


Date: November 15, 2021

To: All DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, Supports Waiver, State General Fund Agencies and Stakeholders

From: Jason Cornwell, Director   
Developmental Disabilities Supports Division

Subject: Resuming In Person Monitoring Visits and In Person Training effective January 1, 2022

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Effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022; all DD Waiver Case Managers, Mi Via Waiver Consultants, Supports Waiver Community Support Coordinators, Medically Fragile Waiver Case Managers, Agency Service Coordinators and Supervisors, to include State General Fund programs must resume in person visits as required by each program. In-person monitoring is an important element of the overall service system and is critical for health and safety of participants in Waiver and State General Fund services.

Agencies are responsible for ensuring face to face, in person visits according to the frequency established by the specific Waiver Service Standards. This means visits required monthly must be started in person by January 2022; visits required quarterly must be started in person by March of 2022; and visits required every other month must be started in person by January 2022. If your agency provides services on Tribal lands, please be aware of additional or different requirements based on Tribal jurisdiction. Resuming in-person visits will not apply if tribal borders are closed. Tribal orders supersede requirements in this memo.

**Please note, during the month of December 2021, DDSD will allow in person monitoring visits and/or remote monitoring visits at the preference of the individual and/or guardian.** The month of December will serve as a “transition” month to return to exclusively in person visits effective January 1, 2022. If the individual and/or guardian elect to continue with remote monitoring visit(s) during the month of December, an exception approval from DDSD is not necessary or required.

**Preparing and Planning for the Return to In Person Monitoring Visits:**

1. All agencies must have a COVID-19 Safe Practice Plan that includes:
  - Communication.
  - Addressing a COVID-19 outbreak.
  - Screening routine for employees and sub-contractors.
  - Screening procedures for all visitors to office prior to in-person meetings.
  - COVID-19 safe training for employees and sub-contractors.
  - Accessing Personal Protective Equipment for employees and sub-contractors.
  - Alternate plan to complete in person visits when employees and sub-contractors are unable to conduct in-person visits when required.
  - Support for telehealth and teleconferencing based on individual health and safety concerns.

2. Guidance for health care workers applies to Case Managers, Consultants, Community Support Coordinators, Agency Service Coordinators and Supervisors including wearing masks throughout the entirety of the in-person visit and should be included in the agency's COVID-19 Safe Practices Plan.
3. Frequency and location of in-person visits must follow applicable Waiver Service Standards. In DD Waiver, when visits during Customized Community Supports and Community Integrated Employment services are provided at home or virtually, count the in-home visit during those hours as a day services visit.
4. Agency COVID-19 Safe Practices Plan must be available to DDS immediately upon request.

#### **In Person Safeguards**

1. In person visits should not include any physical contact and may take a variety of forms depending on risk level and need.
2. Visits must include wearing masks throughout the entirety of the visit and following screening protocol of host home agency or family. If the individual does not have a screening protocol, the screening routine defaults to that of the visiting agency.
3. Social distancing and number of people present must be considered for individual safety at in person meetings. In person meetings must include wearing of masks throughout the entirety of the meeting.

#### **Waiver Participant Choice**

1. Safety of in person visits must be continually assessed and can change from day to day, week to week and should include the preference of the waiver recipient and their family.
2. Effective January 1, 2022, if a waiver participant and/or their guardian requests that a required in person visit be conducted telephonically, via telehealth or in a setting other than the setting required, an exception to standards may be submitted to the DDS Regional Office and will be reviewed within 10 business days. Exceptions requests should be based on how an in-person visit might jeopardize a waiver participant's health and safety, not the agency or staff person's need.

**IDTs in person or remote:** IDTs can continue to be held in person or remotely based on the preference of the guardian and/or individual. If the IDT is held in person at a Congregate Care Facility (defined as any facility based Day or Group Employment service offered within any of the DD Waiver, Mi Via Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, Supports Waiver, or State General Funded programs) or Community Home (defined as DD Waiver Supported Living, Intensive Medical Living Services, and State General Funded residential homes), IDT members attending meetings in person in these locations must be vaccinated unless they have received an exemption from their employer and submit to weekly COVID-19 testing with negative tests results.

#### **Training:**

The DDS Training Unit is announcing that effective January 1, 2022, certified agency trainers may once again conduct DDS core/classroom trainings in-person. We want to encourage remote on-line trainings/livestreaming trainings when possible. This announcement also rescinds all other memos regarding in-person or face-to-face trainings of DDS Core courses, and the Crisis Prevention and Intervention Systems guidance issued March 15, 2021. Following COVID-19 Safe Practice Plan Individual Specific Training can resume. Please follow the COVID-19 related guidance in this memo for all DDS core/classroom trainings.

### **COVID-19 Vaccinations:**

As per the Public Health Order (PHO) dated September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021; signed by Acting Department of Health Secretary, Dr. David R. Scrase “*All hospital workers, congregate care facility workers, and employees of the Office of the Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they qualify for an exemption.*” The PHO further states “*If an operator of a hospital, operator of a congregate care facility, or the Office of Michelle Lujan Grisham determines a worker to have met the requirements of an exemption...the unvaccinated exempt worker shall:*

- a. Provide adequate proof that the individual has tested negative for COVID-19 on a weekly basis; and*
- b. Wear a mask or multilayer cloth face covering at all times indoors at the hospital or congregate care facility except when eating or drinking. An unvaccinated worker will be exempt from wearing a mask indoors if adequate proof is provided that the individual has been instructed otherwise by a licensed healthcare provider.”*

DDSD is requiring that any Case Manager, Consultant, Community Support Coordinator, Agency Service Coordinator, and/or Supervisor must be fully vaccinated to render in person face to face monitoring visits in any setting for any Waiver or State General Funded service unless an exemption has been granted by the employer.

### **Public Health Orders:**

Each agency is expected to monitor compliance with the COVID-19 indoor mask mandate and vaccine mandate as outlined in the Public Health Orders to include weekly monitoring of COVID-19 testing for those employees and/or sub-contractors who have been granted an exemption by their employer. Any entity who violates the Public Health Order, is subject to civil administrative penalties available at law.

### **Executive Order:**

On Friday, November 12, 2021, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed an executive order expanding eligibility for COVID-19 booster shots to all New Mexico adults as part of the state’s strategy to address rising case numbers and hospitalizations, a trend being seen nationwide. New Mexicans aged 18 and over may now schedule a booster shot if:

- They received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine more than two months ago OR
- They completed the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine series more than six months ago

If you have not done so already, DDSD strongly encourages everyone to register to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, for those who are eligible now to receive the COVID-19 vaccine booster shot, DDSD encourages everyone eligible to register to receive your booster. Together we can limit the opportunities for the virus to spread and by doing so we have a better chance of keeping each other safe.

If you have questions, please contact the following DDSD Staff:

- DD Waiver Program Manager, Marie Velasco ([marie.velasco@state.nm.us](mailto:marie.velasco@state.nm.us))
- Mi Via Waiver, Jennifer Rodriguez, Deputy Director ([jennifer.rodriguez@state.nm.us](mailto:jennifer.rodriguez@state.nm.us))
- Medically Fragile Waiver Program Manager, Iris Clevenger ([iris.clevenger@state.nm.us](mailto:iris.clevenger@state.nm.us))
- Supports Waiver Program Manager, Jennifer Roth ([jennifer.roth@state.nm.us](mailto:jennifer.roth@state.nm.us))
- State General Fund Program Manager, Juanita Salas ([juanita.salas@state.nm.us](mailto:juanita.salas@state.nm.us))
- Regional Office Director(s)

- Metro: Michael Driskell ([michael.driskell@state.nm.us](mailto:michael.driskell@state.nm.us))
- NWRO: Michele Groblebe ([michele.groblebe@state.nm.us](mailto:michele.groblebe@state.nm.us))
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- SWRO: Angie Brooks ([angie.brooks@state.nm.us](mailto:angie.brooks@state.nm.us))
- Regional Office Bureau Chief, Angie Brooks ([angie.brooks@state.nm.us](mailto:angie.brooks@state.nm.us))
- DDSD Deputy Director, Scott Doan ([scott.doan@state.nm.us](mailto:scott.doan@state.nm.us))

**Additional Resources:**

- NM DOH COVID-19 Site: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/>
- DDSD COVID-19 Site: <https://nmhealth.org/about/ddsd/diro/ddcv/>
- NM DOH COVID-19 Safe Practices: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/covid-safe-practices/>
- Report a Public Health Order Violation: <https://www.newmexico.gov/2020/03/25/how-to-report-non-compliance-within-a-business-a-violation-of-the-mass-gatherings-ban-or-other-violations-of-the-public-order/>
- NM DOH COVID-19 Vaccine General Information: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/covid-vaccine/>
- NM DOH COVID-19 Vaccine Site: <https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org/>
- New Mexico Notify [NM Notify | Help New Mexico Stop The Spread](#)
- Vault COVID-19 Testing Resource [learn.vaulthealth.com/nm/](https://learn.vaulthealth.com/nm/).
- COVID-19 testing at Curative sites, which can be located through the NMDOH website: <https://findatestnm.org/>
- New Mexico Crisis and Access Line | [www.nmcrisisline.com](http://www.nmcrisisline.com)
- Crisis and Access Line | 1-855-NMCRISIS | 1-855-662-7474
- Peer-to-Peer Warmline | 1-855-4NM-7100 | 1-855-466-7100
- Healthcare Worker and First Responder Support Line | 1-855-507-5509

Do you want to pre-register for your COVID-19 Vaccine?

Visit [cvvaccine.nmhealth.org](https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org) to register today.