



## **DD Community Forum**

A DD Community Forum was held on May 11<sup>th</sup>. A recording of the forum can be found at <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/DDCommunityForums.php>.

Some of the information from the forum follows. Full notes will be available later in May.

### **Have you heard anything about parents/guardians being paid through self direct coming to an end in June? Or if there is a date that has been decided?**

Self-directed individuals and their families do not need to be concerned about this coming to an end any time soon, and we are pursuing permanent approval after the Public Health Emergency (PHE) ends.

Please note the following:

1. Some flexibilities that Medicaid has approved during the PHE will be able to continue for 6 months after the PHE ends. This includes hiring parents/guardians.
2. The current PHE was renewed on April 16, 2022. It will be reviewed again in July unless it is terminated before then.
3. States will have 60 days notice prior to the termination of the PHE declaration for COVID.
4. We are working with our Medicaid office to permanently allow self-directed individuals to hire parents and guardians.

This means that once the federal government announces the end of the PHE, there will be 60 days before the PHE actually ends, then Medicaid flexibilities can continue for another 6 months. So we will have 8 months of continuation after the PHE end is announced. There is no indication yet of when that announcement might happen. And we are working on making this option permanent.

### **Videos About Self-Direction**

The following two videos with information about self-direction were mentioned at the forum.

Advocates in Action 2021 Conference Session

The Director is IN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGYpZwzLFqk>

*Learn What it means to Self-Direct your DD Services and how to do it!*

Self-Directed Supports <https://youtu.be/qpwAktzCsc>

*Information on Self-Directed Support options for adults with developmental disabilities.*

*Presented by the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities.*

## **Affordable Connectivity Program**

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a U.S. government program under the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that helps many low income households pay for broadband service and internet connected devices.

You are eligible if your household's income is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line, or if you or someone you live with currently receives a government benefit like SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, WIC, Pell Grant, or Free and Reduced-Price Lunch.

If your household is eligible, you could receive:

- Up to a \$30/month discount on your internet service or up to a \$75/month discount if your household is on qualifying Tribal lands
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10 but less than \$50)

Only one monthly service discount and one device discount is allowed per household. To receive the connected device discount, consumers need to enroll in the ACP with a participating provider that offers connected devices (Note: not all internet companies offer device discounts.) The internet company will provide the discount to the consumer.

For more information see: <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/> or <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>

### **Additional No Cost Plans**

Through a separate initiative under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, additional no cost plans may be available to Affordable Connectivity Program enrollees. Twenty leading internet providers have agreed to offer ACP-eligible households a high-speed internet plan for no more than \$30 per month. Eligible families who pair their ACP benefit with one of these plans can receive high-speed internet at no cost. To learn more please visit [GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov).

Low Cost Plan \$30 per month  
ACP Benefit -\$30 off your internet bill  
Monthly Cost = \$0

You can sign up for the low cost plan and ACP benefit through your existing internet service provider if it participates in the program. [Cox](#) and [Verizon Fios](#) are participating providers.

There are 3 options for more information or to sign up:

1. Contact your existing internet provider;
2. Visit [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov) or [GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov) to sign up online or get an application;
3. Call (877) 384-2575.

### **Lifeline Programs**

If you are currently enrolled in the Lifeline program, you do not have to apply again for the ACP. You can apply your Lifeline and ACP benefit to the same or separate services. You can talk to your Lifeline provider about the services they may have available as part of the ACP, including options to apply the discounts to your existing Lifeline service.

## **BHDDH Seeks Your Thoughts on the DD Forums**

Please take a moment to answer four simple questions about yourself and the Quarterly DD Community Forum.

Your input is extremely valuable as decisions are made about future Forums.

Simply click this link to get started:

<https://tinyurl.com/DDForumSurvey> [tinyurl.com]

Thank you for your time!



## **Why You Should Attend This Year's Advocates in Action Conference**

by Denise Flynn



My name is Denise Flynn, and I am excited to tell you about RI's 2022 Self-Advocacy Conference "Reach for the Stars!"

There are many reasons why you should come and join us. For instance, you can learn what a person-centered plan is, and how all things in it are up to YOU!

But one of the most important reasons to attend the Conference is building friendships and making connections with people from all different walks of life.

We all have questions, so feel free to ask about anything! There will be lots of answers to questions at the Conference.

Everyone attending will learn many things, and have a fun time at this Conference. Having fun is a big part of how we get things done!

I am looking forward to attending this year's Conference, and being able to have fun with everybody, and learn new ways I can help others.

See the Advocates in Action 2022 Conference flyer attached to this newsletter or visit their [conference website](#) for more information or to register.



## **LAZO**

*Brokerage Services for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.*

Lazo is a nonprofit agency that provides brokerage services for people who want help managing the responsibility associated with self-directing their services.

### **What is Brokerage?**

Brokerage is a business that provides a service. A support Broker helps to arrange services for an adult with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability as outlined in their Individual Support Plan (ISP). A Broker is the liaison between the individual and the programs or people providing services. They assist with whatever is necessary to identify the individual's needs, special requirements, or resources required to meet those needs. A Broker acts as an agent for the individual, taking all direction from the individual receiving services.

### **What are Brokerage Support Services?**

Brokerage Services are non-clinical services designed to assist individuals in managing their Self-Directed services funding. These services are in place in order to establish a system of support that is responsive to both the needs and desires of the individual.

### **What is 'self-determination'?**

Self-determination is about achieving the quality of life you desire. This includes identifying personal goals that will contribute to involved decision making when it comes to life, health, and work. Self-advocacy acts as the driving force in reaching one's goals and is the training tool utilized to employ change and growth.

### **LAZO Brokerage Process**

1. **Referral and Coaching** Referrals can be made through:
  - School or Transition Program
  - State Assigned Social Worker
  - Family Member or Advocate
  - Self-referral
2. **Planning and Advocacy** Once the referral has been made, the Broker will establish a meeting to review your Individual Support Plan (ISP) which documents the services and supports needed to ensure your quality of life. They will discuss your preferences, choices, abilities and needs, to direct those services and supports.
3. **Problem Solving and Monitoring** Lazo uses a proactive approach to supporting you that is culturally responsive as they create, monitor, evaluate and adjust the support provided to help you meet your goals and lead a full life. The amount and frequency of support provided by the Brokers will vary by person and circumstance.



**Get in Touch/Comuníquese**

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## State Workforce Initiative

A key aspect of stabilizing the DD service delivery system is addressing the current workforce crisis for Direct Support Professionals (DSP). High staff turnover rates have a negative impact on access to services, continuity of supports, and workforce knowledge, skills, and experiences to support adults with I/DD.

In an effort to stabilize the workforce, a Statewide Workforce Initiative was created earlier this year. This initiative is focused on recruitment, retention, and professionalization of the DSP career.

### **Rhode Island's Vision for a Comprehensive DSP Workforce**

*"Rhode Island will have a sustainable, comprehensive, and diverse DSP workforce with the knowledge and skills to provide high quality services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities."*

This comprehensive workforce should be defined by:

- A common definition of DSP, inclusive of DSPs working in various contexts (self-directed/providers, etc.);
- Redefining of the position to reflect community-based responsibilities
- Core competencies, which are foundational with a build to specific roles;
- Career pathways, ladders, and lattices
- Coordinated recruitment and retention plans/strategies;
- Training and professional development aligned to competencies; and
- Compensation that is commensurate with job responsibilities

The State's approach to this initiative consists of a Core Leadership Team and four subgroups. The core leadership team's role includes developing a coordinated strategy and maintaining consistency between subgroup tasks, alignment of policy and documents, evaluation activities, and communication and dissemination activities. Under the guidance and leadership of the Core Group are the four subgroups:

- Recruitment and Retention;
- Standards and Credentialing;
- Inservice Training/Professional Development; and
- Institutes of Higher Education (IHE).

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness month and the goal of recognizing this month is to increase awareness around various mental health needs, reduce stigma around mental health, and increase access to services. Barbara Morse from [NBC 10](#) opened Mental Health Awareness Month at a kick off event on April 28th with a [heartfelt appeal](#) in favor of more behavioral health services in RI. [Click here to watch the Facebook LIVE recording.](#)

### **Who Needs To Look After Their Mental Health?**

Everyone! Mental health is important for all of us. Taking care of yourself is critical to prevent your mental health from worsening – factors like nutrition and gut health, stress, sleep, relationships, trauma, and more can contribute to poor mental health. If your mental health is in a good spot, it is a great time to practice coping skills – ways to help you deal with hard feelings – so that you're better able to handle tough times when they happen.

### **Mental Health Association of RI Calendar of Events for Mental Health Awareness Month**

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**MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**Making Progress Towards Mental Health Parity**

**Presented by: Mental Health Association of RI & The RI Parent Information Network**

**Join the Mental Health Association of RI and the RI Parent Information Network for a VIRTUAL conversation.** Both Rhode Island and federal mental health parity laws were enacted to regulate health insurers so that people needing mental health care, including for substance use disorders, could get the treatment and services they need. But the promise of mental health parity has not yet been realized. Patients continue to struggle accessing care. This conversation will explore the history, current actions, and needed next steps — both regulatory and legislative — that will move Rhode Island towards the promise of mental health parity. [REGISTER HERE](#)

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**MAY 24<sup>TH</sup> 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**The Relationship Between Exercise & Wellbeing**

**Presented by: Community Care Alliance**

A Facebook Live event: The Harbour Youth Center staff discuss their personal experiences and how exercise helped get them through emotionally difficult times in their lives.

Facebook Live: <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityCareAlliance>

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**MAY 24<sup>TH</sup> 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**Newport Hospital Annual Mental Health Month Panel**

**Presented by: Newport Hospital**

Newport Hospital Annual Mental Health Month panel. This free event will be held virtually on May 24 from 6-7 pm and will feature a variety of mental health experts from Newport Hospital and other local organizations. [Click here to learn more about the event.](#)

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**MAY 25<sup>TH</sup> 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.**

**Can We Talk...Community Conversations on Trauma and Healing**

**Presented by: The Interfaith Counseling Center**

**Location: Project Outreach, 1520 Broad St., Providence RI**

Can We Talk is a community space to support healing. Program components include meal sharing; childcare services if needed; artistic expression that engages mind, body, and soul; and the opportunity to anonymously share and listen to other community members' stories of trauma, loss, healing, and hope. Through the program, individuals have access to a licensed mental health clinician and community companions who can serve as important navigators for the integration of multiple services. Clinicians and community companions help with referrals for medical, mental health, legal, housing, food, and other needs and may provide one-on-one support to participants, upon request.

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**MAY 26<sup>TH</sup> 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**Open Mic Night at Hillsgrove Clubhouse**

**Presented by: Thrive Behavioral Health**

**Location: Hillsgrove Clubhouse, 70 Minnesota Ave., Warwick RI 02888**

Hillsgrove Clubhouse welcomes the return of our Annual Open Mic Night. This wonderful evening will feature music, singing, poetry, spoken word, comedy, and other performing talents of members and staff of Hillsgrove Clubhouse and Thrive Behavioral Health. Participation is open to anyone in attendance. Light refreshments will be served. Please contact Dawn Anderson at 401-732-0970 to RSVP and/or if you are interested in performing. Free event. Donations welcome.



## **Closing Mental Health Barriers in the Latino Community**

**Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM**

[Register Here](#)

The Latino Community has struggled a lot with mental health and often goes untreated due to the stigmas. This event looks to help remove stigmas and barriers that cause some Latinos to seek the help that they need. We will talk about Access to services, different programs that are available, and when and where to look for treatment.

## **Resources**

*Resources below come from Mental Health America*

**[Caregiver Action Network \(CAN\)](#)**: CAN is the nation's leading family caregiver organization working to improve the quality of life for the more than 90 million Americans who care for loved ones with chronic conditions, disabilities, disease, or the frailties of old age. Individuals can reach out for guidance and support to their dedicated Caregiver Help Desk.

**[Equoo](#)**: Equoo is a game that teaches individuals psychological skills in a fun and captivating way to deal with emotional and mental stressors in a healthy and productive fashion.

**Happify:** Happify brings you effective tools and programs (via the web and an app) to help you take control of your feelings and thoughts using proven techniques developed by leading scientists and experts who've been studying evidence-based interventions in the fields of positive psychology, mindfulness, and cognitive behavioral therapy.

**IDONTMIND:** IDONTMIND is a mental health awareness campaign and lifestyle brand working to get people talking about their minds and to generate positive messaging about mental health. Check out their [online journal](#) for articles on all things mental health.

**Inspire:** Access Mental Health America's Inspire Community to engage with peers who share similar experiences across hundreds of condition-specific support communities.

**Lyf:** Lyf is a social media app where users share highly personal aspects of themselves without the fear of judgment. Lyf users receive support during some of their most grueling, challenging, confronting or even "embarrassing" stages of their lives from other people who have no preconceptions about their fellow Lyfers. Lyfers have the opportunity to connect with and chat to others on the same life paths or journeys; whether it's a struggle or celebration, in Lyf, you aren't alone.

**Minding Your Mind:** Minding Your Mind creates experiences that open minds and show people they are not alone when they are struggling. Their group of young adult speakers, who have successfully and productively coped with their mental health challenges, share their stories of hope, recovery, and resilience. They use the power of storytelling to provide evidence-based education about mental health challenges in schools, communities, and workplaces. Minding Your Mind encourages youth to seek help and ensures that those around them are effectively prepared to provide that help.

**notOK App:** The notOK App® is a free app that takes the guesswork out of asking for help when you're feeling vulnerable.

## **Making Progress Toward Mental Health Parity**

**Friday, May 20**

**12:30 – 1:30 PM**

**on ZOOM**

**[Register Here](#)**

Join the Mental Health Association of Rhode Island and RIPIN for a virtual conversation that will explore the history, current actions, and needed next steps—both regulatory and legislative—that will move Rhode Island towards the promise of mental health parity.



Panelists:

- Marie Ganim, former Rhode Island Health Insurance Commissioner
- Patrick Tigue, current Rhode Island Health Insurance Commissioner
- Senator Joshua Miller, Chair, RI Senate Health & Human Services Committee
- Representative Teresa Tanzi, RI House Government & Elections Committee

Moderators: Karen Malcolm, RI Parity Initiative; Shamus Durac, RIPIN Staff attorney.



## **988 Coming Soon**

### **New Number to Call for People Facing Mental Health Crises**

Everyone deserves access to the support they need, when they need it – and that includes mental health support.

That’s why this year, starting on July 16, 2022, anyone facing a mental health crisis can call 988 and get connected to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (also called the Lifeline).

The line will be staffed with trained crisis counselors who know what callers are going through and know what local resources might make a difference. The phone line is staffed 24/7, and is free and confidential.

When someone is facing a mental health concern or living with a mental health condition, it’s really common to feel like no one understands what you’re going through. It may be difficult to imagine that someone who picks up the phone could totally understand what you’re feeling, and even harder to imagine that recovery is possible.

The current way of doing things isn’t working. Calling 911, the de facto response in our country, is not serving people in a mental health crisis well. A police response can inflict additional trauma on someone in crisis, or worse, attempt to criminalize the person.

Unlike 911, counselors will be at the other end of the Lifeline when you dial 988. They are trained to understand exactly how you’re feeling and to pair you with resources that are specifically tailored to helping you meet the moment you’re in.

Having concerns about your mental health is a common experience. It’s time to make this kind of support just as common. This is why 988 is an easy, three-digit phone number to remember. This resource was created for everyone, including you: if you’re ever feeling like you need help with a mental health or substance use crisis, but not sure if you should call, starting in July, you can just dial 988. It is a direct connection to compassionate, accessible support.

It’s never too early – or too late – to seek help. In the U.S., the average amount of time between the onset of symptoms of a mental health condition or challenge and a diagnosis is 11 years. It’s never too early to get support: If you’re facing a mental health crisis for the first time, reaching out can help.

Mental health challenges and crises are widespread. This is why resources and support for people facing mental health and substance use crises must be just as widespread. Starting July 16, 2022, it will become even easier for people living with these challenges to get the help they need.

If you or someone you know needs to be connected to someone who will understand what you’re going through and how to help, they can soon call 988 to be directly connected with a trained crisis counselor at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Note: 988 will not be available to everyone until July 16, 2022. In the meantime, if you or someone you know is in crisis, please continue to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or the Crisis Text Line by texting MHA to 741741.

## **Your Feedback is Needed for a Survey** **about Transportation Options in Rhode Island**

The [Rhode Island Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council](#) is conducting a survey about the following publicly-funded transportation services in our state:

- RI Public Transportation Authority (RIPTA) Fixed Route and Flex Bus
- The Ride Program- RIPTA ADA Paratransit and contracted services for the RI Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Non-Emergency Medical (NEMT) and Elderly Transportation Program (ETP), which are currently provided by MTM
- Local Van Services provided by Cities and Towns
- Rhode Island's Commuter Rail and Train Service

The information you provide will help the Coordinating Council better understand how publicly-funded transportation services meet the needs of ALL Rhode Islanders and identify areas for improvement in our state.

[Click Here to Take the Survey](#)

### **About the Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council**

The Coordinating Council is charged with better integrating and improving transportation programs that support individuals in need of specialized transportation assistance. It was created by the Rhode Island General Assembly in RI Gen. Laws § 39-18.1-5, which established a coordinating council consisting of state agencies responsible for meeting the needs of low-income seniors and persons with disabilities.

The following agencies are currently represented on the Council: RI Dept. of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH); RI Dept. of Health (RIDOH); RI Dept. of Human Services (DHS); RI Division of Statewide Planning; RI Executive Office of Health & Human Services (EOHHS); RI Office of Healthy Aging (OHA); RI Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS); RI Office of Veterans Services; RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA); and RI Dept. of Transportation (RIDOT).

**This survey is open to everyone. If you don't use any of these public transportation options, you can still take the survey to give your feedback on why they don't work for you.**

**Please share the link to the survey with anyone you know who uses any of these transportation options.**

The link is <https://tinyurl.com/HSTCCSurvey>

## **Contacting DD Staff**

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00  
for questions or support  
**(401) 462-3421**

Para español, llame  
**(401) 462-3014**

Send general questions to the  
AskDD email address.

[BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov)

Please do not email critical issues.

## **Sign Up for Our Email List**

If you aren't receiving email updates  
and newsletters from BHDDH, you can  
[sign up here](#) or on our website. Go to

<https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmentaldisabilities/events/newsandupdates/> to sign up or to see  
past quarterly newsletters and issues of DD News.



**SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER**

## **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](http://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

## **For Information on the Consent Decree**

For information on the Consent Decree and BHDDH, see <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>.

## **COVID-19 Information**

### **Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources**

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;  
Email [RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov)  
Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>  
*Includes a link to ASL videos*

### **RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)**

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>  
Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email [callcenter@ripin.org](mailto: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*

## Developmental Disabilities Services - All Staff Contacts

<b>Main Phone #:</b>	(401) 462-3421	<b>Fax:</b>	(401) 462-2775
<b>To report abuse/neglect:</b>	(401) 462-2629	<b>TDD:</b>	(401) 462-3226
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://bhddh.ri.gov/">https://bhddh.ri.gov/</a>	<b>Spanish Line:</b>	(401) 462-3014

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### Case Management Units

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#### Providence/West Bay/Kent Region

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JoAnn DiMuccio	Social Caseworker II	462-2523	<a href="mailto:JoAnn.DiMuccio@bhddh.ri.gov">JoAnn.DiMuccio@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Meaghan Jencks	Social Caseworker II	462-2113	<a href="mailto:Meaghan.Jencks@bhddh.ri.gov">Meaghan.Jencks@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Souphalak Muriel	Social Caseworker II	462-2512	<a href="mailto:Souphalak.Muriel@bhddh.ri.gov">Souphalak.Muriel@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Yolande Ramos	Social Caseworker II	462-1059	<a href="mailto:Yolande.Ramos@bhddh.ri.gov">Yolande.Ramos@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Vacancy	Social Caseworker II	462-2563	

### Eligibility Unit

Karen Lowell	Eligibility Supervisor	462-2209	<a href="mailto:Karen.Lowell@bhddh.ri.gov">Karen.Lowell@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Marisa Abbruzzi	Social Caseworker II (RICLAS)	462-6099	<a href="mailto:Marisa.Abbuzzi@bhddh.ri.gov">Marisa.Abbuzzi@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Christine Harding	Eligibility Caseworker	462-3233	<a href="mailto:Christine.Harding@bhddh.ri.gov">Christine.Harding@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Lori Lombardi, RN	PASRR	462-0089	<a href="mailto:Lori.Lombardiburns@bhddh.ri.gov">Lori.Lombardiburns@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Kim Wright	Information Aide	462-2584	<a href="mailto:Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov">Kimberly.Wright@bhddh.ri.gov</a>

### SIS Unit

Donna Standish	SIS Supervisor	462-2628	<a href="mailto:Donna.Standish@bhddh.ri.gov">Donna.Standish@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Wendy Cormier	SIS Caseworker	462-1302	<a href="mailto:Wendy.Cormier@bhddh.ri.gov">Wendy.Cormier@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Kristen Miga	SIS Caseworker	462-0449	<a href="mailto:Kristen.Miga@bhddh.ri.gov">Kristen.Miga@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Judy Smith	Social Caseworker II	462-1327	<a href="mailto:Judith.Smith@bhddh.ri.gov">Judith.Smith@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Jamie Fitzgibbons	Social Caseworker II	462-2510	Start date 5/8/22

### Transition Unit

Susan Hayward	Administrator, YIT	462-2519	<a href="mailto:Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov">Susan.Hayward@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Carolee Leach	Prof. Services Coordinator	462-1723	<a href="mailto:Carolee.Leach@bhddh.ri.gov">Carolee.Leach@bhddh.ri.gov</a>

### Support Staff

Stephanie Andreozzi	Implementation Aide	462-1859	<a href="mailto:Stephanie.Andreozzi@bhddh.ri.gov">Stephanie.Andreozzi@bhddh.ri.gov</a>
Lori Vandall	Clerk Typist - medical leave	462-6086	<a href="mailto:Lori.Vandall@bhddh.ri.gov">Lori.Vandall@bhddh.ri.gov</a>

To All the People Who Receive Support Through the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Their Families,

In 2020, as part of the Consent Decree, the Court ordered the State to simplify the overall system and to develop solutions to a variety of issues that made the system difficult to navigate. We formed five work groups to work on that task. Most of the work is finished, some of it will be resolved through the rate and funding methodology review that is currently underway and will be finished by December. I want to provide a summary of what these changes mean to individual lives.

- (1) Quarterly authorizations have been replaced by annual authorizations. That means that you will be able to budget for how to use your tier funding for an entire year. You will receive a quarterly budget statement that will inform you of your remaining balance. This is the first stage towards helping each person develop an individual budget that increases your personal control and increases community access according to your personal interests and wishes.
- (2) An additional needs questionnaire has been added to the SIS assessment to better identify an individual's funding needs upfront, without the need for a request for additional supports through the existing cumbersome process. This questionnaire will assist the State to better understand your whole life support needs and to reduce the need for you to have to engage in the time-consuming request process.
- (3) There will be a new SIS results letter that provides
  - Tier level,
  - Annual allocation,
  - Social Caseworker contact information and areas they can assist with accessing services and supports,
  - Information on service model options
  - Information on Medicaid,
  - Information on Individual Service Plans,
  - Links to BHDDH website, DHS website, and EOHHS website,
  - Information on how to request an appeal.
- (4) Definitions for functions and activities have been updated. Guidance has been developed that allows individuals to share supports to increase the amount of support they receive. This guidance will be posted on the BHDDH website by the end of the month.
- (5) The BHDDH contract with RIPTA has been approved for Medicaid match. This will eventually increase the amount of funding available to individuals for transportation funding.
- (6) DHS staff have been trained in procedures to significantly reduce the need for duplication in documents and applications. Grids have been developed to assist the DD social caseworkers in the process of identifying the minimum documents required to complete a

Medicaid application. If an individual is on SSI, financial redetermination is not necessary. The appeals process has also been simplified.

- (7) The Rate and Payment Methodology Review process will be completed by 12/1/22 and will address the following:
  - The resolution of the 15-minute billing units.
  - The resolution of ratios for day services.
  - The provision of a range of funding levels through individual budgets.
  
- (8) Conflict Free Case Management (CFCM) remains under development with the support of the CFCM Workgroup through EOHHS and the recommendations of the DD Quality Advisory Committee. CFCM, paired with the revised process for developing individual budgets and the other revisions described in this letter, will allow for more individualized supports. This new process will be fully implemented by September, 2022.

The entire Administrative Barriers project has been a major effort in collaboration and communication regarding the shared vision of increasing individual control over their lives and increasing community access. Those involved in this process have made a step forward in the efforts to improve service delivery to adults with disabilities through the reduction in unnecessary administrative burdens. I look forward to completing this work through the LTSS workgroups and the Rate Methodology project with the lens of continuing to focus on reducing administrative barriers constantly in focus.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Savage  
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities  
BHDDH

# SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS NETWORK

A NETWORK OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY MEMBERS USING SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS IN RHODE ISLAND

ONLINE MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022  
7:00 – 8:30 PM

This meeting will take place online using Zoom. When 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.

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

## PLAN TO 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.

## JOIN THE DISCUSSION!

- Coming out of COVID? How are you coping?
- Designing a plan to support what you need.
- Recruiting and keeping good staff.
- Making friends and community connections.

RSVP LINK: <https://bit.ly/2YUamqz>

Please RSVP using the link above. Click the link or cut and paste into your browser. Soon after you RSVP, you will receive an email confirmation with complete details and directions for using Zoom. 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, contact Claire Rosenbaum, [crosenbaum@ric.edu](mailto:crosenbaum@ric.edu) 401-456-4732 or Crystal Cerullo, [ccerullo@ric.edu](mailto:ccerullo@ric.edu), 401-456-8915, TTY: 711

# LUNCH AND LEARN: Working While Disabled—Work Incentives Sessions

**Registration Now Open!**  
**Work Incentives sessions for SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries**

## **Work Pays! An Introduction to YOUTH Work Incentives**

June 1, 2022, 12-1 pm

## **Working with Benefits - Yes, You Can!**

June 22, 2022, 12-1 pm

## **SSI Overview:**

July 20, 2022, 12-1 pm

## **SSDI Overview:**

August 10, 2022, 12-1 pm

*ALL SESSIONS will be offered on Zoom with subtitles in English.*



**REGISTER ONLINE at <https://bit.ly/2KkUCVQ>**

The Sherlock Center provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and those that support them (family, guardian, rep payee, professionals). These sessions will be of value to anyone looking for a basic introduction to disability-related work incentives and/or has related questions. The Work and Benefits Introduction is for those starting to think about working and have general questions. The SSI or SSDI sessions provide details about the specific work incentives and other related information. All sessions provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the following topics:

- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

Upon registration please share your questions.

NOTE: These sessions will not address how to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits.

**TIP:** Unsure if you receive SSI or SSDI? You can confirm which benefit you have at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

**Presented by Certified Work Incentives Counselors.**

**REGISTRATION IS LIMITED!** Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the session. You can access the session by computer, mobile device or listen using a cell or landline phone.

**Accommodation requests or registration questions:** Contact Elaine Sollecito at [esollecito@ric.edu](mailto:esollecito@ric.edu), 401-456-2764.

**Session questions:** Contact Vicki Ferrara at [vferrara@ric.edu](mailto:vferrara@ric.edu), 401-456-8092 or Joshua Hughes at [jhughes@ric.edu](mailto:jhughes@ric.edu), 401-456-4734.







**Get Ready for  
Rhode Island's  
2022 Statewide  
Self-Advocacy  
Conference!**

**[Register here](#)**

## ***Reach for the Stars!***

Join us for this free, informative, FUN online event!!

**This year's Conference will be held:**

**Thursday, June 16th 10:00 am – 2:30 pm**

**Friday, June 17th 10:00 am – 2:30 pm**

*(There will be a one-hour break each day from 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)*

**The Reach for the Stars Virtual Dance Party will be held:**

**Friday, June 17th 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm**

### **Conference Schedule**

#### **Thursday, June 16**

10:00 am General Session  
11:00 am Workshop  
12:00 am One Hour Break  
1:00 pm General Session  
1:15 pm Workshop  
2:30 pm End of Day One

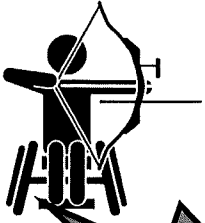
#### **Friday, June 17**

10:00 am General Session  
11:00 am Workshop  
12:00 am One Hour Break  
1:00 pm General Session  
1:15 pm Workshop  
2:30 pm End of Day Two

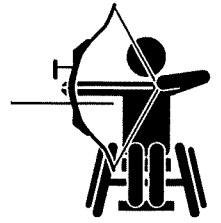


For updated information, keep checking the Conference page on our website:

**<https://www.advocatesinaction.org/2022Conference.php>**



# NEVER TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT TOGETHER WE CAN DO IT ALONE



**EXCITING  
NEWS**

*We Aim To Please!*

**HOPE, MOTIVATION,  
INFORMATION**

**WELCOME TO  
ALL CONTRIBUTORS  
& THE COMMUNI-**

**COMING  
SOON**

**PLAN YOUR  
SUMMER**



**ALL AGES  
AND ABILITIES**

**BECOME A  
CONTRIBUTOR**

**GET YOUR  
VOICE HEARD**

**Inside**  
Why...  
Recipes  
Activities & Events  
Calendar And More...

*Mark Reese (401) 381-8118*

*319 Providence Street Suite 803 · West Warwick Rhode Island 02893*