



# DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES

COMMUNITY SERVICES

April 30, 2020

Dear DDDS Families:

As we are now six weeks into COVID-19, I wanted to send a quick update about services in the Division. The State of Delaware continues to be open for business, which means all DDDS employees continue to work, albeit most are working remotely. If you need to reach anyone, you should be able to via their email or cell phone.

Columbus' Community Navigators continue to support individuals living at home with their families. If you need any resources or services, please do not hesitate to reach out to your loved ones' Community Navigator.

For those living in a provider-managed setting, the Division is following updated guidance from the Division of Health Care Quality (DHCQ) and requiring that all direct support professionals (DSPs) wear a mask during every shift in a residential setting. For homes that do not have any active COVID-19 cases, DSPs may wear cloth masks. For any site that has a COVID-19 positive person, DSPs are required to wear non-woven masks such as those worn in the medical field. Additionally, any DSP providing direct care to a COVID-19 positive person is required to wear additional Personal Protective Equipment (this has not changed). Our provider community has worked diligently to secure PPE, including non-woven masks. We are working together to ensure every provider has the supplies they need.

We are working with our providers to try to preserve the provider network as many do not have a source of income right now because they had to suspend day habilitation services. We want to try to make sure that these providers will be able to stay in business so that they can start up again when the emergency order is lifted or modified to permit such activities. DDDS has received approval from CMS, our federal funding agency, to enable us to pay "retention" payments to providers that have had to temporarily suspend operations. We are meeting with each provider individually to determine the amount of the retention payments based on the individual circumstances of each provider. We should be able to start making these payments within the next week or so.

As the news tells us, the number of cases continues to climb, so the State is not ready to move into its phased approach to reduce the social distancing orders. DDDS is working with other states' developmental disabilities divisions to learn from their experiences about how they eased/plan to ease back into services. We know the transition back for DDDS recipients will be a longer process, for a variety of reasons. We are committed to providing clear guidance as the plan comes to fruition.

Please look for updates on the DDDS website at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/ddds/>. We post updates on Facebook as well, which includes a link to our DDDS Family COVID-19 Update Webinar from April 18<sup>th</sup> and resources for individuals with developmental disabilities.

We are all in this together. Please continue to support one another.

Be well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP".

Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP  
Director of Community Services