



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

COMMUNITY SERVICES

April 6, 2020

Dear Families of individuals served through DDDS:

As you are well aware, Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) has become more prominent in Delaware. Please know that the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and its network of providers are working together keep exposure at a minimum. As the situation changes daily, we assure you we are working to ensure the health and safety of all individuals served through DDDS, our Home and Community Based providers and their staff, and our own DDDS staff. We are following the Governor's orders for social distancing. The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) announced that all walk-in access to its public offices became suspended effective this morning, because of the potential risk for clients and DHSS employees in having in-person interactions. DDDS offices have limited access to visitors; services are being conducted remotely via video conference or telephone. The State is still open, so you should have no difficulty in contacting any DDDS employee; they are just most likely working in a different location than usual.

Many day programs that have suspended services during COVID-19 are still having their direct support staff check-in periodically with service recipients. Some have enacted weekly video conferencing as a way to stay connected. In these challenging times, the more normalcy we can keep, the better for everyone. Please reach out to your loved one's program to discuss other opportunities to stay connected.

We do have some DDDS recipients who continue to work as essential personnel in essential businesses that remain open. DDDS is recommending that providers use enhanced hygiene protocols for those individuals as they come home from their jobsite. In an unintentional way, COVID-19 has really demonstrated the valued work that many individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities perform daily and that they are truly essential. Many residential providers have redeployed their day service staff or have increased staff to cover 24/7 support needs.

I wanted to offer clarification from a previous communication- the guidance issued by DDDS indicating that monitoring, oversight and routine contacts would be done remotely by DDDS Support Coordinators, Columbus Community Navigators, Nurse Consultants and Behavior Analysts due to COVID-19, appears to have caused some confusion. To clarify, those functions that can be done remotely should be done remotely. However, in these complex, hectic times with broken routines and confusion, there are people who may need in-person behavior supports from their Behavior Analysts. Behavior Analysts may continue to provide direct in-person supports to individuals on their caseload as necessary. Behavior Analysts are essential members of the individual's support team and should be permitted to visit the individual in his/her home setting. They are expected to perform hand hygiene and be vigilant about sanitizing equipment they bring to/from the home site. I hope that clarifies any unintended confusion.

Please continue to stay connected to your loved ones and their friends. We know the days are long and sometimes disorienting, but we will all get through this together. Please look for updates on the DDDS website at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds/>. We will also post updates on Facebook.

Be well,

Handwritten signature of Cory Ellen Nourie in black ink.

Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP
Director of Community Services