

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SUPPORTS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

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Happy summer!

We have so many things to be grateful for in NM's system of support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Even when things get hard or uncertainty is amidst, stay positive! Approach all you do with optimism, resilience and a focus on what's possible rather than what's limiting. Did you know, positive thinking reduces stress, lowers rates of depression, boosts motivation, and it's contagious?! In case you need it, here are a few reminders of all the greatness we are surrounded by...

- Amazing Provider Agencies who provide homes, transportation, and direct support professionals to support people with IDD to live with dignity, independence and purpose.
- Awesome Direct Support Professionals who bring empathy and patience to work every day so that people with IDD are seen, heard and valued as full members of society.
- Outstanding state partners who come together every time we ask for something to collaborate and share different perspectives and ideas.
- A remarkable legislature that has invested millions of dollars in our programs to support people with IDD.
- Knowledgeable and committed DDSD staff dedicated to keeping people safe, traveling across the state daily to complete health and wellness visits, and
- The most extraordinary people with IDD and their families who trust us to hear them and design a system of support to meet their needs.

I am grateful for each of you, and I am confident that together we will continue to protect rights, deliver needed services, promote independence and ensure public accountability for the well-being of people with IDD.

Jen



HEALTH CARE
AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SUPPORTS DIVISION - 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**



Working Together - DDSD Visits New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute

Contributor: Jen Rodriguez, Division Director

New Mexico Behavioral Health Institute (NMBHI) is the state's only state-operated psychiatric hospital, located in Las Vegas, New Mexico. It serves a broad spectrum of individuals in need of mental health and behavioral health services, operating under the New Mexico Department of Health (DOH).

NMBHI comprises five specialized divisions, each licensed separately with unique admission criteria:

- **Adult Psychiatric Division (APD):** Provides acute inpatient psychiatric care for adults aged 18 and older, including voluntary, involuntary, and court-ordered treatment.
- **Forensic Division (FD):** Offers competency restoration services to individuals referred by district courts across New Mexico, aiding those charged with felony offenses in regaining mental competency for trial.
- **Center for Adolescent Relationship Exploration (CARE):** A 10-bed residential treatment center for adolescent males aged 13 to 17½ who have engaged in sexually harmful behaviors and have co-occurring mental health diagnoses.
- **Long-Term Care (LTC) Division:** The largest restraint-free nursing home facility in Northern New Mexico, providing specialized care for elderly and disabled residents, including those with dementia.
- **Community-Based Services (CBS):** Offers outpatient mental health services in San Miguel, Mora, and Guadalupe counties, including psychiatry, therapy, crisis intervention, and substance use treatment.
- NMBHI extends its reach to rural communities, offering telehealth services for medication management, individual therapy, and intakes. This initiative aims to improve access to mental health care in under-served areas.

On occasion, some of the people we serve through our DDSD programs have inpatient stays at NMBHI. DDSD and NMBHI meet routinely to staff challenging situations, share resources, and collaborate to ensure the best outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). In May DDSD visited NMBHI and trained a variety of professional staff on our IDD programs, entrance criteria, application process, discharge planning and other relevant information. DDSD staff were also granted a tour of the campus and had the opportunity to learn about the entirety of NMBHI's services. I was encouraged and in-

spired that so many professionals took the time to learn from each other to improve outcomes for people. It was a great experience and a true demonstration of alliance between the NM Department of Health and NM Health Care Authority and their commitment to supporting vulnerable New Mexicans.

No single organization can solve today's complex challenges alone. True partnerships enable us to leverage diverse expertise and create innovative solutions.



Health and Wellness Visits Update

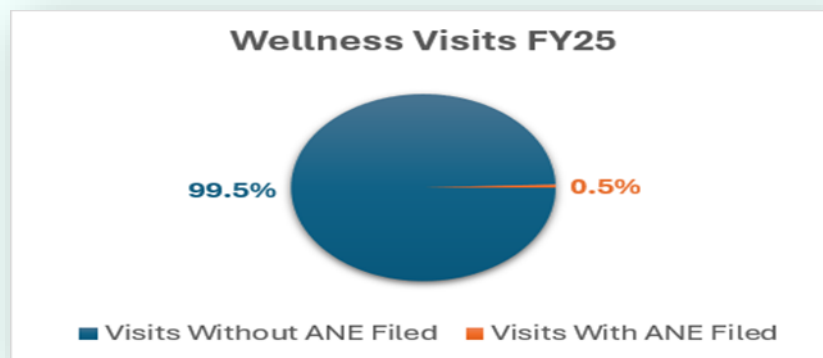
Contributor: Scott Doan, Deputy Director

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) began completing health and wellness visits in March of 2023. Over two years later, DDSD's commitment to preventing abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation remains unwavering. This unrelenting commitment is demonstrated by the tireless work of the DDSD Staff, completing over 31,000 health and wellness visits. Health and wellness visits continue to be a key strategy in DDSD's effort to eliminate abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation from the entire system of DDSD administered services.

Below is a chart that reflects the total number of health and wellness visits completed beginning July 1, 2024 through May 30, 2025, the average number of health and wellness visits completed per month, and the total number of alleged abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation reports made to the Division of Health Improvement, Incident Management Bureau (DHI-IMB).

| Period of Time | Total Number of Health and Wellness Visits | Total Number of ANE Allegations Reported | Percent of Health and Wellness Visits with ANE Allegations Reported |
|---|--|--|---|
| FY25 (7/1/2024 through 5/30/2025) | 14,014 | 73 | 0.521% |
| Average Visits Per Month FY25 (7/1/2024 through 5/30/2025) | 1,274 | 7 | 0.549% |

The chart below reflects the overall percentage of ANE allegations made to DHI-IMB as a result of health and wellness visits since July 1, 2024. The percentage of ANE allegations is below 1% of the total visits.



Although reported allegations of ANE are below 1%, one case of ANE is one too many! DDSD will continue to strive toward its commitment to visit everyone receiving Home and Community Waiver Services twice per year. The first round of visits is nearing completion ending June 30, 2025. The second round of visits will begin July 1, 2025.

Thank you for your continued cooperation with the health and wellness visits. Remember, the only way to eliminate abuse, neglect, and exploitation from our system is if we stay diligent, heed the warning signs of ANE, work together, and when in doubt, report!

Closed-Loop Referral System



“A Model that Centers People and Communities by Leveraging Technology and Partnerships “

Project Overview

The New Mexico Health Care Authority (HCA) is developing a Closed-Loop Referral System (CLRS) to connect underserved populations - especially Medicaid enrollees - to vital health and social services. This system will bring together state agencies, community-based organizations, healthcare systems, and other partners in a coordinated care network. By addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) like housing, food, and transportation, CLRS aims to reduce unmet needs and improve health outcomes through a streamlined referral and tracking process.

The Solution: YesNMConnect

YesNMConnect, powered by the FindHelp platform, is the technology foundation for CLRS and an enhancement of the existing Yes.nm.gov portal. It will feature a statewide resource directory, a secure referral platform, and a trained network of care coordinators and navigators. A robust governance structure—led by the HHS 2020 Executive Committee and supported by workgroups for communications, operations, technology, and community engagement—ensures strong project oversight and stakeholder collaboration.

Goals and Implementation

The CLRS initiative has four main goals: improving access to services and care coordination, enhancing data transparency and outcomes, identifying and addressing service gaps, and aligning funding to support service development. The implementation roadmap spans 2025–2026, moving through planning, development, network building, refinement, and ongoing monitoring. This phased approach allows for iterative improvements and long-term sustainability.

Stakeholder Engagement: User Scoping Sessions

To ensure the platform is responsive to the needs of HCA divisions and programs, the CLRS team is conducting User Scoping Sessions. These sessions explore current workflows, engagement methods, and unmet population needs. The insights gathered will guide platform customization and rollout. To participate, HCA programs can contact Roberto Martinez (roberto.martinez@hca.nm.gov) or Lisa Bond

lbond@findhelp.com

Bureau of Individual Safety and Advocacy (BISA) Report Data

Contributor: Scott Doan, Deputy Director

It’s been a little over a year since the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) launched a new Bureau in April of 2024, the Bureau of Individual Safety and Advocacy (BISA).

Since its inception in April of 2024, a major priority of BISA is the prevention of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of individuals receiving Home and Community Based Waiver services in New Mexico. BISA’s utmost priority is to ensure that assigned DDSD subject matter and program experts are promptly informed of critical abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation (ANE) allegations so that appropriate support can be effectively coordinated and implemented for individuals identified as alleged victims. BISA’s focus is on determining what, if any, additional support or actions are needed by DDSD and/or the individual’s team to assure health and safety.

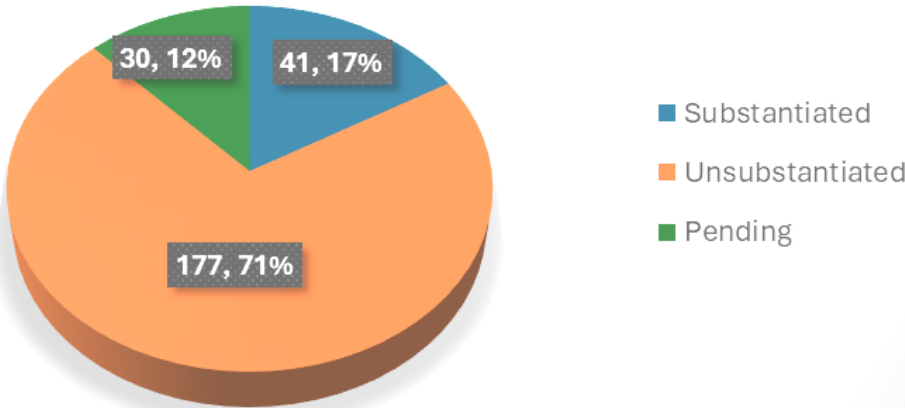
BISA follows specific criteria to determine if follow up actions need to be taken by DDSD. BISA diligently tracks each individual case. Below is a summary outlining the detailed work of BISA and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for the past year.

Reporting Period April 2024 - May 2025

- BISA Reviews:** 2,351 ANE allegation reports reviewed
- Case Assignments:** 248 cases opened and assigned to SMEs
- Open Cases:** 33 of assigned cases are still actively being worked on.

Incident Management Bureau (IMB) Disposition of BISA-Opened Cases

IMB Disposition of Cases Opened by BISA



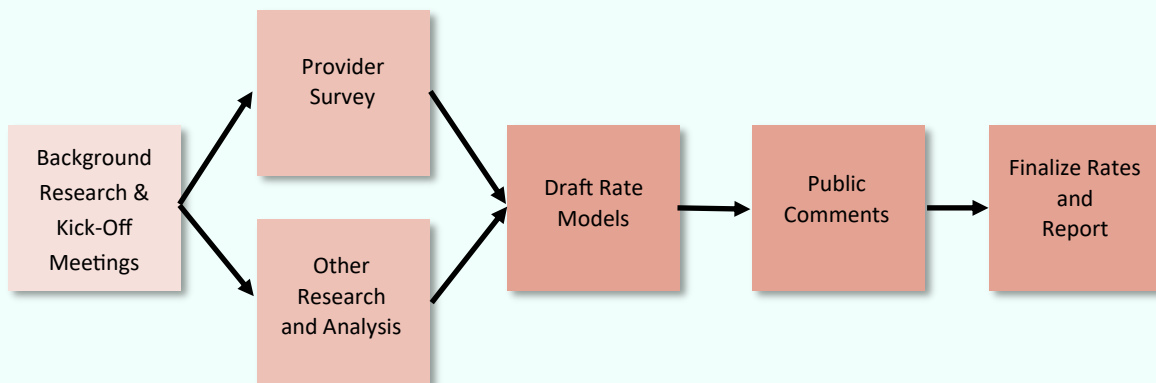
Rate Study Update

Contributor: Joseph Tighe, Deputy Director

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) is conducting a rate study for services authorized under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver, Medically Fragile Waiver, and Mi Via Waiver. DDSD has contracted with the Burns & Associates division of Health Management Associates (HMA-Burns), a national consulting firm, to provide technical assistance and professional consultation throughout the rate study.

In the coming weeks, HMA-Burns will distribute a provider cost survey that will collect current information about service costs, and programmatic details (such as current turnover rates among workers, caseloads, mileage, and other details). A separate time study survey will be distributed to agencies to share with their direct support workers. Together, these data collection efforts will inform specific rate recommendations made by the HMA-Burns team. To inform the best possible results, DDSD is asking that all providers participate in these surveys when requested to ensure rates are informed by a robust data collection.

There will be several opportunities for participation during this rate study. For questions or additional information contact Joseph Tighe: joseph.tighe@hca.nm.gov



Developmental Disabilities Waiver Renewal

Contributor: Melanie Buenviaje, Deputy Director

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) has officially begun work on renewing the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver for another five-year cycle, effective July 1, 2026.

As part of this process, a series of upcoming town hall meetings will offer valuable information about the waiver renewal process and provide opportunities for waiver recipients, families, providers, and advocates to ask questions and share input.

Community feedback is a vital part of shaping the future of the DD Waiver, and DDSD encourages all stakeholders to participate in these sessions to ensure the program continues to meet the needs of those it serves.

IN PERSON TOWNHALL DATES AND TIMES

| Northeast (NE) Region | Southeast (SE) Region | Northwest (NW) Region | Metro Region | Southwest (SE) Region |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday, June 23, 2025• 1:00-3:00 pm• Harold Runnels Building (Auditorium)• 1190 S St. Francis Dr, Santa Fe, NM 87505 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday, June 30, 2025• 1:00-3:00 pm• Department of Transportation Training Center• 132 E. Earl Cummings Loop, Roswell, NM 88203 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday, July 10, 2025• 1:00-3:00 pm• Sycamore Park Community Center• 1051 Sycamore Street, Farmington, NM 87401 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday July 14, 2025• 1:00-3:00 pm• Education Building Auditorium at Gateway Center• 5400 Gibson Blvd SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesday July 22, 2025• 1:00-3:00 pm• New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum• 4100 Dripping Springs Road, Las Cruces, NM 88011 |

VIRTUAL TOWNHALL DATES AND TIMES

Unable to attend person? Virtual Townhalls have also been scheduled. All Virtual Townhalls Meeting Links are located at the HCA website: <https://www.hca.nm.gov/developmental-disabilities-waiver/>

| Northeast (NE) Region | Southeast (SE) Region | Northwest (NW) Region | Metro Region | Southwest (SE) Region |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday, June 23, 2025• 5:30-6:30 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday, June 30, 2025• 5:30-6:30 pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday, July 10, 2025• 5:30-6:30 PM | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monday July 14, 2025• 5:30-6:30 pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuesday July 22, 2025• 5:30-6:30 pm |

Launching the 2025 DD Waiver Individual Service Plan (ISP)

Contributor: Claudia Rice, Office of Constituent Supports Manager

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) is excited to announce the upcoming launch of the updated Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver Individual Service Plan, ISP 2025. Over the past year, DDSD has been revising the DD Waiver ISP to be more person-centered and accessible. Person-centered planning (PCP) ensures that people with IDD are supported in making informed choices, have control over their lives, can access services and supports they need to live, work, and lead a safe and fulfilling life.

ISP 2025 represents a step forward in PCP and was shaped by valuable technical assistance and insights from the National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems, waiver recipients and their families, the case management system, external stakeholders, service providers, and DDSD staff. The updated ISP not only places the individual at the center of the planning process but also strengthens DDSD's quality assurance efforts and maintains compliance with federal requirements. In addition, ISP 2025 draws from the Mi Via Service and Support Plan and service plans used in other states.

Rolling out later this summer, ISP 2025 features a more user-friendly and comprehensive format designed to improve the planning experience for individuals, families, and professionals. As part of this initiative, DDSD will be partnering closely with Case Management providers and the Third-Party Assessor to support a smooth and successful implementation. To further support this transition, an ISP Instruction Guide will accompany the rollout. This guide is designed to assist waiver recipients, and their support teams, including Case Managers, in navigating and completing the ISP 2025 with clarity and ease.

The ISP 2025 revision project reflects DDSD's ongoing commitment to enhancing PCP and promoting inclusivity throughout waiver service planning practices. We look forward to working together to rollout ISP 2025 and strengthen service planning across the DD Waiver system.

If you have any questions about ISP 2025, please contact Claudia Rice, Office of Constituent Support Manager, at Claudia.Rice@hca.nm.gov, or 505-546-9428.



Improving Access to Waiver Programs: What To Know About the Access Rule

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

The Access Rule is a new federal rule to help people get Medicaid services more easily and to make the program clearer and fairer. This rule is especially for people who get help at home or in the community. As we start Fiscal Year (FY)26, important dates and steps are coming up that we want to share with you.

By July 9, 2025 – Starting A New Committee

The Health Care Authority Medical Assistance Division will launch the Beneficiary Advisory Council (BAC) made up of people who get Medicaid services including the home and community based waiver programs operated by DDSD like the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waiver.

You can learn more here: <https://www.hca.nm.gov/medicaid-beneficiary-advisory-council/>

By July 1, 2026 – Setting Up a Grievance System

DDSD will create a system where people can report problems or complaints about person centered planning or the Settings Rule. The Settings Rule is a federal rule that ensures people receiving Medicaid home and community-based services live and get support in places that feel like a normal part of the community - rather than in institutions or places that isolate them. It helps protect their rights, privacy, and freedom to make choices about where and how they live. This is being worked on now by Claudia Rice, who leads DDSD's Office of Constituent Supports.

By July 1, 2026 – Sharing Rate and Payment Information

DDSD will post information about how much Medicaid pays for important services that cover personal care, home health aide, homemaker, and habilitation services. This will include:

- Average hourly payment rates
- Data based on location and type of provider
- The number of claims paid, and the number of people served each year

By July 9, 2026 – Creating a Payment Advisory Group

DDSD will start a group of people to help watch over and give advice about Medicaid payments.

Other Important Work

There are more parts of the Access Rule that will happen over time, with the final deadline in July 2030.

Besides the FY(26) goals, DDSD will keep working on:

- Reporting on person-centered planning, which means planned care to fit each person's needs
- Improving how we handle and report incidents or problems
- Tracking waitlists and how long people wait for services
- Making Medicaid information easy to find online

These efforts focus on services like personal care, home health aide, homemaker, and habilitation services. The names might be different in some programs, but the goal is to make sure these services are good and easy to get.

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) will keep watching for updates from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS has paused giving new guidance since January 2025.

If you have questions or want to learn more, please contact:

Christina Hill, Deputy Bureau Chief, Community Programs Bureau: Christina.Hill@hca.nm.gov

Supports Waiver Sunset

Contributor: Melanie Buenviaje, Deputy Director

The Supports Waiver (SW) was designed as a vital bridge for individuals on the lengthy waitlist for the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver. At the time, wait times stretched beyond 13 years. The SW provided essential services while individuals awaited access to the more comprehensive DD or Mi Via Waivers.

In 2021, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) launched the “Super Allocation” initiative, offering DD or Mi Via Waiver slots to everyone on the waitlist. Coupled with new funding in the FY26 budget, appropriated through House Bill 2, DDSD is transitioning to a true “no wait list” model, ensuring continued and timely access to services.

As this vision becomes a reality, the need for the Supports Waiver has come to a close. The waiver will officially sunset on September 30, 2025. All SW participants have been offered an allocation to either the DD or Mi Via Waiver and the DDSD Supports Waiver Unit is actively working closely with families and Community Supports Coordinators on a smooth transition and continuity of care.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every provider, advocate, and partner who helped make the Supports Waiver a success. Your compassion, dedication, and unwavering service have touched countless lives across New Mexico—and continue to do so as we enter this new chapter of support and accessibility.

For questions, please contact Anysia Fernandez at Anysia.Fernandez@hca.nm.gov or (505) 629-7476.

House Bill (HB) 357

Contributor: Melanie Buenviaje, Deputy Director

House Bill (HB) 357, signed into law during the 2025 Regular Session, marks a significant step forward in ensuring equitable budgeting practices for participants in New Mexico’s Mi Via Waiver program. Sponsored by Representatives Tara L. Lujan and Kathleen Cates, the legislation prohibits the inclusion of health care provider gross receipts taxes (GRT) in a participant’s individual budgetary allotment.

DDSD is actively working on the implementation of HB 357 for January 1, 2026, including the development and promulgation of administrative rules as well as updates in the FOCOSOnline System to ensure that GRT costs are billed and reimbursed as a separate line item, outside of the participant’s approved annual budget. This change is designed to protect the integrity of self-directed Mi Via Waiver and ensure that participants receive the full value of their allotted budget.

Please stay tuned for more information as we near the implementation phase.

For questions, please contact Melanie Buenviaje at melanie.buenviaje@hca.nm.gov.

New Mexico Respite Care Training & Registry

Contributor: Sharon Finarelli, Respite Care Coordinator



Did you know that any New Mexican seeking to be a respite caregiver can now obtain the needed training on how to become one?

The New Mexico [Respite Care Training](#) teaches foundational skills needed to work for those with disabilities and those who are elderly. Respite care training content was developed for New Mexico based on nationally-recognized core competencies of respite care, thanks to New Mexico Caregivers Coalition and [ARCH National Respite Network](#).

The training is applicable to any type of caregiver working in any type of care setting. Best of all, there is no cost to the learner.

All completers receive a Certificate of Completion that may be used toward their agency's annual in-service training requirements. Community Health Workers/Community Health Representatives earn seven (7) Continuing Education Units toward their annual in-service because this training is recognized by the New Mexico Department of Health.

[Respite Care Training](#) completers are eligible to be listed within the [Respite Care Registry](#), a resource that lists ONLY those who complete the training. In this way, New Mexico Caregivers Coalition can promote caregivers who have mastered at least these core, foundational skills.

To get started:

Step 1: Create an account within the [Respite Care Training](#) portal. Once you've completed the 7-hour training, you'll move on to...

Step 2: Create a profile (or resume) so you may be listed on the [Respite Care Registry](#).

Respite care is for everyone. It's a great way to help elders and those with disabilities in your neighborhood. It's a rewarding and valuable first job for a high school student, and may be a perfect avenue for seniors seeking to re-enter the workforce.

Thank you to [New Mexico Caregivers Coalition](#); [ARCH National Respite Network](#); [Respite Care Association of Wisconsin](#); and National Academy for State Health Policy for creating these invaluable resources available to all New Mexicans!

If you have additional questions about New Mexico Respite Care Training & Registry, contact Sharon at New Mexico Caregivers Coalition at 575-621-9684 or Email: sharon@nmdcc.org.

Stepping into the Gap: The MEDIAN Project

The Medical aional Interagency Autism Network (MEDIAN Project) seeks to increase the skill set of school-based autism evaluators and remove boundaries to medical autism diagnosis in New Mexico. The mission of the MEDIAN Project is to create the conditions for high-quality educational evaluations and better access to medical evaluations for students with autism, regardless of where they live.

For families of autistic children, the process of receiving assistance can be difficult and confusing. Full access to support services requires both a medical diagnosis and a school eligibility, but for many families in New Mexico, a medical diagnosis is out of reach for many reasons, including long waitlists at the two university-based evaluation centers, medical deserts in rural communities, and complicated processes. Not only are medical evaluations hard to obtain, but educational evaluations can vary widely because of staff turnover and inconsistent training.

Region 9 Education Cooperative and the New Mexico State University's Papen-Aprendamos Autism Diagnostic Center (ADC) have worked in partnership for two years to create and implement Ed/Med evaluations. These evaluations allow for an educational eligibility and medical diagnosis to be considered in a simultaneous evaluation process. Ed/Med evaluations have been completed in Region 9's member schools for two years, with nine Ed/Med evaluations conducted to date.

Recently, with generous funding from the New Mexico Public Education Department's Office of Special Education (OSE), Region 9 and the ADC launched the MEDIAN Project to a broader audience, creating a training cohort of sixty-one individual related service staff from twelve districts, one regional educational cooperative, and pre-service graduate students in the fields of speech and language pathology and school psychology.

This cohort will receive intensive and ongoing support and training, opportunities to collaborate with autism experts, and access to best-practice tools. The training started in February of 2025, with a half-day "kickstarter" to allow for the collection of data and to begin to build relationships in the cohort. In June, these individuals will travel to NMSU for a 5-day intensive training, which includes the use of the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition (ADOS-2) evaluation tool, recognizing autism in a variety of populations, and adhering to the New Mexico Technical and Evaluation Manual guidelines for autism evaluation.

The MEDIAN project is part of a larger, continuing effort by the Health Care Authority's Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD), the OSE, and Region 9 to provide quality, low-cost training for providers. The DDSD and Region 9 have a long-running intergovernmental agreement to provide training via the Mobility and Positioning Conference, which focuses on seating and positioning for individuals with Intellectual and I/DD. This training provides therapists working in community-based settings with low-cost professional development to improve practices and retain quality providers in New Mexico, connecting providers to valuable resources and networking opportunities.

For more information on MEDIAN or the Mobility and Positioning Conference, or to join our mailing list, please email autism.project@regionix.org or call (575) 257-2368.

Employer of Record as a Paid Waiver Service

Contributor: Melanie Buenviaje, Deputy Director

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) is seeking approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to have the Employer of Record (EOR) as a paid service under the Mi Via Waiver with its upcoming waiver renewal. This service will provide Mi Via participants who lack natural supports for an EOR the opportunity to contract with an EOR agency for EOR services. EOR services provide a level of support to participants that is unique to their individual needs to maximize their ability to self-direct in the Mi Via Waiver.

An Employer of Record (EOR) is the common law employer responsible for identifying and hiring employees and vendors to provide services identified in the participant's Service and Support Plan (SSP). EORs do not have budget authority, meaning they do not shape budgets or select services. Service selection and budget creation is done by the participant with assistance of their Consultant. EORs not influencing budget choices minimizes conflicts of interest and allows them to focus on providing administrative support like payroll and employer responsibilities.

The EOR is responsible for:

- Finding qualified employees
- Finding qualified vendors. A vendor can be a Health Care Authority (HCA) approved provider or another agency that provides the service that you are looking for.
- Hiring employees
- Setting employee pay rates
- Training employees and vendors in accordance with Mi Via Waiver Service Standards
- Setting employee work schedules
- Approving employee timesheets and vendor payments
- Registering employees and vendors in the Electronic Visit Verification system, as applicable

Agency Provider Qualifications:

- Hold a current business license issued by the State, county, or city government.
- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Have one (1) year of supervised experience working with people living with disabilities OR
- Have a high school diploma or passed the General Education Development (GED) test and a minimum of six (6) years of direct experience related to the delivery of social services to people living with disabilities.
- Complete all required Mi Via Waiver orientation and training courses.
- Pass a nationwide Caregiver Criminal History Screening pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 29-17-2 et seq. and 7.1.9 NMAC and an abuse registry screen pursuant to NMSA 1973, Section 27-71-1 et seq. and 8.11.6 NMAC.

DDSD will release an official call for providers to help create the provider network for this service in July 2025. If you have any questions about the Employer of Record service, please contact Elaine Hill, Mi Via Program Manager, via email at Elaine.Hill@hca.nm.gov or via phone at 505-506-6103.

The Participatory Approach: Therapies That Meet You Where You Are

Contributor: Kyle Cottrell, Therapy Services Coordinator - Supervisor

Requirements for therapy services offered through the developmental disabilities (DD) waivers aim to allow for innovation and best practice in service delivery models for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The participatory approach to providing speech language pathology (SLP), physical therapy (PT), and occupational therapy (OT) facilitates greater opportunities for therapists to be collaborative, contextual to the person's environment and circumstances, and meaningful in their application of therapeutic modalities.

Unlike traditional therapies that often take place in clinics or segregated classrooms, the participatory approach embeds therapy into a person's everyday life. Therapists co-develop goals and implement strategies in real-life environments; at home, in the community, or wherever support is needed most directly with the person receiving services, their families, and their support staff. Therapies happen where a person lives their life and are designed to support functional participation and self-advocacy for waiver recipients.

For people with IDD progress isn't just about achieving milestones on paper, it's about achieving greater independence, increasing participation in a meaningful day, and improving their overall quality of life. The participatory approach ensures that therapy is not something that happens to a person, but with them and those who know them best. It integrates therapy strategies into daily life, making interventions more relevant, respectful, and sustainable.

By bringing SLP, PT, and OT into natural settings, the participatory approach greater aligns with the lived realities of the people receiving services. It honors the belief that everyone learns best in environments that are familiar, supportive, and filled with opportunity.

DDSD sees value in the participatory approach and encourages therapists to see the whole person and meet them exactly where they are.

Client Program Counts

| PARTICIPANTS BY WAIVER AS OF 6/16/25 | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Waiver | Participant Count |
| Developmental Disabilities Waiver | 4,580 |
| Mi Via Waiver | 3,559 |
| Supports Waiver | 94 |
| Medically Fragile Waiver | 187 |
| Total | 8,364 |

Acupuncture: Service with Allowable Payments for Mi Via Recipients

Contributor: Dr. Yvette Arellano DOM, LMT - President NMSAAM

Many Mi Via Waiver recipients and health care providers may not be aware that acupuncture is a paid allowable service. In addition, practitioners and patients may not be aware of acupuncture's benefits. Acupuncture can be used to treat individuals with disabilities due to their unique pathophysiological characteristics. Individuals with disabilities often have more comorbidities, increasing risk of polypharmacy and can be associated with higher mortality rates. Therefore, prevention is crucial for this patient population and acupuncture can be used in a primary preventative manner. This can reduce disease onset, focus on secondary prevention, and prevent severe progressions and long-term impacts of disease. The title of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) doctors in the state of New Mexico is Doctors of Oriental Medicine (DOM). New Mexico is one of the top five states nationally, regarding educational requirements. It has a rich history that includes having a Practice Act since 1978. DOMs are considered primary care providers in New Mexico.

Introduction to Acupuncture:

Acupuncture is an ancient practice originating from Traditional Chinese Medicine. It has been used for thousands of years to treat a variety of ailments, and involves inserting thin needles into specific points on the body to dissipate symptoms, promote healing, and balance the body by also taking into consideration diet, food, and exercise that can assist in improving patients'



health. In addition, research and clinical practice have shown that acupuncture can effectively manage pain, improve physical function, boost the immune system, and enhance overall well-being. Acupuncture can be part of a comprehensive treatment plan that includes Western Medicine, other therapies and interventions.

By addressing the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, acupuncture can play a crucial role in improving quality of life, stabilizing health, decreasing visits to urgent care or the Emergency Department, and promoting better quality of life. The benefits of acupuncture are not limited to physical health - it can also help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, which are common among individuals with disabilities. By promoting relaxation and enhancing the body's natural healing processes, acupuncture can support mental and emotional well-being, contributing to a more balanced and fulfilling life. In fact, we are closer to Stage 1 kidney disease after being in Stage 2 for about 3 years. This makes it particularly suitable for individuals with complex medical conditions who may benefit from a more integrative treatment strategy and have

Acupuncture: Service with Allowable Payments for Mi Via Recipients (continued)

more accessibility to appointments and more frequent targeted care to decrease symptoms by receiving care from DOMs. Practitioners trained in acupuncture can tailor treatments to meet specific needs of each patient, ensuring a personalized and effective approach.

How Acupuncture Works: The fundamental principle of acupuncture is the concept of Qi (pronounced Chee), and its flow through the meridians. According to TCM, there are 12 primary meridians, each corresponding to a major organ system in the body. Acupuncture points are located along these meridians and serve as access points to regulate the flow of Qi. There needs to be adequate and correct Qi flow to feed energy to the organ systems so those organs systems can properly do their physiological processes. There is an awareness when individuals have disabilities that also consist of congenital abnormalities, that their organ systems do not always function well or properly. Acupuncture has the capacity to increase energy to the organs system so they can function more efficiently and effectively.

As a practitioner and mother to a special needs child that has Down Syndrome, Autism, and Stage 2 kidney disease, I have been able use this medicine to keep my son's immune system boosted and I am very happy to say we have made it through a very crucial time of development and his kidneys were able to handle the demand. In fact, we are closer to Stage 1 kidney disease after being in Stage 2 for about 3 years.

Other professions have started to use acupuncture needles to do "dry needling", although DOMs are the needle experts when it comes to the use of acupuncture needles. To ensure expertise, safety, and effectiveness, it's crucial to choose a qualified acupuncture practitioner.

In the state of New Mexico all DOMs are nationally certified by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) and then by the New Mexico Board of Acupuncture and Asian Medicine (BAOM). The New Mexico Society for Acupuncture and Asian Medicine (NMSAAM) at nmsaam.org is providing a list of DOM practitioners that are currently accepting new patients and are open become vendors for individuals that are on the Mi Via Waiver. And of course, patients are welcome to seek out DOMs in their communities as well on their own. In addition, there are more articles about the impact of Acupuncture on pathologies of individuals with disabilities on our site as well.



Employment First Strategic Planning Session

Contributor: Alix Dean, Community Inclusion - Supported Employment Lead

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) met the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Partners for Employment for a strategic planning session. The State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), a nationwide technical assistance center dedicated to strengthening employment initiatives within intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) agencies, facilitated the meeting and provided valuable insight related to Employment First (E 1st).

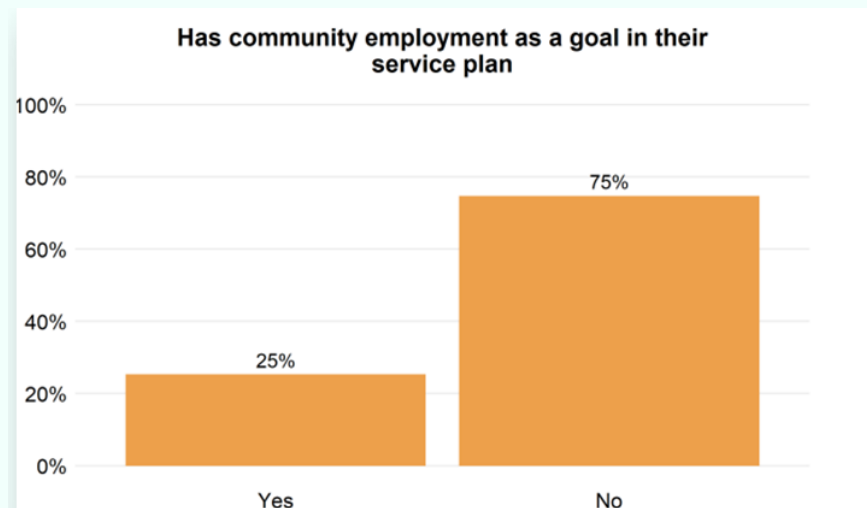
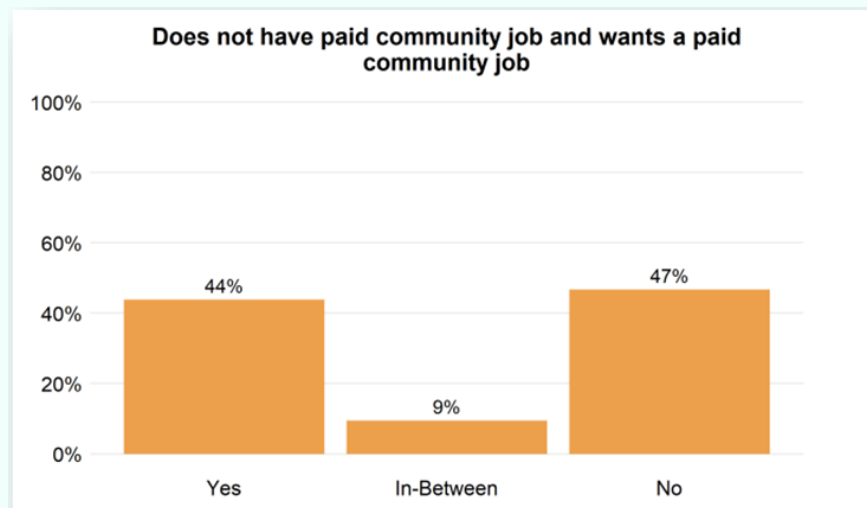
The goal of E 1st is quality jobs for people with IDD. E 1st strategies and priorities align with DDSD's guiding principles to be:

Person centered
Innovative

Proactive
Inclusive

During the planning session, DDSD and E 1st partners learned that nationally people with IDD are not using employment services as much as expected. Additionally, 44% of people with IDD who don't have a job want a job, however, only 25% of people who want a job have an employment goal in their person-centered plan. Why is this? We have heard people are afraid to lose benefits and services, they don't know how to get started, and that employment is not discussed frequently or in a meaningful way.

Inspired by insights from the SELN planning session, DDSD will be reviewing its E 1st policy, training, and technical assistance resources. Through increased data collection DDSD hopes to understand what components of the E 1st services and supports are working or not working, and how DDSD can support employment outcomes for people we serve.



Source: National Core Indicators (2023) - Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (NCI-IDD) National Report 2021-2022.

New Health and Wellness Visit Training

Contributor: Eryn Bailey, Training Unit Manager

The Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) Training and Knowledge Management Unit is excited to announce the launch of a new Health and Wellness Visit Training designed specifically for DDSD employees who conduct health and wellness visits. This training is an important step in our continued commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of people we serve.

The purpose of health and wellness visits is to help prevent occurrences of abuse, neglect, and exploitation (ANE) by identifying concerns early and promoting proactive support. The new training equips DDSD staff with knowledge and tools to conduct thorough, person-centered visits that focus on dignity, safety, and well-being.

The topics covered in this training include preparing for the visit by reading through the Individual Service Plan (ISP)/Service and Support Plan (SSP) and case notes, accessing resources, communicating effectively during visits, and following up on identified concerns. The course also emphasizes the importance of documentation and timely reporting.

All current employees who conduct health and wellness visits are required to complete this training by September 1, 2025. Whether they are new to health and wellness visits or have been conducting them from some time, this training is an opportunity to reinforce best practices. The course can be accessed through the Center for Development and Disability (CDD) Training Hub online courses which can be accessed through this link: [DDSD Health and Wellness Visit Training :: Center for Development and Disability | The University of New Mexico](#).

Thank you for your dedication to creating safer, healthier environments for those we support. Together we can make a meaningful difference.



New Medicaid Claims Management System in Development

The New Mexico Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Medical Assistance Division (MAD) are actively working on the development of Turquoise Claims, a modernized Medicaid claims management system that will eventually replace the current system and the NM Medicaid Provider Web Portal.

This new system is being designed to ensure compliance with federal requirements and create a single point of entry for claims processing.

When it launches, you will access Turquoise Claims through the [YES.NM.GOV](https://yes.nm.gov) portal, the one-stop place for all provider tools including Provider/PED Enrollment.

As we move closer to launching Turquoise Claims, we will offer flexible training options that fit your busy schedules, and dedicated office hours to answer questions. We will also hold in-person meetings during the Turquoise Claims roadshow, coming to a location near you.

We'll make sure you have plenty of time to prepare before any changes go into effect.

Please watch your email for regular updates.

We'd love to hear from you! Please complete our quick survey: [Provider Survey](#)

Regards,

The Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Medical Assistance Division (MAD)

Questions? Email us at HCA-TurquoiseClaims@hca.nm.gov

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- **Turquoise Claims Roadshow:** In-person meetings **closer to go-live**
- **Official Launch:** We will keep you informed with plenty of time to prepare



How to Report Suspected Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Report incidents of abuse, neglect and exploitation to:
**THE DIVISION OF HEALTH IMPROVEMENT
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT BUREAU**

**Reporting Hotline: 1-866-654-3219
or complete online at: <https://www.hca.nm.gov>**

ANE Reporting Procedure

- Ensure the health & safety of the consumer.
- Involve emergency medical services (EMS) and/or law enforcement as needed.
- Notify the Incident Management Bureau (IMB) via telephone of the allegation of ANE, suspicious injury, environmental hazard or death.
- Provide IMB a verbal Immediate Action and Safety plan to ensure health and safety of each individual involved or in potential danger. Submit the written IASP within 24 hours of providing the verbal IASP to IMB.

StationMD DSP Spotlight Series

StationMD DSP Spotlight Series



“Caroline consistently goes above and beyond to ensure individuals receive support and quality care with dignity and respect... She embodies the values that StationMD promotes – compassion and person-centered care.”

Community Options, Inc. in New Mexico

StationMD’s DSP Spotlight series celebrates Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), who play an essential role in the lives of individuals with disabilities, offering care, companionship, and unwavering support. We constantly recognize their hard work and the profound impact they make every day. We’re proud to recognize **Caroline Callan** of **Community Options, Inc.** as StationMD’s June DSP Spotlight. Described by her team as compassionate, dependable, and empowering, Caroline consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the individuals she supports receive not just quality care, but also dignity and respect in every interaction.

Caroline’s impact is especially clear in how she facilitates medical care. She takes the time to prepare individuals for their health visits – including telehealth visits with StationMD – helping to ensure clear communication and better outcomes. As Community Options shared, she’s “a reliable advocate, facilitating access to timely medical care and working closely with providers to support individuals’ health needs.” Her commitment reflects the very values that define person-centered care.

Motivated by a strong, supportive work environment and surrounded by good colleagues, Caroline sets an example through her respectful communication, reliability, and willingness to help. She encourages her peers to build strong relationships and positive workplaces, knowing that trust and teamwork are essential in this field.

Outside of work, Caroline enjoys cooking, sewing, traveling, walking, and of course – eating! Recently, she shared how StationMD helped one of the individuals she supports by quickly involving a doctor and ensuring that all necessary care was received, making the process smooth and reassuring for everyone involved.

Caroline’s dedication uplifts both the people she supports and the team around her. We’re honored to spotlight her as a model of compassionate, thoughtful care.

E-BLASTS

Contributor: Tammy Barth, Provider Enrollment & Relations Manager

DDW Individual Service Plan (ISP) Memo and Documents – June 18, 2025
HMA-Burns Rate Study Introduction – June 17, 2025
DDSD Document Distribution – June 17, 2025
Developmental Disabilities Waiver Renewal - Town Hall Meetings Flyer – June 10, 2025
DDSD Document Distribution – June 2, 2025
DDSD Document Distribution – May 19, 2025
DDSD Document Distribution – May 1, 2025
DDSD Document Distribution – April 1, 2025
Advocacy Partners Meeting - April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025
Measles Outbreak Guidance for Health and Wellness Visits Memo – March 20, 2025
DDSD Document Distribution – March 14, 2025
Allocation Reporting Form Moving to Therap – March 11, 2025

NEW HIRES AND PROMOTIONS

Contributor: Joe Anaya, Human Resources

Veronica Villa-Chavez, Registered Nurse Level III Albuquerque, starts: 8/16/25
Nicole Hernandez, Pre-Service Intake Bureau Chief, A/O II Albuquerque, started: 6/21/25
Bianca Gomez, SOC/COM SV COORD-II , Las Cruces office, started: 6/7/25
Vanessa Runyan, Office & Admin Support III Las Cruces SWRO office, started 6/7/25
Elana Gonzales, Research & Policy Analyst Staff Manager, Santa Fe office, started: 5/10/25
Brandi Rede, SOC/COM SV COORD-Supervisor, Albuquerque office, started: 4/26/25
Tiara Shorty, SOC/COM SV COORD-O, Gallup, NWRO office, started: 4/26/25
Ronda Romero, FIN SPEC, III, Santa Fe office, started: 4/26/25
Michele Rex, Statewide Clinical Supervisor, A/O II Albuquerque, started: 4/12/25
Katherine Hellebust, SOC/COM SV COORD-II, Albuquerque, started: 4/12/25
Laura Perez, Behavioral Health Therapist II Las Cruces, started: 3/29/25

ABOUT US

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