month now to be able to connect and so we're encouraging providers to do that. And if you've got questions about that or want to perhaps encourage your loved one's provider to do that, you can reach out to Jen and we can talk about encouraging providers, you know, to make sure that's happening as much as possible. We've also had questions about our providers being paid during this time period, which I think is a lovely question from a family standpoint because again it shows the value and commitment, you have to your loved one's service provider. So through the lifespan Waiver, one of the things we have is a we had an opportunity to apply for an appendix K amendment, which is through CMS that says that we can modify some of our typical services. So one of the services we have requirements of standards that you have to have certain amount of check ins face to face on a regular basis and that kind of stuff. Obviously with COVID 19 we can't be doing that anymore. So we wrote into the appendix K amendment that we can have the FaceTime check ins your telephone contacts that kind of stuff. Additionally, we do have an opportunity through the appendix K amendment to pay retention payments to providers who otherwise have had to suspend services. So as we eventually move through the COVID 19 pandemic and we get back into a routine eventually when we get to that point, we are going to focus on transitioning back into kind of this new normal. And we know that for a lot of people, it's going to be

difficult. And it's something that we haven't ever had to experience before. So, we will continue as a Division and Columbus will continue to work with you and your loved one's provider to ease back into the transition and make sure we have our support necessary. We want to make sure that all those providers have an opportunity to maintain financial solvency. So they are ready to open the doors when we get the bans are lifted. So I just want to encourage you to continue to think about ways to stay connected to service providers and know that they are missing everyone as much as everyone else. And they're still doing check ins. There's lots of telephone calls happening and we want to make sure that we are you know we're all staying connected as much as possible in a very difficult time.

I want to now, just turn it over to Shenika Kirby from the Columbus Organization to talk about how we are working with them and how they can assist you and your loved one in making sure that we are all moving things along during COVID-19. Shenika, take it away.

Shenika Kirby: Hi everyone, so I am Shenika Kirby, executive state director here in Delaware for the Columbus organization. It is safe to say that we all went to bed one day and woke up in a different world. This pandemic has impacted our individuals' daily routines, their socialization, their sense of safety and it's created a difficult time for you, the parents and the caregivers. As mentioned as Cory mentioned due to social distancing orders, we have all witnessed an unfortunate suspension of day services schools and access to our community. Delaware community navigators continue to remain a resource and available to address service gaps and to help with questions or concerns for those we support.

Our team remains active and assisting to address emergencies and emerging needs by identifying alternate services at this time. Thus far, we have assisted with online ordering groceries prescriptions personal items and facilitated the delivery of those items. We have provided both community educational entertainment and mental health resources. In addition, we have coordinated with DDS to facilitate access to needed respite benefits services during this time. Community navigators continue to implement person center plans in our waiver admission processes are continuing to process lifespan waiver applications virtually so avoid a delay in services. Once we are on the other side of this, we at Columbus want to be sure you have access to someone on your team should you continue to need assistance, please reach out to your Navigator. If you are unable to reach your navigator or you don't know who your navigator is, please contact their supervisors and if you give me a second. I'm going to pull up, I'm learning zoom. I'm going to pull up that contact information. Give me one.

So in New Castle County our supervisors are Jennifer Moccia, Devon Manly and Cassandra de Stefano their contact information is listed here.

And Kent and Sussex County. Our supervisor is Morgan Covington her information is listed here as well.

And our senior leadership team continues to remain available to you as well. In the event that you have an urgent need, you're not hearing back from your supervisor or the community navigator their supervisor myself, our assistant vice president Jacque Pulling, our senior vice president Carlos Hernandez remain available as well. One second. Take that off. Alright. So life can be difficult on any given day, but when you add the layer of COVID 19 it's no longer about the routine support. It's about the Delaware team being there for you to assist in any way possible whether it be through phone calls, text messages, emails, or video conferencing, we remain available. I hand it over to you, Jen.

Jennifer Tozer: There we go. Good morning, finding my mute button. Good morning, everybody. My name is Jennifer Tozer I'm the manager of family engagement with the division. And I want to thank everybody for taking the time to send your questions in. I do want to remind you that we will not be answering any of the questions that are submitted on the chat box through the chat box if you could please reenter them in the Q &A box or email them to me personally, we do want to make sure that your questions are addressed. However, in this forum. Some of them might have a more complicated answer. So please, just make note of that. I do see them. And I just want to ask you to redirect them so that we can address them. I'm also going to share screen with you. Just give me one second, please.

One of the things that we wanted to be able to communicate. Was that the Columbus organization and the lifespan unit are in constant contact We are up and running as Shenika mentioned waiver processes are still happening. And it's important right now for us to make sure that you know who you can be contacting to get information so that we can rely on those channels so again, if you're living at home your community navigator, in a provider manage setting, please reach out to your support coordinators family members. We got a lot of questions about how to maintain those contacts and can they set up you know, virtual meetings and regular zoom conferences with their loved ones so that they can maintain contact and we absolutely support that and want to be able to problem solve with families to be able to remain in contact with their loved ones individuals that are on the LTSS waiver, your, your targeted case management will come through your MCO and DDDS does have our family resource coordinator Susan Graham and you may always contact me my information is listed here as well also by phone.

I did want to let people know we've had a lot of questions coming in about transition much of that were, you know, we are waiting. But what we did want to let people know is that there has been some turnover within our pathways to employment unit and New Castle County. However, those positions have been filled. So if you are wondering who your employment navigator may be, we are encouraging you to reach out to Ashley Drummond for New Castle County. Look, excuse me, please love technology, Ashley Drummond in New Castle County or Quintella Coleman in Kent and Sussex .Like we are all very much aware based on today's meeting alone everyone is heavily relying on technology to stay connected, it's also another way that we are sharing resources with family, everything from practical things entertainment things local resources. So if you would like to join us by following us on Facebook. That is where we also post updates and announcements. Additionally, many of our authorized providers also have Facebook accounts, that's another way that you can get connected with them, many community organizations. If you're interested in learning about them, please email me are starting to put out virtual programming. Some are hosting virtual Bingo or even virtual cooking and exercise classes. So there are things that providers are doing to help to help entertain and socialize during these current times. We have a lot of questions come in about what to do if I get sick or if my loved one gets sick, and I want to encourage everyone to visit the life course tools. These are the tools that we use in our person centered planning, they've put out a lot of very good resources to help individuals think about what plans would make sense for their family and we share these resources through our Columbus organization support coordinators use these things for problem solving.

And I have some examples to share this was a you know a way to think about how we can cope with social distancing looking at the different levels of support that an individual may need. And this was actually a trajectory that was shared from another family about how they were what they were going to

focus on as they shelter in place in and what was important for them and their loved one. There's also a tool that can help you think through what you would need if your loved one was going to be in the care of the others. There was a lot of questions about not just to, it would be. But what that would look like, and there are resources where we can help families develop plans that makes sense based on their situation and where it is that they are and what their resources are because everybody's situation is going to be different. There was a really great tool kit that I wanted to share that was put out by an organization called communication first and they offer a free download, and I'm going to switch over to my browser to show it to you. But it gave them a personal health assessment specific to, you know, your individual needs, but also focusing on the communication piece. And there was a bunch of resources and links so that your loved one in the event that they were hospitalized without a caregiver are aware of their communication rights. So I have this link available if you think that this would be relevant to you or you're curious to learn more, please reach out to me. We've also been sharing, you know, information about in plain language so that individuals that have different communication needs that we're able to help them understand why everything is going on.

Jennifer Tozer: Let me stop sharing my screen.

Cory Nourie: Thanks, I'm going to pop in for a second. Your screen wasn't sharing. And so people are typing like "we can't see it, we can't see." But that's the technology we're all working together and people are asking, also for Shenika's things popped up too quickly for them to capture it. Once this is over. We will be posting this information on our DDDS Facebook page. On our DDDS website the Columbus organization on their Delaware page and anybody who has a question is also questions about can we get a transcript of this, we will have all that available after this webinar is over this morning as we have a time to process the actual recording, so we will get the information. Yes, I'm so sorry to you. So I don't. Sorry to interrupt. I just was like, oh,

Jennifer Tozer: Somebody phenomenal. I'm so glad I wish you, I wish someone would have interrupt me soon I'm sorry I couldn't even see the chat box, but to answer and address some of the questions that came in through directly, we are processing waivers for transition students. I know there's a lot of questions. Transition is an individualized process anyway. And I want to encourage you to use those channels that are there, your employment navigator your community navigators myself reaching out to your school systems to think about what that looks like for you. I can tell you that we are still our day service providers or employment specialists are still placing individuals. Many of our folks are filling essential positions and they are following the CDC guidelines and getting very creative on what that coaching can look like on DVR and our day services transition have a very good relationships that they're working through that process to help people follow with their goals and their plans.

As far as respite please reach out to your community navigator, we are helping families to enroll in that self directed methods so that they can get some access to respite and and self directed care. There were a lot of questions that came in about I don't have a backup caregiver not and I know that this proceeds even COVID life and I want you to we're going to start now having conversations because Columbus and our lifespan unit meet regularly to please communicate that information to your community navigator to myself so that we can track it. Because many of our families have had great success in partnering with each other and we want to be able to help matching and making those pairs if it's a good fit. So that's one thing that we can start exploring for those that are finding themselves without a back-up caregiver, but also know that we do have the ability, you know, for home health aides personal attendant services

and to in extreme emergency cases provide that respite care and alternative settings. So that's why it's important to have that dialogue with your navigators to develop a plan that's going to make sense for your family because everybody's resources are going to be different and kind of piling through because we're almost at a time. Again, please go ahead.

Cory Nourie: I'm sorry, I was just answering one of the questions. Somebody asked was what retention payment thing meant for providers and just to explain it means that we'll be able to help offset some of their expenses and keeping people on payroll and having electricity and all that kind of stuff come in when they're not providing billable services right now. So just to answer that question.

Shenika Kirby: And I just want to chime in, really quickly. So for those that are transitioning and the lifespan waiver application, the community navigators are not processing those lifespan applications. We actually have a designated group of individuals, they are Lifespan waiver processors, they will be contacting you, your navigator should be contacting you let them know that they are going to be contacting you. But we want to kind of get the ball rolling. So if you hear from a Columbus waiver admission process or that is what they're doing. They're working on that lifespan waiver, so we can avoid any interruption and services and to ensure we have services available to you after the transition

Cory Nourie: Right. So we have some questions coming in about unemployment benefits and things like that. I want to make sure that we are able to provide accurate intimate information for you. So we can follow up with you offline. Jen, you want to talk something about the stimulus payments. I thought there was a question. We've heard about that.

Jennifer Tozer: Yes, we did have some individuals that are out of work that had questions about the stimulus payment because they were eligible for the \$600 week benefit and they're worried about put them over the income limit. And the answer, the very basic answer is that, no. You can apply for those benefits and that there's no redetermination of eligibility at this time during the state of emergency, the National Emergency so I hopefully that answers that question, we do want to make sure that we get you connected to a resource that would be better able to answer for benefits counselor, for example, and we so that was the blanket answer. We wanted to make sure people knew that they could apply for those benefits without risking their, their service eligibility.

All of the contact information that she needs to share. We will be posting that online. We can send that to you via email as well. You might have to reach out to me via email, depending on how this post zoom webinar allows me to collect the information. So I please encourage you to do that, but it will be posted on our Facebook page and also our website.

Cory Nourie: And then just to follow up on a couple of online question to our outstanding questions, if anybody needs Jen's email address. It's Jennifer.tozer@delaware.gov and she can be the contact person. The most important messages if you need something from the division reach out to your support coordinator or the Columbus organization community Navigator. We are all still working. We're all in this together and we want to make sure that a chance to get the services that you need your loved ones during a very difficult time. So please do not hesitate to reach out to us, everyone is still working, we're just working in a different physical location than where we typically do

And again, as the pandemic continues on will be modifying, I keep I kind of joke about pivoting and friends episode with the couch, but there's a lot of pivoting going on, depending on what the current

status of things are with regards to the governor's orders and as you know, we start to reach the peak hopefully of the COVID cases. So we are all working together and please do not hesitate to reach out to the division or to the Columbus organization for anything because we really are really, really collaborative in this effort which is a really positive thing. I think with COVID in particular. So additional questions, again, we will be following up with the questions that are coming in the Q & A box right now. And if you have anything you can reach out to Jen and she can get to where you need to go for that.

Jennifer Tozer: And also, I think there's been a lot of I know people are very curious about what the other questions are many of them were shared and so what we'll be doing is, I'll be getting with Cory and we'll put together. Probably an FAQ to address out all of the questions that were asked as appropriate without sharing information. So if you miss something or your question wasn't answered, please reach out to me and we will be making sure this is posted and following up with all of those things.

Cory Nourie: And we've had questions about will we have more of these. So I think if this is was well received and people think it seems like it was beneficial. I think the answer is yes for myself, for Shenika and for Jennifer appreciate that. But we can absolutely create more of these opportunities for these kinds of webinars or other option. Other ways for us to be able to share information again in trying to get information out quickly to people.

We're kind of talking very generic terms for a lot of things, but for individual situations, please do not hesitate to reach out to your support coordinator, your community navigator, Jen and, you know, we'll do everything we can to make sure that we can respond to your questions as appropriate. And we want to encourage everyone to please continue to be safe and be well and take care of yourselves and your family members. The social distancing is necessary for a variety of reasons. And it's really the way that we're going to stop the exposure, hopefully in the spread of COVID 19 and I think we're in a long haul now versus a sprint and so please you know, we're all in it together and we want to make sure that we are doing the best we can. So eventually soon enough. We can get everyone back into their real lives and enjoying life, to the best of their ability. Check the Facebook page for the division

And then also, again, we'll put it on the Columbus Facebook or Columbus's on state page for Delaware and DDDS website through DHSS and then we'll also be able to send this information to transcript and everything out to the support coordinators and the community navigators to. They can also share that information with you that way. Yes.

Jennifer Tozer: And our Facebook is Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services-DDDS

Cory Nourie: everyone we are at our time now. And so I know zoom will probably kick us off.

Shenika Kirby: Thank you everyone.

Jennifer Tozer: Thank you.

Cory Nourie: Thank you everyone. Please, have a great day. Thank you so much for your attention and be well