

LETTER TO FAMILIES

Dear DDDS Families and Service Recipients,

August 31, 2022

I hope this letter finds you well as so many adjust to back-to-school times. COVID-19 continues to be present around the state and in our network, but services continue to be open as our system has learned to live with the virus among us.

COVID-19 Cases

In the past month, we have seen a similar ebb and flow in the number of cases as in previous months. Over the last two weeks there were about half-as-many cases as the prior two weeks, so that is hopeful. We are now at 1344 Direct Support Professionals positive, an increase of 60. There have been 694 service recipients who receive residential habilitation services positive throughout the pandemic, with an additional 55 this past month.

COVID-19 Prevention

Face masks continue to be required for all in-person interactions with service recipients. As of last week, New Castle County was in the low (green) zone, while Kent and Sussex were in the high (red) zone. The CDC recommends wearing a mask indoors in public for areas in the high (red) zone. I have announced that once all three counties are in the low (green) zone, DSPs will be permitted to discontinue wearing a face mask if they choose to do so.

We continue to have access to and use Rapid Antigen Tests within our network to detect COVID-19 amongst those who are asymptomatic or have had an exposure.

Vaccines continue to be recommended for everyone, to reduce severity of illness and/or death.


Provider Network Capacity

The DDDS provider network continues to navigate the ongoing DSP workforce challenge. Providers are working to recruit and retain DSPs, but many report that they are not at pre-COVID staffing levels. This limits their ability to welcome service recipients back to their pre-COVID frequency and/or welcome new service recipients to their programs. Please continue to work with your/your loved one's Columbus Community Navigator, Support Coordinator or Family Resource Coordinator for the latest updates and service availability.

Future Communications

As there haven't been many changes in operations or guidance in the recent months, this will be my last monthly letter about COVID-19's impact on the DDDS network. If anything dramatically changes, we will of course send a notice accordingly. I thank you for your attention, patience, and support throughout the pandemic.

Be well,



Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP
Director of Community Services