



DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SUPPORTS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

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From the Director’s Desk - Jennifer Zwally, Director

Hello and happy Spring!

So much has been going on at DDS and I’m always grateful to stop, reflect, and share the highlights of the last few months with you. As we approach the end of the fiscal year, we are already planning for the next. We remain committed to continuous improvement, always seeking new ways to strengthen the system and enhance the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Our Community Programs and Clinical Services teams successfully completed waiver renewal activities, culminating in the submission to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The Developmental Disabilities Waiver and the Medically Fragile Waiver will continue for another five-year cycle beginning July 1, 2026.

A quarterly Advocacy Partners meeting was recently held, building on the commitments established at the 2024 Provider Summit. This time, the conversation placed a renewed emphasis on the perspectives of self-advocates highlighting their priorities, experiences, and ideas for improving the system.

Our employment team has been actively partnering with schools and providers across the state to ensure that individuals who want to work have access to the information and resources they need to succeed. At the same time, we are strengthening provider supports, so they are well-equipped to help individuals participate fully in their communities. Through individualized schedules and competitive, integrated employment opportunities, we are helping people build skills, gain independence, and lead meaningful lives.

We have reestablished a strong partnership with the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department to identify solutions for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who are in state custody. Through this collaboration, we are exploring innovative and responsive approaches to better support these children and meet their unique needs.

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From The Directors Desk (continued)

The second annual Special Smiles Special Care Dental Summit took place in April, drawing a strong turnout and growing interest from across the field. In partnership with the New Mexico Dental Association Foundation, dentists from the HCA DDS Special Needs Dental Clinic shared best practices in specialized dental care and engaged in meaningful dialogue about future growth. The summit also provided an opportunity to gather ideas for expanding services and address the increasing demand for providers with the unique skills needed to deliver high-quality dental care to underserved and diverse populations.

As we continue this important work, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to each of you for your dedication, compassion, and commitment. Every day, your efforts make a meaningful difference in the lives of people with IDD supporting independence, fostering inclusion, and creating opportunities for individuals to thrive in their communities. Thank you for the care you bring to this work and for the impact you make each and every day.

Jen



DDSD Mission Statement

To serve those with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing a comprehensive system of person-centered community supports so that individuals live the lives they prefer, where they are respected, empowered, and free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

To Act With:

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Respect
- Transparency

To Be:

- Person Centered
- Proactive
- Innovative
- Inclusive

Guardian Access & Secure Communication Requirements

Contributor: Julie Pierce, Systems and Access Unit Manager

To support transparency, collaboration, and compliance, Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver Provider Agencies must ensure guardians have appropriate access to individual records and secure communication tools within Therap. Therap is a secure, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant, web-based system for planning, reporting, documentation, communication, and other functions to meet the needs of organizations supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in home and community-based services (HCBS) and other settings.

Per DD Waiver Service Standards 20.5.1 and 20.4, providers are required to create Therap user accounts for guardians upon request. These accounts must include read-access to the individual's full record, ensuring guardians can stay informed and actively participate in support planning and oversight. All communication involving Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must be conducted through Therap's Secure Communication (SComm) module. SComm is a HIPAA-compliant platform designed to safely exchange sensitive information, similar to email but with enhanced privacy protections. Using SComm is mandatory when communicating with Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) members, Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD), and Division of Health Improvement (DHI) regarding PHI.

All guardians and individuals with Therap accounts must have SComm privileges enabled.

Need Help?

- For general technical assistance (no PHI): email DDSD.Therap.Support@hca.nm.gov
- For individual-specific support use SComm to contact DDSD, Therap Unit / Inbox Only - Auto Reply (DOH-DDSD)

Maintaining these standards ensures we protect sensitive information while promoting effective, timely communication with guardians and support teams.

NM START Service Description



NM START is a mental health support service for people with Developmental Disabilities (DD), designed to help individuals live full, meaningful lives in the community while avoiding crises. Team members are trained in both DD and mental health and focus on individual strengths. Services typically last 12–18 months and are designed to support, not replace, existing providers by aligning everyone toward shared goals.

A key component of NM START is coordination. NM START coordinators learn as much as possible about each person and use a biopsychosocial approach, considering physical health, diagnoses, and social and cultural factors. This helps teams develop proactive strategies to reduce challenges. Coordinators work closely with providers, families, and other supports to create a Cross System Crisis Prevention and Intervention Plan, which serves as a roadmap for preventing and responding to crises.

NM START also provides access to additional expertise, including a medical director and clinical director. Coordinators can offer guidance on diagnoses, positive support strategies, and attend meetings or appointments. Outreach visits across settings help identify what is working well and where improvements can be made collaboratively.

Who Should Be Referred?

NM START serves individuals ages 6+ with ASD, ASD/IDD, IDD, and complex behavioral health needs who live within two hours of Albuquerque. Referrals may be appropriate for individuals who are in crisis, have recent psychiatric hospitalizations, require enhanced staffing, have multiple placements, experience frequent crisis interventions or medication changes, have unclear diagnoses, are at risk of losing services or housing, or present with complex behavioral, medical, or trauma-related needs.

How to make a referral: If you believe the individual, you support may benefit from our services, please email: CDD-NMSTART@salud.unm.edu or call: (505) 272-106



Tracking Federal Updates on the Medicaid Access Rule: What DDSD Is Doing

Contributor: Christina Hill, Deputy Bureau Chief - Community Programs Bureau

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services Final Rule (the Access Rule) to strengthen Medicaid services by improving access to care, increasing transparency, and enhancing protections for people who rely on Medicaid. The rule requires states to meet several new requirements over a staggered five-year implementation timeline. These include payment adequacy reviews, quality reporting, incident management systems, grievance processes, waitlist reporting, person-centered planning reporting, and advisory groups that include stakeholders and people receiving services. CMS is currently considering delaying enforcement or potentially repealing parts of the rule. The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) is closely monitoring these developments while continuing work to prepare for possible implementation. To stay proactive this is what DDSD is doing now.

Grievance System Is Live

DDSD has established a grievance system where anyone can share concerns or complaints related to services, including issues with person-centered planning or service delivery. Grievances can be submitted online using the Grievance Reporting Form or by email, phone, or mail. This system does not replace reporting abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Learn more on the [Office of Constituent Support](#) webpage.

Interested Parties Advisory Group (IPAG)

DDSD began planning for the Interested Parties Advisory Group focused on payment adequacy. Development is currently paused while federal guidance is being reviewed. CMS issued an [informational bulletin](#); “Exercise of Enforcement Discretion until Calendar Year 2029 for Medicaid Interested Parties Advisory Group”, delaying the July 1, 2026 enforcement deadline until January 2029. This additional time will allow CMS to consider proposing changes to this aspect of the Access Rule. DDSD will revisit this work as more information becomes available.

Rate Disclosure Coming July 1, 2026

Beginning July 1, 2026, DDSD will post additional information on the DDSD website about payment rates and claims for services that fall under federal definitions of personal care, home health aide services, homemaker services, and habilitation. This will build on the current Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) fee schedules already available online. The posted information will include:

- Average hourly rates (agency-directed vs. self-directed)
- The number of Medicaid-paid claims
- The number of beneficiaries served

The disclosure will also include similar information for Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID), which are provider and location specific rates that are not currently published.

Experience of Care Survey

To meet Access Rule quality measure set requirements, DDSD will use the National Core Indicators (NCI)-IDD survey, one of three CMS-approved tools. The survey measures health, safety, and community participation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DDSD is following the state procurement process to select a vendor who will administer the survey and report results to CMS by 2028.

DDSD remains committed to keeping services accessible, transparent, and responsive while monitoring potential federal changes. For questions or more information about how DDSD is complying with the Access Rule, contact Christina Hill at christina.hill@hca.nm.gov.

DDSD School Outreach for Community Inclusion and Competitive Employment

**Contributors: Alix Dean, Community Inclusion & Employment Lead
Lizette Lujan, Community Inclusion & Employment Coordinator**

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) is excited to announce a new High School Outreach initiative through the Community Inclusion and Employment (CI/E) Unit. This initiative is designed to strengthen partnerships with high schools across New Mexico and give students, families, and school staff information about the services and supports available through the Mi Via, Medically Fragile and Developmental Disabilities Waiver programs that help students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) enjoy community life and plan for employment as they prepare for adult life.

The CI/E Unit started by contacting the special education leads and school principals at 184 high schools via email in January. During this initial outreach, the regional office Community Inclusion Coordinators shared resources and connected schools with DDSD program information. School outreach will continue and DDSD plans to send resources to schools twice every school year—at the start of Fall and Spring semesters.

The CI/E Unit and other bureaus within DDSD are available to present or participate at school events such as parent education nights, transition fairs, and other student-focused activities. The CI/E Unit can provide information to students, families, school staff, and other stakeholders about community inclusion and employment services available through the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers to enhance self-advocacy during the transition-age years for community integration.

By connecting students and families with information and resources early, DDSD aims to empower young people with IDD to pursue meaningful post-school outcomes that include employment and enhance participation in their communities. DDSD is committed to Employment First and believes all students are capable of full participation in their communities, gaining competitive integrated employment.

For high schools interested in scheduling a visit or learning more about the initiative, please use the School Presentation / Event Request form by scanning the QR code below.

Contact: Lizette Lujan, Community Inclusion & Employment Coordinator with any questions: Lizette.Lujan@hca.nm.gov



HB357 Implementation Complete in the Mi Via Waiver

Contributor: Melanie Buenviaje, Deputy Director

The New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) is happy to report that House Bill 357 (HB357) has now been fully implemented in the Mi Via Waiver.

HB357 changes how participant budgets are calculated by removing provider gross receipts tax (GRT) from the Individual Budget Allocation (IBA). The GRT will be paid instead through DDSD funds specifically designated for GRT. With implementation complete, GRT is no longer included in Mi Via budgets ensuring that more of each participant's funding is available for direct services and supports.

What this means for families and providers:

- **More funding for services:** Participant budgets are now focused on supports identified in the Service and Support Plan (SSP), without reductions related to GRT.
- **Greater clarity:** Budget development and approvals now reflect a simpler and consistent approach.
- **Next Steps:** A budget revision will be required to apply "GRT funds" to additional and new supports. For information see: HB357 GRT FAQ

The implementation of HB357 reflects our State's commitment to person-centered, self-directed services, giving participants greater control over how their resources are used to meet their individual goals.

DDSD will continue to provide guidance and support to ensure participants, consultants, and vendors understand these updates and can fully benefit from the changes.

Jennifer Sedillo, Registered Dental Hygienist - DDSD Special Needs Dental Clinic

My name is Jennifer Sedillo, and I am one of the dental hygienists at the DDSD Special Needs Dental Clinic. I'm a lifelong resident of Albuquerque, New Mexico and attended Texas Tech University before returning home to pursue a degree in dental hygiene at the University of New Mexico. After spending 29 years in private practice, I discovered a passion for caring for patients with special needs while volunteering at Carrie Tingley's dental clinic.

I joined Dr. Lyons, Dr. Grady, and the DDSD Special Needs Dental Clinic team in 2016. For more than a decade, I have been dedicated to providing compassionate, respectful, and supportive care to our patients, ensuring they feel safe and comfortable during their visits.

Outside of work, I enjoy life in New Mexico with my husband. We raised three children here and now love spending time with our seven grandchildren. I also enjoy camping, gardening, and spending time at the lake with family and friends.



Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver Updates

Contributor: Steve Fernandez, DD Waiver Program Manager

DD Waiver Renewal

Over the past year, DDS D hosted 10 town hall meetings to engage DD Waiver participants, providers, family members, and advocates. These sessions provided valuable opportunities to gather feedback, share information, and hear directly from the community about their experiences receiving support through the DD Waiver. Thank you to everyone who took the time to participate and provide thoughtful input about how to improve the DD Waiver. Your feedback will play a key role in strengthening the DD Waiver program and improving the lives of the individuals we serve. On March 30, 2026, the Health Care Authority held a public hearing on the DD Waiver renewal application. The application has now been submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), with a proposed effective date of July 1, 2026.

DD Waiver Service Standards Revisions

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDS D) continues to make steady progress on revising the DD Waiver Service Standards. This work is focused on aligning updates related to waiver renewal, improving clarity, and enhancing overall usability. Revisions are guided by several key goals:

- Improve clarity across all chapters and sections
- Enhance user-friendliness
- Consolidate and streamline content where appropriate
- Correct grammar and sentence structure

DDS D extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who has contributed feedback and suggestions throughout this process. Community input has been invaluable in shaping these revisions. Suggestions received to date reflect a wide range of important topics, including:

- Updates to nursing requirements and language
- Changes to recommended medical examinations
- Clarification of case management responsibilities
- Updates to aspiration risk management requirements
- Expansion of respite provider options
- Revisions to reporting requirements
- Clarification of meeting requirements

DDS D is actively reviewing all feedback. A draft of revised DD Waiver Service Standards is anticipated to be available for external review around June, 2026. This draft will provide stakeholders with an opportunity to review proposed changes and submit additional input. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Vineland Adaptive Behavior Skills Implementation

DDS D has partnered with Comagine Health to provide Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales-3 (Vineland-3) training for all DD Waiver Case Managers, Mi Via Consultants, and internal DDS D staff. The training is scheduled for April 21, 2026, and is designed to strengthen understanding of the Vineland-3 assessment tool and how to use the results in person-centered planning. Implementation of Vineland-3 in the DD Waiver is expected to begin in October 2026. A comprehensive roll-out plan will be shared in late summer 2026.

For questions or information contact: Steven Fernandez at steven.fernandez@hca.nm.gov

Health and Wellness Visits Update

Contributor: Scott Doan, Deputy Director

As we approach the end of the first quarter of 2026, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) continues to complete health and wellness visits. DDSD has completed 42,902 health and wellness visits since March of 2023. On average, DDSD completes approximately 1,150 visits per month for individuals receiving home and community based services (HCBS) waivers.

The following table reflects the total number of health and wellness visits completed from January 1, 2026 through March 24, 2026; including the total number of alleged abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation (ANE) reports made to the Division of Health Improvement, Incident Management Bureau (DHHIMB). The table also shows the total number of Regional Office Requests for Assistance (RORAs) filed during this time.

Time Period	Total Number of Health and Wellnes Visits	Total Number of ANE Allegations Reported	Total Number of RORAs Filed
1/1/26 - 3/24/26	2,968	9	10

As part of the DDSD health and wellness visits, DDSD completed a preliminary review of environmental concerns. These concerns were reported by DDSD staff conducting health and wellness visits in the homes of individuals receiving Developmental Disabilities Waiver (DDW) and Mi Via Waiver (MVW) services. Environmental concerns reported included but were not limited to the following:

- Unsanitary conditions
- Infrastructure concerns
- Infestation of bed bugs
- Infestation of cockroaches
- Infestation of rodents
- Utilities not working
- Water temperature too hot
- Excess clutter, unable to walk in home
- Excess trash
- Spoiled/expired food
- Plumbing failure (sewer odor)
- Door, cabinet and refrigerator locks
- Home not accessible
- Hoarding

A preliminary review was completed for the peroid of January 2025 to January 2026. During this time 64 environmental concerns were reported. Of these 64 reported concerns, 5 individuals appeared more than once as a reported concern, resulting in an unduplicated count totaling 59 individuals who receive either DDW or MVW services. Of the 59 individuals, 46 receive DD Waiver services and 13 receive Mi Via Waiver services. Of the 64 environmental concerns reported, 22 rose to the level of a reportable incident to the Division of Health Improvement - Incident Management Bureau.

As a result of preliminary findings cited above, DDSD has added an environmental concerns question to the DDSD health and wellness visits. DDSD will continue gathering information and analyze data to determine appropriate next steps as it relates to reported environmental concerns that do not rise to the level of ANE reporting.

As always, continued thanks to each person who has participated in the health and wellness visits for your cooperation.

Medically Fragile Waiver (MFW) Updates

Contributor: Melissa McBride, MBA, MSN, RN - Clinical Services Bureau Chief

The Medically Fragile Waiver (MFW) renewal application has been submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). A Public Hearing was held on March 30, 2026. The waiver application was submitted to CMS on April 1, 2026. Highlights of changes are listed below.

- Revised language throughout application for clarity and accuracy
- Added new services: Acupuncture, Biofeedback, Chiropractic, Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy, Hippotherapy, Naprapathy, Play Therapy, and Music Therapy
- Annual capped dollar amounts were increased to align with current provider rates

The Medically Fragile Waiver Unit is revising the MFW standards to better align with other DDSD 1915(c) waivers.

- The updated standards will be available for review in the coming months.
- We welcome your feedback and suggestions on ways to improve the content or organization of the standards. Please provide feedback using link [MF Waiver Standards Revision-2026](#)

Our new Medically Fragile Waiver Program Manager, Shannon Culpepper, started on March 30th. She joins DDSD with over 10 years of experience as a nurse case manager and coordinator. Her background includes managing caseloads across Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT), Developmental Disabilities Waiver (DDW), and Medically Fragile Waiver (MFW) programs. She can be reached by email at shannon.culpepper@hca.nm.gov or by phone at 505-670-8954.

Therapy Services

Our new Therapy Coordinator Supervisor, Moses Martinez, started on April 1st. He comes to us from the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division Pre-Service Intake Bureau and we are excited to have him join our team at Clinical Services Bureau. Moses will be overseeing safety net services, therapy recruitment, and any therapy-related concerns involving Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP). He can be reached at moses.martinez@hca.nm.gov or by phone at 505.52.3611.

The Short-Term Therapy Consultations Services, "Safety Net Services" document has been updated on the DDSD website [CSB-TS-Short-Term Consultation.pdf](#) and includes information on what safety net services are, how to request them, and what types of assistance are available. It will be presented at the DDSD Quarterly Provider Meeting on May 21, 2026, by one of our therapy consultants.

Aspiration Risk Management (ARM)

Updates have been made to the Comprehensive Aspiration Risk Management Plan (CARMP) form. A few highlights of changes are below. Refer to memo dated April 1, 2026, for a comprehensive review of all changes.

- In the header a Decision Consultation Form signed date was added,
- Section A. added emergency response information (as needed),
- Emergency Contact Information now has its own box.

ICF/IID Update: Beds, Briefs, and Billing

Contributor: Jessica Trujillo, ICF/IID Program Coordinator

ICF/IIDs in New Mexico: Services, Locations, and Capacity

An Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) provides services in residential settings, ongoing evaluation, planning, supervision, treatment, and integration of health or rehabilitation services to help individuals with intellectual disabilities function at their greatest ability in home and community-based settings.

In New Mexico, there are seven ICF/IIDs each with multiple homes in Metro, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest Regions. Currently, there are approximately 245 individuals admitted to the ICF/IIDs across the state with 28 open-beds across all seven ICF/IIDs.

NMAC Language Changes

On February 10, 2026, the New Mexico Health Care Authority (HCA) through the Medical Assistance Division (MAD) proposed amendments to the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) removing outdated language and replacing it with updated references to individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. On March 12, 2026, HCA held a public hearing allowing opportunities for public comments regarding these changes. The implementation of the revised NMAC is expected to take effect July 1, 2026.

Rate Publication and Disclosure Coming July 1, 2026

Beginning July 1, 2026, the HCA Medical Assistance Division (MAD) will publish ICF/IID fee-for-service (FFS) fee schedules on the HCA website. Publishing this information complies with the federal Medicaid Access Rule titled Medicaid Program; Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Managed Care, Medicaid Program Fee-for-Service, and Medicaid and CHIP Delivery System Reform; Medicaid Access (CMS-2442-F).

The posted information will include fee schedules which are provider and location-specific rate schedules, along with data related to hourly rates, claims for services, and the number of people served in ICF/IIDs. Posting this information is intended to help stakeholders better understand how services are paid and support greater transparency.

Learn more:

[ICF/IID Webpage](#)

Program Contact:

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about ICF/IIDs, please contact:

Jessica Trujillo, DDSD ICF/IID Program Coordinator

Phone: 505-623-1916 Email: jessica.trujillo@hca.nm.gov

State General Fund Program Provides Support for New Mexicans with IDD

Contributor: Brandi Rede, SGF program Manager

The State General Fund (SGF) program plays a vital role in supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) across New Mexico who do not have access to Medicaid waiver services. SGF services serve as a safety net program ensuring individuals can receive needed supports while waiting for waiver services or when other options are not available. The program supports independence, provides in-home services, promotes community integration, and ensures continuity of care.

Bridging the Gap in Services

The SGF program primarily serves individuals who have completed the DDS waiver eligibility process and have been determined to meet the criteria for IDD services but are not currently enrolled in a Medicaid waiver or the Medicaid Community Benefit program.

For many families, SGF represents an essential bridge providing stability and necessary care during periods of uncertainty.

Services That Support Daily Life

The SGF program offers a range of services aimed at helping individuals remain safe in their homes and communities. These services include:

- **Adult Day Services** - Structured daytime supports that promote skill-building, socialization, community engagement, and employment support.
- **Residential Services** - Assistance with daily living for adults who need support in a home setting
- **Respite Services** - Short-term relief for caregivers of both children and adults

All services are designed with a strong emphasis on person-centered planning, ensuring that supports align with each individual's needs, preferences, and goals.

Supporting Transitions to Long-Term Services

While SGF is not intended to replace waiver services, it plays an important role in preparing individuals for long-term support options. The SGF program manager regularly monitors participants' waiver allocation status and coordinates with SGF providers, DD Waiver case managers, and Mi Via consultants to support transitions when waiver opportunities are selected.

The Mi Via, Developmental Disabilities and Medically Fragile Waiver programs offer more comprehensive and long-term services than the SGF program, including expanded supports, greater service array to choose from, case management and broader access to specialized care. Because of this, transitioning to a waiver program allows individuals to receive a more robust level of support tailored to their long-term needs.

To support continuity of care, individuals may choose to remain with their current provider if that provider is also approved to deliver waiver services. This allows for consistency in relationships, services, and supports throughout the transition process. Through proactive coordination and planning, the SGF program helps ensure individuals experience smooth transitions to waiver services without disruptions in care, while gaining access to more comprehensive, long-term supports.

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State General Fund Program (continued)

For more information about the SGF program and available services, please visit:

<https://www.hca.nm.gov/state-general-funded-services/>

Providers and families may also contact the SGF program team for guidance or assistance:

SGF Program Manager: Brandi Rede: (575) 932-8160

Regional Liaisons:

Northeast Regional Office Liaison: Mikaela Romero – (505) 637-1791

Northwest Regional Office Liaison: Tessa Arviso – (505) 478-3035

Southeast Regional Office Liaison: Melissa Acuna – (575) 624-6100

Southwest Regional Office Liaison: Jaime Lopez – (575) 636-5731

Metro Regional Office Liaison: Contact SGF Program Manager

Office of Constituent Support - Key Updates and Efforts

Contributor: Claudia Rice, Office of Constituent Supports Manager

Greetings from the DDSD Office of Constituent Support (OCS)! The abbreviated legislative session concluded in February, and despite its short duration, there were several positive developments for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in the state of New Mexico. Notably, the passage of House Bill 38 requires state health insurance plans to cover wheelchairs, and House Bill 4 is designed to assist New Mexicans with health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket healthcare costs. During the session, DDSD participated in Elevate the Spectrum Autism Day and Disability Rights Awareness Day at the legislature, helping to raise awareness of the services and supports available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism and other disabilities, throughout New Mexico.

New through the OCS: DDSD has enhanced its grievance system to better address concerns and improve responsiveness. A grievance is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or concern, regardless of whether a specific resolution is requested.

To file a grievance with the DDSD, call 505-699-6775, email DDSD.Constituents@hca.nm.gov, mail the DDSD your grievance at PO Box 2348, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2348, or visit the [DDSD OCS](#) webpage to file your grievance online.

To contact DDSD Office of Constituent Supports, email DDSD.Constituents@hca.nm.gov, or call 505-546-9428.

Provider Enrollment Relations Unit Updates

Contributor: Tammy Barth, Provider Enrollment Relations Unit Manager

The Provider Enrollment Relations Unit (PERU) remains committed to maintaining adequate provider capacity across New Mexico. Currently, six (6) newly approved providers have been added to the Secondary Freedom of Choice (SFOC) list, offering services under the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver. Their services include:

- Occupational and Speech Therapies
- Customized Community Supports (Group & Individual)
- Living Supports (Family and Supported Living)

Additionally, four (4) providers are undergoing HCA review for the following services:

- Occupational Adult Nursing, Customized Community Supports-Group, Customized Community Supports-Individual, Independent Living Transition, Living Supports-Family Living, Living Supports-Supported Living and Non-Medical Transportation
- Case Management
- Remote Personal Support Technology

PERU continuously monitors provider capacity and actively recruits to ensure sufficient coverage for waiver services. Current service needs by region are outlined below:

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver Service

Metro	Remote Personal Support Technology and Vehicle Modifications.
Northeast	Crisis Supports, Intensive Medical Living, Remote Personal Support Technology, Vehicle Modifications.
Northwest	Crisis Supports, Environmental Modification, Independent Living Transition, Intensive Medical Living, Nutritional Counseling, Remote Personal Support Technology, Socialization & Sexuality Education, and Vehicle Modifications.
Southeast	Crisis Supports, Environmental Modification, Nutritional Counseling, Remote Personal Support Technology, Vehicle Modifications.
Southwest	Crisis Supports, Independent Living Transition, Nutritional Counseling, Remote Personal Support Technology, Vehicle Modifications.

Medically Fragile (MF) Waiver Service Needs

Metro	Customized Community Group Supports, Individual Direct Goods & Services, Massage Therapy, Nutritional Counseling, Specialized Medical Equipment & Supplies, Specialized Respite Home, Vehicle Modifications.
Northeast	Customized Community Group Supports, Environmental Modification, Individual Direct Goods & Services, Massage Therapy, Nutritional Counseling, Specialized Medical Equipment & Supplies, Specialized Respite Home, and Vehicle Modifications.
Northwest	Behavior Supports Consultation, Customized Community Group Supports, Environmental Modification, Individual Direct Goods & Services, Massage Therapy, Nutritional Counseling, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Specialized Medical Equipment & Supplies, Specialized Respite Home, Speech Therapy, Vehicle Modifications.
Southeast	Behavior Supports Consultation, Customized Community Group Supports, Environmental Modification, Individual Direct Goods & Services, Massage Therapy, Nutritional Counseling, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Specialized Medical Equipment & Supplies, Specialized Respite Home, Speech Therapy, Vehicle Modifications.
Southwest	Behavior Supports Consultation, Customized Community Group Supports, Individual Direct Goods & Services, Massage Therapy, Nutritional Counseling, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Specialized Medical Equipment & Supplies, Specialized Respite Home, Speech Therapy, Vehicle Modifications.

Employment Tales - Ethan Diffey

Hello, my name is Ethan,

I work at Fly High as a cashier and I have been here for 4 years. Fly High is a trampoline park where kids and adults can jump and have fun! In addition to typical cashier work, I also support the snack bar, clean, and walk around the floor to check on customers. I went in and applied and enjoy my job because I'm great around kids and good at communicating with other people. I also like my job because it gives me an opportunity to make more friends and I have gotten close to my co-workers.

By sharing your employment tale, you can join DDSD in encouraging more people to explore how they can contribute to their local economy and build a pathway to economic stability.

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) is celebrating the success of New Mexicans with intellectual and developmental disabilities at work through the Employment Tales series. Want to participate? Submit a picture and 5 sentences about what you enjoy about working to:

Lizette.Lujan@hca.nm.gov



Client Program Counts

PARTICIPANTS BY WAIVER AS OF 3/23/26	
Waiver	Participant Count
Developmental Disabilities Waiver	4,849
Mi Via Waiver	3,949
Medically Fragile Waiver	182
Total	8,938

Mi Via Service Standards Update

Contributer: Elaine Hill, Mi Via Program Manager

DDSD is finalizing updates to the Mi Via Service Standards, incorporating valuable feedback from stakeholders.

Projected Release: Spring 2026 - What to expect:

- A new, streamlined format that is more user-friendly and easier to navigate
- Continued emphasis on a self-directed, person-centered model that also aligns with the new Mi Via Waiver Application. Some additions to the standards include:
 - ◆ Training Compliance
 - ◆ Voluntary and involuntary termination
 - ◆ Changes to Gross Receipt Tax language due to House Bill (HB) 357.

2026 Fall Leadership Institute



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Be part of what leaders have called:
'The most important training of my career.'

PROGRAM DETAILS

Dates: November 15 -20, 2026
Location: Santa Fe, NM
Cost: \$2550 (Early Bird Rate)
Who Should Attend: Open to all IDD system leaders. At NLCDD, we believe that anyone in any position or role who impacts change is a leader.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Hosted in partnership with the New Mexico

HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

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CORE LEARNING

1. Navigating unique challenges in the disabilities sector
2. Learning about field innovations and opportunities
3. Leading values-based transformation
4. Building a positive and engaged culture
5. Honing your leadership skills to promote the rights and human dignity of people with disabilities

IMPACT

Our data shows that those who attend the Leadership Institute leave re-energized, more confident, and prepared to address challenges within their organizations and systems.

- More energy means more engagement and enthusiasm for providing great services
- More confidence means more effective and productive leadership at all levels
- More prepared means leaders have the skills, tools, and resources to impact needed change at all levels

EMPOWERING LEADERS, BUILDING COMMUNITY

StationMD DSP Spotlight Series

StationMD DSP Spotlight Series



“I am motivated by the opportunity to advocate for individuals and help them live meaningful, empowered lives. My own life experiences have taught me resilience, patience, and the importance of showing up consistently for others... Creating a supportive, lighthearted, and stable environment helps individuals feel safe, valued, and capable.”

Blair Garfield

DSP at Ability First, New Mexico

February 2026’s DSP Spotlight shines on Blair Garfield from Ability First, a Direct Support Professional whose leadership, dependability, and compassion make a lasting impact on those he serves. Blair’s colleagues describe him in three words: responsible, dependable, and leader. He consistently demonstrates critical thinking skills while working diligently to support his team and uphold the highest standards of care. His professionalism and performance distinguish him among his peers.

Blair’s path to direct support is unlike most. Originally from Vitebsk, Belarus, he grew up in an orphanage before coming to the United States. When he arrived, his adoptive mother recognized his natural desire to help others and his passion for improving lives. That early recognition helped shape who he is today and strengthened his commitment to serving communities with compassion and care.

“I am motivated by the opportunity to advocate for individuals and help them live meaningful, empowered lives,” Blair shares. “My own life experiences have taught me resilience, patience, and the importance of showing up consistently for others. I strongly believe that laughter and positivity are powerful tools. Creating a supportive, lighthearted, and stable environment helps individuals feel safe, valued, and capable.”

Blair has found StationMD to be a valuable partner in providing quality care. He recalls a situation where an individual he supports experienced symptoms requiring medical guidance but not emergency intervention. “StationMD allowed us to quickly access a knowledgeable and licensed provider who understood my individual’s unique needs,” he explains. “This support helped us make informed decisions, advocate effectively, and maintain a calm environment during a stressful moment. The experience reinforced how valuable StationMD is in promoting both quality care and peace of mind for our individuals and even staff.”

When asked what advice he would offer fellow DSPs, Blair emphasizes empathy, consistency, and confidence. “Leadership often means being a steady presence, advocating for individual needs, and setting a positive tone. A calm, respectful environment that allows room for laughter can be deeply therapeutic.”

Outside of work, Blair enjoys traveling, attending concerts, spending time with loved ones, and finding joy in the small day-to-day moments.

Thank you, Blair, for your advocacy, your positivity, and your steady presence. The individuals you support are fortunate to have you.

E-BLASTS

Second Annual Special Needs Dental Care Summit Flyer – March 24, 2026
EMOD Call for Providers for Medically Fragile Waiver – March 20, 2026
DDSD Document Distribution – March 16, 2026
Advocacy Meeting Invitation - March 3, 2026
DDSD Document Distribution – March 3, 2026
PUBLIC NOTICE: Public Comment: Proposed Amendment to NMAC 8.321.1 – February 24, 2026
HB 357–Mi Via Provider Gross Receipts Tax Frequently Asked Questions – February 19, 2026
DDSD Document Distribution – February 16, 2026
DDSD Document Distribution – February 2, 2026
HCBS Rate Study Final Report on Rate Study Recommendations – January 27, 2026
Turquoise Claims Update – January 15, 2026
DDSD Document Distribution – January 15, 2026
Corrected - December 2025 Quarterly Meeting Presentation – December 18, 2025
DDSD Document Distribution – December 15, 2025
Mi Via Memo - Clarification on Mi Via Service Caps – December 15, 2025

NEW HIRES AND PROMOTIONS

Trinity Douglass - Economist: Santa Fe office: starts 6/20/26
Michelle Sanchez - Social Services Coordinator: Las Cruces, starts 4/11/26
Amy Mondragon - Senior Registered Nurse: Albuquerque, starts 4/11/26
Andres Soveranez - Purchasing Coordinator: Santa Fe, starts 4/11/26
Shannon Culpepper - Senior Registered Nurse: Albuquerque, 3/28/26
Guadalupe Garcia - Senior Purchasing Coordinator: Santa Fe, 3/28/26
Ernest Martinez - Supervisor, Social Services: Albuquerque: 3/28/26
Crystal Vigil - Legal Support Worker Supervisor: Albuquerque, 3/14/26
Laura Mixon - Supervisor, Social Services: Roswell, 2/28/26
Jason Rodriguez - Supervisor, Training: Albuquerque, 2/28/26
Phillip Bustamante - Sr Social Services Coordinator: Albuquerque, 2/14/26
Amber Carrillo - Sr Social Services Coordinator: Albuquerque, 2/14/26
Dominic Jaramillo - Supervisor, Social Services: Albuquerque, 2/14/26
Jesus Marquez - Senior Healthcare Surveyor: Albuquerque, 2/14/26
Bernadette Torrez - Sr Social Services Coordinator: Albuquerque, 2/14/26
Cesar Leon - ASB Bureau Chief, Program Management: Santa Fe, 1/31/26
Kristina Memmer - Sr Social Services Coordinator: Taos, 1/31/26
Jovanna Miranda - Sr Social Services Coordinator: Albuquerque, 1/31/26
Megan Shores - Sr Social Services Coordinator, Pre-service specialist: Albuquerque, 1/31/26
Amanda Veracka - Statewide Case Management System Coordinator: Albuquerque, 1/31/26
Amanda Abeyta-Arrietta - Business Operations Analyst: Santa Fe, 1/17/26
Ben Dougherty - Office Support Clerk: Taos, 1/3/26

ABOUT US

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