



Update on COVID Vaccine for DD Participants

Starting on January 25, DD social caseworkers will begin contacting individuals who live independently or with family to track who is interested in receiving the COVID vaccine. This is for individuals only at this time, not staff or family members. BHDDH is collecting this information in order to plan for vaccination clinics. We do not yet have a timeframe or location for the clinics. This information will help inform the RI Department of Health's efforts.

We will share information on time, location, and how to register when it becomes available.

Vaccinations clinics are currently underway for those living in congregate care and shared living.

If you have any questions or want to call proactively to inform us of your interest in receiving the vaccine, please call the main number at (401) 462-3421.

Self-Directed Supports Network Meeting
Special Topic: Employment Supports for Self-Direction

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

7:30 - 8:30 PM

**Guest presenter: Tracey Cunningham, Associate Director of Employment
BHDDH - Developmental Disabilities Services**

The Self-Directed Supports Network is a resource for individuals and families using self-directed supports through the BHDDH Developmental Disabilities Services. Meetings provide an opportunity to share experiences and learn from others.

Please attend if you are:

- A family member or person **considering** self-directed supports.
- A family member or person **new** to self-directed supports.
- A family member or person **experienced** at using self-directed supports.

[RSVP online here](#)

Please RSVP using the link above. This meeting will take place online using Zoom. After you RSVP, you will receive an email with the directions and a password to join the meeting. You can connect by computer, mobile device or listen using your telephone. You may be prompted to download an app depending on the device you plan to use. If you need a reasonable accommodation (e.g. ASL Interpreter, large print) or information in a language other than English, please make your needs known when you RSVP.

For questions, email or call Claire Rosenbaum, Sherlock Center on Disabilities

Email: crosenbaum@ric.edu

Voice: 401-456-4732

TTY: 711

PlanRI Innovative Housing Series 2021

PlanRI has issued an invitation for participants to renew their 'tickets' to the 2021 PLAN RI Housing Alternatives meeting series. The Zoom account has changed for the Innovative Housing series, so it is necessary to re-register. Over 150 registrants participated on our many different sessions in 2020. If you did not participate last year, you are welcome to join now!

As they did last year, PlanRI will host webinar-style meetings on the last Wednesday of each month, and conversation-style meetings on the first Wednesday of each month. You only need to register once to attend any or all of the meetings.

The January webinar meeting will be held at **6:00 PM on Wednesday, January 27th**, and will feature Cathy Ludlum, one of the founders of Common Thread Cooperative — a vibrant inclusive housing cooperative in Manchester, CT. Cathy is the author of *One Candle Power*, a classic on the power of circle-building, an activist and a powerful advocate.

[Click here to register.](#) After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meetings.

About The PLAN RI Housing Alternatives Series

The Challenge:

There is an inadequate supply of affordable housing in Rhode Island generally, and a very inadequate supply of *accessible* and affordable housing in particular. Aware of this, families of individuals with disabilities are concerned about where their loved ones will live once they move out of their family homes, and how they can help their loved ones establish homes of their own sooner, rather than later or not at all. Current options are limited by:

- The number of available housing units,
- Their cost, their locations, and
- The availability of supports to make it possible for individuals to live in safe, secure, and inclusive communities.

The Opportunity

PLAN Rhode Island has been awarded a grant from the **John E. Fogarty Foundation**, along with additional funding from **RI FORCE and The Carpionato Group**. These generous contributions are making it possible for us to deliver a series of educational action-oriented activities for families. The series will feature international, national, and local public and private innovators in housing development and residential support for vulnerable individuals.

The series will consist of monthly webinars (held on the last Wednesday of every month) and parent meetings (held on the first Wednesday of every month) over the course of the year.

This will be more than a 'study' series. The presenters will share proven options and strategies that have supported people to take action in the short run and in the long run. We'll talk about using existing Self-Directed funding resources to set the stage for people being successful in their own homes, collaborating with builders to make upcoming developments more inclusive, affordable and accessible, and advocating with government to invest more in affordable housing.

Bridging the Digital Divide for HCBS Beneficiaries:
Access, Affordability, and Digital Literacy

Thursday, February 4, 2021

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Many older adults and people with disabilities do not have the financial means to pay for internet service in their home nor purchase an internet enabled device - such as a PC, tablet, or smart phone. Further, many lack the skills needed to confidently navigate the internet and digital communities by themselves.

This is particularly relevant with the transition to telemedicine and virtual services in place of in-person visits due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This dynamic is leaving many people vulnerable and isolated, which affects their ability to obtain medical services, procure basic goods and services, address social determinants of health (employment, transportation), and stay connected while social distancing.

This webinar provides an overview of key concepts, barriers, and opportunities. The panelist presentations will focus on:

- Funding -- Home internet service and purchase of internet enabled devices.
- Delivery of Services and Supports -- Potential HCBS stakeholder roles: states, service providers, etc. Holistically assessing technology needs. Providing set up and ongoing supports. Addressing unique challenges rural communities face.
- Knowledge and Skills Needed -- Using software and apps. Instilling awareness of online etiquette, protocols, and vulnerabilities. Promoting participation in digital communities and self-sufficiency.

The webinar will be recorded. If you are interested in the webinar and cannot attend, please register. We will send you the recording link via email.

[Register here](#)

About this webinar series

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) host a monthly webinar series that invites subject matter experts and practitioners from across the home- and-community-based services (HCBS) continuum to share insights and best practices to develop high quality HCBS programs and services.



ACL's short animated video, [Strengthening Communities: Why Community Living Matters](#), explains why community living is so important and how the entire community benefits when older adults and people with disabilities are able to fully participate. [View ACL's YouTube channel for more videos.](#)

US Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights Tackles Health Care

Excerpted from: [npr.org](https://www.npr.org)

Civil rights officials at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a series of actions to protect people with disabilities from health care discrimination by medical providers during the pandemic.

The actions, by the Office of Civil Rights, or OCR, at the Department of Health and Human Services, specifically address discrimination related to the denial of treatment for people with disabilities who have COVID-19 or the symptoms of COVID-19. They include:

- The start of a process to write regulations that explicitly prohibit medical workers from denying care to people with disabilities based on subjective decisions about the quality of their life or by issuing a Do Not Resuscitate order without the patient's consent or against their stated preference.
- A revision to the guidelines of four health care systems, in North Carolina, North Texas, Southwest Texas and the Indian Health System, to assure that people with disabilities and older people are not passed over for scarce care, like drug treatments and ventilators.

"We said during COVID-19, our civil rights are not suspended," HHS OCR director Roger Severino told NPR. "People will not be subject to age or disability discrimination when the going gets tough."

Sarah McSweeney, whose death was the subject of one of NPR's stories on health care rationing, was a 45-year-old woman with multiple disabilities. She died at an Oregon hospital in May after doctors questioned her quality of life and pressured her guardian and others who cared for her to sign a Do Not Resuscitate order to allow doctors to withdraw care.

The new OCR action makes clear that doctors cannot issue a blanket DNR and cannot substitute their subjective beliefs about the quality of a disabled person's life over the person's own wishes. Severino says the actions are intended to make clear "that discrimination against persons with disabilities will be absolutely forbidden and stereotypes about their usefulness should never be part of a discussion when we allocate care."

If the OCR action — which takes on a range of issues of discrimination — becomes formalized, it would become a significant expansion of disability civil rights law. A final rule exists in draft form, according to a source at HHS, with hopes that new Biden Administration officials will pick it up.

Alison Barkoff, of the Center for Public Representation, a disability civil rights group, said the OCR actions reflect parts of the disability agenda that President-elect Joe Biden had promised in his campaign. "This is a great signal and we're really pleased," says Barkoff, who helped write more than a dozen complaints to OCR about treatment of people with disabilities during the pandemic.

In addition, OCR announced four settlements over what are called "state crisis standards of care." These are guidelines by state governments to health care providers about how they can determine who gets medical care if it gets scarce. The rules are guidelines for events like natural disasters, terrorism or pandemics.

The final four agreements — including in Texas where hospital staff say they are facing shortages in the latest spike of the coronavirus — include language to guarantee doctors will not pressure patients to sign Do Not Resuscitate orders and not exclude people from treatment based on their disability alone.

The steps taken by OCR to stop medical discrimination reflect the findings of a series of papers on bioethics and disability, issued by the National Council on Disability, an independent federal agency that makes recommendations to Congress and the White House on disability policy. Those reports alleged widespread discrimination in medical settings against people with disabilities — from who gets organ transplants to how bias that disabled people can't have a good quality of life is used to deny medical treatment.

"Disability discrimination in health care is among the most insidious — with life and death consequences — and it's hard to root out," Neil Romano, chairman of the National Council on Disability told NPR. The action by OCR, he says, "sends an unequivocally clear message that we will not accept health care that relegates people with disabilities to last in line or 'lost cause.'"

FCC Seeks Input on Providing Broadband Service and Devices to Low-Income Households by February 16

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is seeking to provide broadband service and devices to low-income households. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 directed the FCC to create the program, which would reimburse participating companies for providing discounted broadband service and connected devices to eligible households during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program will pay up to \$50 for a broadband connection per qualifying household. On Tribal lands, that monthly discount may be up to \$75 per month. The program will also purchase a device (such as a phone, laptop, or tablet) to connect to the Internet up to \$100 of the cost of the device so long as the household contributes no less than \$10 and no more than \$50 for the device. Participating providers will receive reimbursement from the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program for the discounts provided.

[Find more information about this request for comment.](#)

Comments are due by February 16.

All filings should refer to WC Docket No. 20-445. Filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission. Comments may be filed by paper or by using the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS). Comments and replies may be filed electronically via ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>.

Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and one copy of each filing.

- Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9050 Junction Drive, Annapolis Junction, MD 20701.
- U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail must be addressed to 45 L St, NE, Washington, DC 20554.

People with Disabilities. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice) or (202) 418-0432 (TTY).

Silver Linings

Employing autistic staff, Rising Tide Car Wash plans third location

Excerpted from article by Scott Luxor, Sun Sentinel (Florida). For the full article see:

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/community/the-forum/fl-cn-new-rising-tide-car-wash-20201230-sv4uex2ue5hepn3za57365gp4-story.html>

The ripple started in Parkland. Then it became a wave in Margate. Now there's a [Rising Tide](#) coming to Coral Springs. Rising Tide Car Wash, which hires mostly people on the autism spectrum, has now found enough success in its business model to expand to a third location.

John D'Eri co-founded the car wash business with his son Thomas back in 2013. His mission was to create a social enterprise to give people with autism an opportunity to have real opportunities and real jobs that would challenge them and give them skills. D'Eri was inspired by his other son, who was diagnosed as being autistic when he was a toddler. "My son Andrew is on the spectrum," he said. "There were no opportunities for him whatsoever. I have always been a serial entrepreneur. So I decided that the best thing I could do was try to give him empowerment through employment versus some form of institutionalization like a group home."

The original car wash was so successful that the family decided they should open a second location in 2017. Now, the success led them to pursue a third location in Coral Springs, which is slated to open in late 2021 or early 2022. "Within the first two years of operation, we want to be 100% staffed with diversity, meaning employees on the spectrum. That includes the team leaders. That's our goal with Coral Springs, which would be the first of its kind."

While the pandemic has been challenging for everyone, D'Eri said that Rising Tide has found ways of adapting that has set them apart from other car wash services. He also recognizes the positive aspects of the year.

"You have to look for the silver linings in 2020," he said. "Rising Tide has been committed to our expansion into Coral Springs. We kept our head down and kept pushing through, even with all the bad news and everything going on with COVID."

D'Eri said that perseverance is a quality that has made a huge difference in getting things done, despite the health crisis. "I always feel a sense of hope, like we always do at Rising Tide," he said. "The coronavirus, too, will pass. And when it passes, we don't want to be left behind."

The changes that have been made to help prevent the spread of the virus at the car wash are thorough, and D'Eri said many of them should be continued beyond the pandemic.

Who would think that a car wash would be an important way of impacting the autistic community? D'Eri said that he and his son Thomas did a lot of research, and that's how they came up with a car wash as a high-impact model for a social enterprise for people on the spectrum.

What made this model have its most impact was the visibility of the workforce for the customers. The car wash model also was good for workers who are on the spectrum since the tasks are sequential and are repeated throughout the day.

Rising Tide is a model of a more recent trend in businesses that operate both for a profit, as well as for a cause.

Happy Facts

Taken from <https://www.womansday.com/life/q29072119/happy-facts/>

Otters hold hands when they float to keep them from floating away from each other while they sleep.



The national animal of Scotland is a unicorn.

Pink dolphins exist.



Honeybees hold hands when they move. They're actually more like hooks. They hook themselves together and off they go.

Honeybees can recognize human faces. Don't expect one to stop you on the street anytime and say hi, but research has proven they can differentiate humans from each other.

Honey stays good forever. Literally. It's the only food that never, ever goes bad.

There's a basketball court on top of the US Supreme Court building. It's called "The Highest Court In All The Land." Really.



Almost 30,000 rubber duckies were lost at sea in the '90s and are still being found today. Imagine thousands of yellow duckies out there in the middle of the ocean.

Laughing for about 10 minutes can make you burn between 20 and 40 Calories.

Goats have regional dialects and accents just like humans do.

Octopuses gather shiny things and make gardens out of them.

A group of porcupines is called a prickle. A group of hedgehogs is also a prickle.

Humpback whales protect other sea life from killer whales.



The quokka (rhymes with *mocha*) is always smiling and has been called the happiest animal in the world. It is one of the friendliest animals toward humans, too. The quokka is a small relative of kangaroos, about the size of a cat, and lives in western Australia.

The Cookie Monster's real name is 'Sid.'

All people in your dreams are real people. Even if you don't recognize them, they're composites of real people you've seen before.

There's an island in Japan filled with friendly rabbits.

The blob of toothpaste that goes on your toothbrush is called a "nurdle."

Crocodiles can't stick their tongues out. However, alligators can.

Baby elephants suck on their trunks like human babies suck on their thumbs.



If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, BH Link is here for you

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)

If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website cdc.gov/coronavirus

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

Includes a link to ASL videos

BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website bhddh.ri.gov/COVID

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email callcenter@ripin.org

Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

Website <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at 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 at right.



DD Community Newsletter
SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

Contacting DD Staff

DDD has put extended hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers on the next page. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

401-462-3421

WEEKDAYS DURING BUSINESS HOURS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS
- QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES

During business hours (Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00), for questions or support
(401) 462-3421
 Para español, llame
(401) 462-3014

401-265-7461

AFTER HOURS ON WEEKDAYS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

For emerging or imminent care related questions, Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and weekends 8:30am-10pm
(401) 265-7461

401-265-7461

ON WEEKENDS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Send general questions to the AskDD email address. Please do not email critical issues.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

E-MAIL THE DIVISION

BHDDH.AskDD@BHDDH.RI.GOV

HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!

WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:

- NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS about Your Services and Supports
- GENERAL QUESTIONS about Your Services or the RI DD System

FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL 911 RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!

For medical or healthcare related emergencies, call your Primary Care Physician or 911

CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

CALL FOR:

- ROUTINE Healthcare Questions
- NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care

FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE
 DON'T go to their office unless they tell you to!



Family Employment Awareness Training

We invite families to participate in a FREE four-part series about employment in the community for youth (14-21 years of age) with developmental disabilities.

ONLINE SERIES USING ZOOM
MARCH 9, 16, 23 & 30, 2021
3:30 - 5:00 PM

"FEAT was an eye opening experience. I wasn't sure my son was employable. But now, I have become very excited about some job ideas for my son."

-Family member

SESSION DETAILS

Families are encouraged to attend all sessions of this four-part series, but it is not required. Each session will be a live, interactive training using Zoom. Sessions will not be recorded.

SESSION 1: MARCH 9, 3:30-5:00 PM—PART 1: BUILDING THE DREAM OF EMPLOYMENT

- o Introduction to Employment in RI
- o Panel of Youth successfully employed in RI

SESSION 2: MARCH 16, 2021, 3:30-5:00 PM—PART 2: BUILDING THE DREAM OF EMPLOYMENT

- o Supported and Customized Employment
- o Hear more possibilities!

SESSION 3: MARCH 23, 2021, 3:30-5:00 PM—Planning the Transition to Employment

- o Role of the Family in Planning for Employment
- o School Role in Planning for Employment (Transition IEP)

SESSION 4: MARCH 30, 2021, 3:30-5:00 PM—Accessing Adult Supports for Employment

- o Office of Rehabilitation and Division of Developmental Disabilities
- o Related Supports

"I learned that there are many more resources to support my daughter's future employment than I realized."

- Family member

ALL PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:

- Training materials and resources
- Opportunity to network with families, employees and entrepreneurs

TO REGISTER: Register online or by mail, fax, or phone. Complete the attached registration form or go to www.sherlockcenter.org to download.

Online: <http://bit.ly/2vAxyLi>

Mail: Sherlock Center/RI College, 600 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Providence, RI 02908, Attn: Elaine Sollecito

Fax: 401-456-8150 **Phone:** 401-456-2764

FEAT Questions / Requests:

Claire Rosenbaum, crosenbaum@ric.edu or

Iraida Diaz Williams, williams@ric.edu (bilingual in English/Spanish)

Language Accommodation

If you or someone you know is interested in learning about FEAT and needs information presented in a language other than English, please contact the Sherlock Center. Depending on interest and available resources, sessions may be scheduled in alternative languages.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT ONLINE Classes for People with Disabilities, Families and Community Agencies



NEXT CLASS STARTING February 2, 2021

Do you know a person with a disability who has a hobby or idea for a possible business or who needs more support for an existing business? If so, our **FREE ONLINE ZOOM Business Classes** can help the person to learn all about self-employment and available resources to build their business idea and their financial future!

These are unprecedented times due to COVID-19 but there are opportunities for people with disabilities to safely pursue employment by owning their own business! Entrepreneurship is the choice to do things that have *real meaning* for the person and the ability to sell a product or a service they really love to make a living. This pandemic presents an opportunity for people with disabilities to safely learn skills to be a business owner! Here's what Michael Coyne, owner of "Red, White and Brew Café" in North Smithfield, RI says:

WHY CHOOSE SELF-EMPLOYMENT?

1. I love being my own "BOSS", meeting new people and spending my time working on something I really enjoy every day!
2. I decide my own flexible work schedule and hours.
3. The Classes helped me to learn skills for problem solving, creativity, communication, and self-advocacy. I met other great people with disabilities who also own their own businesses. And I received a mini-grant to buy some equipment I needed for my business!
4. I have assistance through my personal support network and my Business Team who are there to help me with my business.
5. I am no longer "volunteering" my time at a job, but instead I have MY OWN business making money and I have increased my income!



The RI Developmental Disabilities Council, in partnership with CWE and others developed a FREE Business Development Series of 8 Classes, now ONLINE through ZOOM Meetings. The first Class starts on **Tuesday, February 2, 2021 from 1:00 pm-2:00 pm** and others scheduled every week or two.

The Classes provide practical business advice, resources (including mini-grants) and ongoing support to participants, families and staff through experienced Business Advisors. Business experts know how to develop good business plans, marketing ideas and set goals the person can achieve in the industry he/she launches.

The Series includes the following Classes: 1. Is Entrepreneurship (Self-Employment) Right for You?, 2. Steps to Start a Small Business, 3. Identifying Your Target Market, 4. Developing an Effective "Elevator Speech" about Your Service/Product(s), 5. How to Write a Good Business Plan, 6. Finances, Bookkeeping, and Community Resources, 7. Marketing Your Business Idea, and 8. Using Social Media to Promote your Business.

To Register for this Class or For More Information Call Claudia Lowe at 738-3960 or Sue Babin at 523-2300. (Participation Is Limited!)



This project is funded by DLT's and the Governor's Workforce Board's "Real Pathways RI" initiative.



Building a Great Life Webinar Series

for Family Members, People with Disabilities, Providers, and State Agencies

These webinars will explore different approaches to building great lives for people with disabilities in the community of their choice and will feature national and state speakers on selected topics.

**Watch for registration information and details about each webinar in the coming months!
Webinars are free.**



2021 Calendar of Webinar Topics

All webinars will be from 6:00-7:30 PM (Eastern Time)

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| February 11 | The Richness of Living a Life that Includes Risk |
| March 4 | Risk and Dignity of Risk - Personal Stories and Strategies |
| April 1 | Building a Livable Community through Friendships, Relationships, and Belonging |
| May 6 | Financial Literacy - Benefits, ABLE Accounts, and More |
| June 3 | Employment Overview |
| July 1 | Employment in Connecticut |
| August 5 | Housing Part One: National Models |
| August 12 | Housing Part Two: Housing Opportunities in Connecticut, Fair Housing, and Legal Considerations |
| September 2 | Supported Decision Making and Other Alternatives to Guardianship |

If you require a sign language interpreter or other accommodations, please contact caclarke@uchc.edu at least 2 days prior to each event.

Sponsored by:





Frequently Asked Questions by Guardians About the COVID-19 Vaccine For Long-Term Care Facility Residents December 30, 2020

The National Guardianship Association, along with the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging and the National Center for State Courts, recognizes that guardians have many questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. Together we have developed some answers to questions we are hearing from guardians. This supplements the [FAQ](#) published in September 2020.

For all questions you should refer to your state laws, local resources, medical advice, and specific court orders. Nothing in this document is to be considered legal advice for specific questions. Consult with your attorney and other professionals as necessary and use the NGA Standards of Practice for further guidance when faced with difficult decisions.

My client or loved will soon be able to be vaccinated against COVID-19. How should I support my client or loved one in deciding whether to receive the vaccine?

When deciding whether to give consent for a client or loved one to receive the COVID vaccine, you should make a person-centered decision in accordance with the *NGA Standards of Practice*:

- **Standard 14.III** “The guardian shall seek to ensure that the person receives appropriate health care consistent with person-centered health care decision-making.”
- **Standard 14.IV** “The guardian shall....maximize the person's participation, acquire clear understanding of medical facts....[and] options, and risks and benefits of each option.”
- **Standard 14.V** “Use the substituted judgment standard with respect to a health care decision unless the guardian cannot determine the person’s prior wishes.” Thus, consider the person’s current statements and past decisions concerning vaccines, and their current concerns about COVID.

The decision is based not on whether you personally would or would not receive the vaccine, nor on what the facility staff think would be best, but what the client or loved one wants. If your client or loved one is unable to make or participate in the decision with support (such as a clear, plain language explanation of the risks and benefits), you should follow the decision-making steps set forth in in NGA Standard 14.IV.

How should I communicate with the long-term care facility about consent for my client or loved one?

Reach out to the facility staff as soon as possible to find out when they expect to have the COVID-19 vaccine available, what the schedule is for vaccinations, and what the facility or pharmacy partner will need in terms of consent. Clarify that as the guardian, you will be making the decision, with the resident’s participation if possible. At this time, it does not appear that written consent will be necessary for long-term care residents. If you give oral consent, document in your file that you did so, the date, and the person with whom you communicated.

What vaccine-related scams should I watch out for?

If anyone calls and asks for your client or loved one's Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number in order to get a vaccine, it's a scam. You cannot pay to move your client or loved one ahead in the priority list to get the vaccine and offers to do so are likely fraudulent. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) has information on these and other Covid-19 scams.

Will my client or loved one have to pay for the vaccine?

The federal government has purchased hundreds of millions of doses of the vaccine and long-term care residents will not have to pay for the vaccine itself. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has stated that patients should not have to pay for the vaccine or its administration.

Useful sites

[CDC FAQ about COVID-19 Vaccination in long-term care facilities](#)

[CDC FAQ about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)

[HHS: Federal Operation Warp Speed information](#)

[CDC fact sheets for the vaccines for recipients:](#)

[The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care information](#) regarding COVID-19

For other questions that guardians may have about the COVID-19 pandemic, see [Frequently Asked Questions by Guardian About the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), September 2020.