



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



## **Delaware Department of Health and Social Services**

1901 N. Du Pont Highway  
Main Building  
New Castle, DE 19720  
(302) 255-9040

[dhss.delaware.gov](https://dhss.delaware.gov)

Follow us



# What's Inside?

→ 01 Message from the Cabinet Secretary

→ 02 Department Mission

→ 03 **Our Divisions**

- Child Support Services
- Developmental Disabilities Services
- Health Care Quality
- Medicaid and Medical Assistance
- Public Health
- Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities
- Social Services
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health
- Visually Impaired
- Office of the Secretary/Administration

→ 14 Vacancies Remain a Challenge

→ 15 Looking Ahead

→ 16 Contact Us

# Message from the Cabinet Secretary



## **Josette D. Manning. Esq.**

Cabinet Secretary, DHSS

---

### **Department Leadership**

- Dava Newnam, Deputy Secretary
  - Lisa Schieffert, Deputy Secretary
  - Steven Costantino, Associate Deputy Secretary of Health Care Innovation & Finance
  - Rebecca Reichardt, Associate Deputy Secretary/COO
  - Julie Devlin, Chief of Staff
- 

As one of the largest agencies in state government, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has 10 divisions, employs more than 4,000 people and in one way or another affects almost every citizen in our great state.

Our divisions provide services in the areas of public health, social services, substance abuse and mental health, child support, developmental disabilities, long-term care, visual impairment, aging and adults with physical disabilities, and Medicaid and medical assistance. The Department includes three 24/7 facilities and the state's only public psychiatric hospital, the Delaware Psychiatric Center.

While providing those services is a critical part of our mission, we also are dedicated to ensuring your tax dollars are well managed. Our Department had a total budget of more than \$5 billion in the past fiscal year and we take our responsibility as stewards of the taxpayers' money seriously. That's why we work hard to provide the best services we can in the most effective and efficient way possible. I'd like to thank our employees for their efforts to make this happen.

In this, our 2024 Annual Report, we will highlight some of our accomplishments of the past year.

---

# Department Mission



## Mission Statement

"To improve the quality of life for Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations."

## Vision Statement

"Together we provide quality services as we create a better future for the people of Delaware."

# Our Divisions

The Department of Health and Social Services is divided into 10 divisions. Each of the 10 divisions within DHSS provides essential services to meet our mission “to improve the quality of life for Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.” Among the services we provide to fulfill that mission are:

- Providing a strong safety net for our neighbors in need through food benefits, Medicaid, subsidized child care and cash assistance.
- Connecting people suffering from addiction or mental illness to services to treat their disease.
- Supporting seniors so they can age safely and with dignity in the community.
- Ensuring that children receive the financial support from parents that they deserve.
- Inspecting nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
- Supporting people with developmental disabilities in being engaged members of the community.
- Providing resources, training and employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.
- Connecting prospective volunteers with opportunities to serve.
- Monitoring and helping to control the spread of disease.
- Inspecting restaurants.
- Reconnecting people with their lost pets.
- Ensuring safe drinking water.



# Division of Child Support Services

The mission of the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) is to promote family independence by reducing the dependency of single-parent households through the collection of monetary child support payments and medical support from non-custodial parents. This mission is achieved through the effective use of paternity establishment programs, aggressive case processing and enforcement techniques, efficient collection, and prompt distribution of support payments.



## Achievements

- The division's highlights for 2024 include a reduction in vacancies, systems upgrades, and increased child support collections.
- Staff has been successful in its efforts to serve bilingual clients and raise paternity establishment to 92%.

## Leadership

**Theodore Mermigos, Director**  
**Julie Shahan, Deputy Director**  
84 A Christiana Road  
New Castle, Delaware 19720  
Information Calls: (302) 395-6500  
Front Desk: (302) 395-6500  
Customer Service: (302) 577-7171

# Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

The mission of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) is to value persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, to honor abilities, to respect choice, to achieve possibilities, and to work together to support healthy, safe and fulfilling lives. DDDS provides services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Prader Willi Syndrome with significant limitations in adaptive functioning.



## Achievements

- The Division of Developmental Disability Services introduced a new enhanced behavioral health residential support service, leading to significant reductions in law enforcement interactions with clients.
- Increased collaboration with other divisions.

## Leadership

**Jody Roberts, Director**  
**Stacy Watkins, Deputy Director**  
**VACANT, Deputy Director**  
 Woodbrook Professional Center  
 1056 South Governor's Avenue, Suite 101  
 Dover, Delaware 19904  
 Main Phone: (302) 744-9600  
 Stockley Center: (302) 934-8031

# Division of Health Care Quality

The mission of the Division of Health Care Quality (DHCQ) is to protect residents and patients in licensed and certified Delaware facilities and health care agencies through the promotion of; the quality of care, quality of life and safety & security. DHCQ also enforces compliance with State and Federal health care laws and regulations.

The Division has four (4) main sections:

- Long Term Care (LTC) Licensing and Certification;
- Acute/Outpatient Care Licensing and Certification;
- Investigative and Background Checks;
- Quality Improvement (QI).



## Achievements

Much progress has been made on inspections of our State's long-term care facilities. The Department must inspect each long-term care facility not later than 15 months after the last day of the previous inspection. Last year we had 21 facilities that had not had a survey in a year. Currently, there is no backlog for surveys. The number of open complaints in nursing homes has decreased by 45% from this time last year, from 803 to 445. Open complaints in assisted living facilities have decreased by 77%, from 812 to 184.

## Leadership

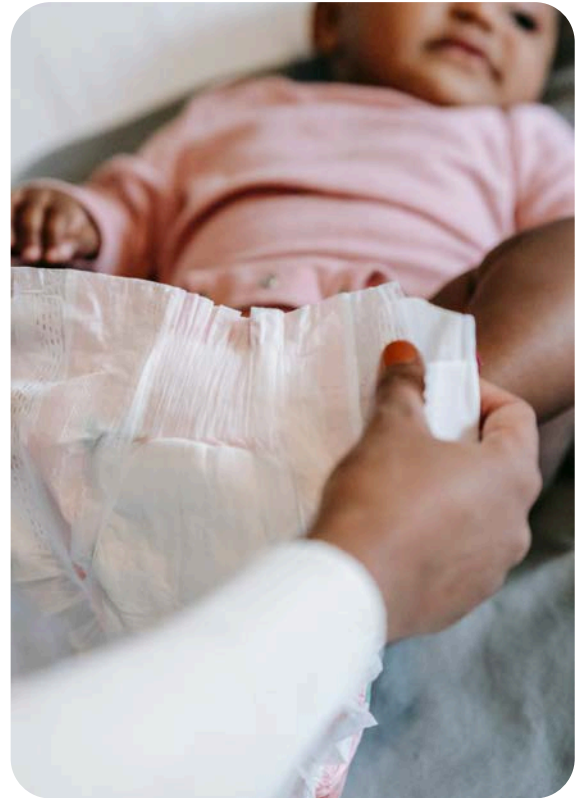
**Corinna Getchell, Director**  
**Denise Elliott, Deputy Director**  
 263 Chapman Road, Suite #200  
 Newark, Delaware 19702-5408  
 Main Phone: (302) 421-7400  
 Milford Office: (302) 424-8600

# Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance

On July 1, 2005, the Delaware Division of Medicaid & Medical Assistance (DMMA) was officially created. The purpose of creating the new division was to strengthen the delivery of quality health care in Delaware in a fiscally responsible manner. DMMA furnishes a variety of medical assistance programs to eligible low-income families and eligible aged, blind and/or disabled people whose income is insufficient to meet the cost of necessary medical services. DMMA serves 300,000 Delawareans.

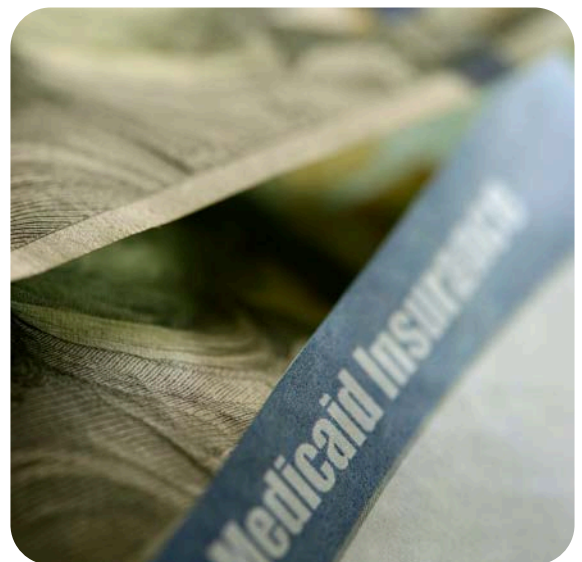
## Achievements

Delaware earned extensive national media coverage in 2024 for being among the first in the nation to focus on a healthier start for new moms. An 1115 Waiver approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) extends a State Medicaid pilot program offering 12 weeks of free diapers and wipes, as well as home-delivered meals during the critical postpartum period. It also allows the State to support participation in evidence-based outpatient treatment programs for pregnant or postpartum mothers diagnosed with stimulant or opioid use disorders. The DMMA team also completed the Medicaid unwinding process and navigated the end of the public health emergency while maintaining quality care for Delawareans.



## Leadership

**Andrew Wilson, Director**  
**Janneen Boyce, Deputy Director**  
 1901 N. Du Pont Highway  
 Lewis Building  
 New Castle, Delaware 19720  
 Main phone: (302) 255-9500



# Division of Public Health

The Division of Public Health's (DPH) mission is to protect and promote the health of all people in Delaware. Public Health touches the lives of everyone in our State and includes a wide range of programs and services - all aimed toward protecting and improving the health of the people who live and work in Delaware. DPH adheres to the following values in the effort to ensure healthy people in healthy communities: integrity, respect, participation, accountability, teamwork, and excellence.



## Achievements

- Began the final stages of COVID demobilization and continued work on a \$58 million project to expand the Public Health Lab.
- Created the Office of Environmental Equity and expanded efforts to address health issues from an environmental perspective.
- Worked on telehealth, health equity, and addressing health issues for immigrants and the unhoused.

## Leadership

**Steven Blessing, Director**  
**Rebecca Walker, Deputy Director**  
**Shonetsha Quail, Deputy Director**  
 417 Federal Street  
 Jesse Cooper Building  
 Dover, Delaware 19901  
 Main phone: (302) 744-4700

# Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities

The mission of the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) is to promote dignity, respect and inclusion for older adults and people with disabilities while providing high-quality service to its participants. DSAAPD provides a broad range of supports and services for older adults, persons with physical disabilities, and caregivers at DSAAPD's facility, the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill, and in the community. DSAAPD is focusing on strengths-based, goal-oriented, and inclusive care planning throughout the agency.



## Achievements

DSAAPD was able to connect more than 20,000 individuals to services in FY2024, resulting in a 16% overall reduction in our waitlist and a significant reduction in wait times for these vital services. The Home Modification initiative is supported with one-time ARPA federal funding and aims to create a single, uniform, cohesive home modification program infrastructure for all disability-serving agencies in Delaware. DSAAPD continues to leverage funding, primarily from federal sources, to offer respite opportunities for caregivers to take a much-needed break.

## Leadership

**Shekelia Hines, Director**  
**Joe Bryant, Deputy Director**  
**Teresa Ritter, Deputy Director**  
 240 Continental Drive, Suite 101  
 Newark, DE 19713  
 Main phone: (800) 223-9074

# Division of Social Services

The mission of the new Division of Social Services (DSS), formed in 2024 when the former Division of State Service Centers (DSSC) merged with DSS, is to provide prompt, respectful, and accurate services that promote the potential for self-sufficiency for all Delawareans. We are committed to a vision of a Delaware where there is hope that anyone can overcome poverty and prosper. DSS will provide, either directly or through coordination, an integrated system of opportunities, services, and income support, which will enable Delaware's most disadvantaged families to maintain and move toward independence. The merger also allows the new DSS to provide even more convenient access to human services as we assist vulnerable populations, support communities, and promote volunteer and service opportunities throughout Delaware. With 15 statewide State Service Centers, DSS now serves as a one-stop-shop housing a diverse array of public/private health and social service partners.



## Achievements

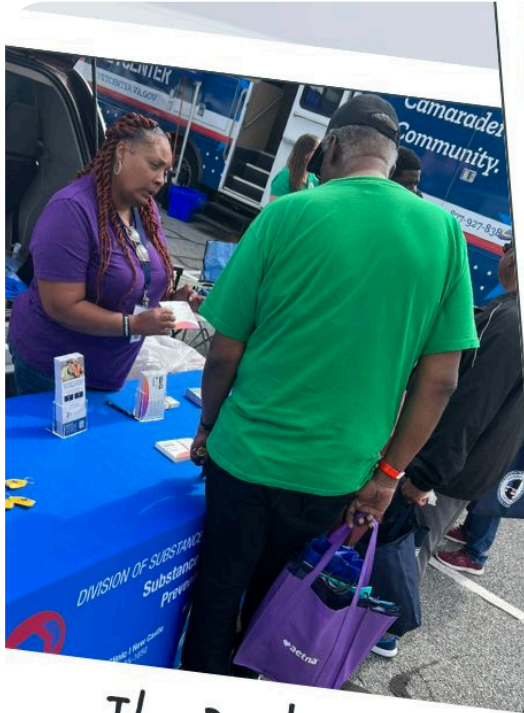
In July 2024, the Division of State Service Centers merged within the Division of Social Services -- a pivotal step in streamlining service delivery. By consolidating resources, improving customer service and productivity, reducing wait times, and providing more staff support at our State Service Centers, the new Division of Social Services will enhance efficiency and improve service delivery to Delaware residents

## Leadership

**Thomas Hall, Director**  
**Marcella Spady, Deputy Director**  
**Faith Mwaura, Deputy Director**  
 1901 N. Du Pont Highway  
 Lewis Building  
 New Castle, Delaware 19720  
 Main phone: (302) 255-9668

# Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health

The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) is "responsible for providing and overseeing public mental health and substance use treatment services serving individuals who are 18 years old and older" (29 Del. C. § 7908). From that charge, the mission of the Division is to improve the quality of life for adults with behavioral health conditions by promoting their health and well-being, fostering their self-sufficiency, and protecting those who are at risk.



*The Bridge Clinic*



*Narcan Rescue Kit Tutorial*



## Achievements

In November 2024, we cut the ribbon on five vending machines located throughout the state to provide free, confidential, 24-hour access to Naloxone and Xylazine test strips through a partnership with Brandywine Counseling. These machines - the first in our region - also carry wound and personal care products, as well as at-home tests for pregnancy, HIV and Hepatitis C and B.

## Leadership

**Joanna Champney, Director**  
**Heather Doncaster, Deputy Director**  
**Frances Marti, Deputy Director**  
 1901 N. Du Pont Highway  
 Main Building  
 New Castle, Delaware 19720  
 Main phone: (302) 255-9399  
 Delaware Psychiatric Center: (302) 255-2700

# Division for the Visually Impaired

The Division for the Visually Impaired originated in 1906 as the Delaware Committee for the Blind. In 1909, the Delaware State Legislature created the Delaware Commission for the Blind, Delaware's first State agency to provide gainful employment for those without sight. DVI works in partnership with the consumer and the community to improve the safety, education and employment of blind and visually impaired Delawareans.



## Achievements

The Division for the Visually Impaired has completed training for public and private partners, such as the Department of Transportation, senior centers, rehabilitation providers, and police cadets, on ways to foster accessibility and inclusivity for the visually impaired community.

## Leadership

**Deborah Talley, Director**  
**Jamie Towns, Deputy Director**  
 1901 N. DuPont Highway  
 Biggs Building  
 New Castle, Delaware 19720  
 Main phone: (302) 255-9800

# Office of the Secretary - Administration

Office of the Secretary – Administration (OSEC Administration) is responsible for the oversight of finance, budget, grants, facility operations, cost allocation, revenue, payments, labor, planning, and quality control procedures. OSEC Administration provides leadership and policy direction for all of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS).



## Key Functions

- Supporting the Office of the Secretary and the day-to-day operations of the Department.
- Providing technical assistance and support to Divisions through training, standard setting, budget, and program analysis and planning.
- Providing centralized administrative functions in accounting, human resources, payroll, labor relations, contracts and procurement, management of state and federal funds, technology and facility operations.
- Developing ideas and processes to maximize resources and improve efficiencies.

## Leadership

**Rebecca Reichardt, Director**  
**Michelle Campbell, Deputy Director**  
**Christopher Hall, Deputy Director**  
 1901 N. Du Pont Highway  
 Main Building  
 New Castle, Delaware 19720  
 Main phone: (302) 255-9000

# Vacancies Remain a Challenge

DHSS has 778 vacancies for an overall vacancy rate of 19%. The highest rates are in the divisions that operate our residential facilities. The ability to adequately staff our facilities and increase staffing levels when necessary is essential to maintaining flexibility to meet the growing need for residential services. As our population continues to grow, particularly our aging population, we can expect the censuses in our facilities to also increase.

The steps we have taken and continue to take to address vacancies are working. It is important to note that today DHSS has 829 fewer FullTime-Equivalent authorized positions than we did in 2005. Even if fully staffed, we would have a 17.5% smaller workforce than we did 20 years ago, despite thousands more Delawareans with increasingly complex needs relying on DHSS for life-impacting services.

DIVISION	Authorized FTEs	Vacant FTEs	Percentage
→ OSEC	591.1	98	16.57
→ DCSS	183	14	7.65
→ DHCQ	70	10	14.28
→ DDDS	409.2	107	26.14
→ DMMA	200.5	26	12.96
→ DPH	812.8	129	15.87
→ DSS	502.7	49	9.75
→ DSAMH	575.1	149	25.90
→ DSAAPD	608.7	185	30.40
→ DVI	65	11	16.92

# Looking Ahead

DHSS continues to look for innovative ways to collaborate internally within our divisions and to leverage partnerships with state agencies and community stakeholders to improve service delivery. The Department is working hard to streamline programs that help constituents access critical services, such as those to address food insecurity, housing, behavioral health needs and the rising cost of utilities and child care. The Department is also planning to extend hours of operation at select State Service Centers to make ourselves more available to those in need.

To further increase access to services, including health care, we will use DPH and DSAMH mobile units to meet people where they are. We are also expanding the services provided by those units.

Recognizing the economic burden of the rising costs of health care on Delawareans, we are driving targeted initiatives to improve the quality of health care delivery. We look forward to working with the Diamond State Hospital Cost Review Board to create transparency around costs and spending and with Nemours on our global budget.

While doing all this here in Delaware, we are closely monitoring changes at the federal level and preparing for potential changes and cuts that could significantly impact critical services for Delawareans. These services range from Medicaid to vaccinations. DHSS stands ready to advocate at the federal level and to work with the Governor, the General Assembly, sister agencies, and stakeholders on solutions to disruptions.



# Contact Us

Phone

**(302) 255-9040**

Email

**[DHSS Constituent Relations@delaware.gov](mailto:DHSS_Constituent_Relations@delaware.gov)**

Website

**[dhss.delaware.gov](http://dhss.delaware.gov)**

Address

**1901 N. Du Pont Hwy., New Castle, DE 19720**

