

# RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals Developmental Disabilities Services



October 2020

## Message from Kevin Savage, Acting Director of DD

BHDDH is proud to support this year's observance of the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This year marks the 75th observance of NDEAM, as well as the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Both milestones are a great time to remember the importance of opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and the value of their contributions.

Community employment is a high priority for many people with intellectual and development disabilities (I/DD), and with appropriate supports and services it can happen. However, the majority of people with I/DD remain either unemployed or underemployed despite their ability, desire, and willingness to work.

BHDDH is committed to ensuring that people with I/DD have the right mix of supports necessary to enable them to find and keep community jobs based on their preferences, interests, and strengths. Everyone should have the opportunity to work alongside people with differing abilities, receive comparable wages, and be free from workplace discrimination.

*Kevin*  
Kevin Savage



## BHDDH Director Power's Corner

Greetings,

As we move into fall and National Disability Employment Awareness Month, I would like to thank our Employment Team, Tracey Cunningham and Jay MacKay. Their hard work, creativity, and commitment to assist individuals with an intellectual and/or developmental disability secure employment of their choosing is inspiring.

More than a year ago, Tracey and Jay created their own BHDDH Job Seekers Club. The club meets on the second Wednesday of every month from 12—1 p.m. Peer-to-peer activities are a great way to share experiences ranging from job interview tips, employment barriers, and even Zoom etiquette. Tracey and Jay have continued the Club on Zoom during the pandemic. It's a great way to keep in contact with friends and peers, especially once it gets cold and we will be inside more and more.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our providers, our partners in government, and families who work to increase employment access for people with differing abilities. Your efforts are truly appreciated!

*Kathryn*  
Kathryn Power, M.Ed.



## Upcoming Changes in DD Services

You may have heard that DD Services are changing from quarterly to **annual authorizations**. People who self-direct their services have had annual authorizations for a long time, but now people getting agency-based services will too. Right now, we're testing the changes in our fiscal system and finalizing the new procedures. You don't need to do anything differently yet. We'll be sharing more information soon about what this means and the benefits to everyone.

Another change for people getting DD services is that the anniversary date for the **Individualized Service Plan (ISP)** is being replaced by plan **start and end dates**. This means there won't be an anniversary date anymore. A new plan will be valid for one year. New plans should still be submitted 45 days in advance, but now it will be 45 days before the end date of the existing plan instead of before the anniversary date. We'll be providing more detailed information about this soon as well.

## **BHDDH Offices Have Moved**

BHDDH offices have moved back into Simpson Hall and Barry Hall. The DD mailing address is:

**BHDDH Developmental Disabilities Services**  
**14 Harrington Road**  
**Cranston, RI 02920**

The phone number is still (401) 462-3421.



The next  
**DD Community  
Forum**  
will be held  
via Zoom on

**Monday, November 16th**  
**3:00 — 4:30 p.m.**

Go to this link to register:

[tinyurl.com/NovDDCommunityForum](https://tinyurl.com/NovDDCommunityForum)

If you need help to register  
call 877-532-5543

You can also watch the forum at  
[Facebook.com/AdvocatesinActionRI](https://www.facebook.com/AdvocatesinActionRI)

## **Person-Centered Supported Employment Program**

The third round of projects for the Person-Centered Supported Employment Program (PCSEPP) still has spaces for people who have never been employed and need customized employment services. View the recorded open house and project information at [www.advocatesinaction.org](https://www.advocatesinaction.org).

### **If I'm not enrolled in PCSEPP, does that mean I can't get help finding a job?**

Anyone getting DD services who wants help finding a job can get employment services. If your provider doesn't offer employment services, your social caseworker can work with you to find a second agency who can help you. PCSEPP isn't taking the place of regular employment services. It is a small pilot program to offer a customized approach to employment for people who need something different than the regular programs offer.

## **Returning to the Community during COVID-19**

Advocates in Action (AinA) has been working with BHDDH to develop a helpful guide to things to consider before returning to the community activities or work while COVID is still a concern.

Some people don't feel comfortable going back into the community for their job or day services just yet, and that's OK. At the same time, pretty much everyone misses their old routine in one way or another, so if you're thinking about returning to your job or restarting your community-based services, you're not alone.

The guide is tool to help individuals, families, and people in their circle of support decide how risky it may be to return to community-based activities. It will help people think about what kind of support they will need, and whether or not they will be able to get it. We hope it will help people think about and have some meaningful conversations about reopening and whether or not all of the potential benefits outweigh the risks for them.

The guide can also be used to make a plan for how to stay safe. If someone finds that they are not ready and want to take it slow and stay home, they can also make a plan for what they want and need to have in place before returning to community activities.

Find the guide on the BHDDH website at <https://bhddh.ri.gov/covid/> or the AinA website at [advocatesinaction.org](https://advocatesinaction.org).

For other resources to help with your decision, see: CDC Deciding to Go Out, CDC Personal and Social Activities, CDC Returning to Work, and CDC Daily Activities and Going Out. All these can be found at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping)

## **Get Updates from DD Services**

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from the us, you can sign up on our website or at [tinyurl.com/DDConnect](https://tinyurl.com/DDConnect).

From the main BHDDH webpage at [bhddh.ri.gov](https://bhddh.ri.gov), select **What's New**, then go to bottom and click on **DD Community Newsletter**. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture below.

DD Community Newsletter

[SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER](#)

## **What if I don't have email?**

If email doesn't work for you, we would like to know what would be a better way to send you information.

Please contact your social caseworker and let them know how you would like to get information, such as through a letter in the mail, a phone call, online video, or some other way.

Stay Informed