



Consent Decree Update

On October 2, 2023, The Court issued an order for an [Addendum to the RI Consent Decree](#) (USA v RI). This Addendum is to continue the oversight of the Consent Decree and ensure all required actions are fully implemented by July 2024 and continue through June 2026. This addendum does not extend or revise the Consent Decree.

The focus is on allowing choice for individuals with I/DD and ensuring all have the opportunity to be employed and to participate in integrated community activities. The Court Monitor has provided [Commentary](#) to explain his reasoning for an Addendum and has outlined some of the major accomplishments that have occurred over the last nine years through the Consent Decree.

View the Addendum, Monitor's Commentary, and other Consent Decree documents on the BHDDH website under [Consent Decree Court Orders](#).

DD Community Forum Recording

The Fall DD Community Forum was held virtually on Tuesday, September 19th. Director Kevin Savage and the DD team provided updates and answered questions about what is happening with the Division. The forum was recorded and is available to [watch here](#).

[Click Here to find recordings of past forums.](#)

Save the
Date

The next DD Community Forum will be held online on Tuesday, December 5th from 3:00-4:30 PM. [Click Here to register.](#)

Conflict-Free Case Management (CFCM) Info Session for DD Participants & Families Thursday, October 19, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM [Click Here to Register](#)

[Draft Certification Standards for Conflict Free Case Management](#) were posted to the EOHHS website on October 2nd.

On October 19th, EOHHS and BHDDH will present a virtual information session for DD participants and families on the draft standards and the plans for moving forward with CFCM for the DD population. A second meeting will be scheduled in-person with DD participants and families. An additional meeting will be held for providers of DD services.

For the most up to date information, meeting dates and times, and recordings of previously held meetings, please go to the : <https://eohhs.ri.gov/conflict-free-case-management>

Save the Date for the Next Conflict-Free Case Management Stakeholder Meeting Thursday, October 26 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM on Zoom

RI EOHHS is leading an interagency initiative to establish a statewide effort to provide conflict-free case management (CFCM) to Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS) beneficiaries who are participants in the State's home and community-based services (HCBS) programs. A core component of this initiative is the establishment of a network of qualified CFCM entities with the capacity to serve approximately 11,000 Rhode Island HCBS participants who have a varying and changing array of LTSS needs.

The draft certification standards for CFCM have been posted on the CFCM page found here [Conflict-Free Case Management | Executive Office of Health and Human Services \(ri.gov\)](#) specifically under the **Program Materials** section.

Note that the public comment period of the draft CFCM certification standards runs thru October 31st, 2023.

Stakeholders should submit feedback to OHHS.LTSSNWD@ohhs.ri.gov by October 31st with the subject line of **DRAFT CFCM Certification Standards**.

All previous Stakeholder Meeting materials which include presentations, recordings and Questions and Answers are available on the same page and are listed by date of occurrence. Upcoming Community Meetings are listed for November, and December.

Additional Upcoming Stakeholder Meetings

- **November 2023:** Thursday, November 30th, 2023, from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM
- **December 2023:** Thursday, December 14th, 2023, from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM

View Previous Community Meetings

- September 28, 2023: CFCM Implementation Updates
 - View the [Presentation](#) or View the [Recording](#)
- August 31, 2023: State's implementation of CFCM
 - View the [Presentation](#) or View the [Recording](#)

Advancing Access and Equity through Tech Innovation

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

3:00-4:00 PM

[Click Here to Register](#)

Join the [Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center](#) (DETAC) for a webinar to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This webinar is focused on how technology has the potential to advance access and equity for people with disabilities. Innovative technology tools, ranging from assistive technology to augmentative intelligence, are continually evolving to increase independence by providing accommodations or enhancing access to information and services. The panel of innovative thinkers will share how designing technology solutions for the needs of the customer with a disability to overcome barriers in transportation, education, and housing increases opportunities to advance competitive, integrated employment. Additionally, the panel will highlight how partnerships play a key role in generating new creative solutions to increase access and equity in the workforce and our communities.

Registrants can note accommodation needs — such as captioning or sign language — on the registration page. The webinar will be live captioned. Webinars are recorded and posted with supporting materials on the [DETAC Events page](#).

Contact AoDEmploymentTA@gmail.com with questions.

The ACL-funded [Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center](#) (DETAC) provides evidence-based training and technical assistance to Administration on Disabilities grantees for improving competitive, integrated employment (CIE) and economic outcomes for individuals with disabilities across the nation.

Assistive Technology Conference of New England

Thursday & Friday, November 16-17

Crowne Plaza, Warwick

[Click Here to Register](#)

The Assistive Technology Conference of New England, hosted by [TechACCESS of RI](#), is dedicated to technology, people with disabilities, families and professionals.

Since 1988, Rhode Island's annual conference on assistive technology has offered state-of-the-art workshops, information and exhibits on the technologies that enhance and change the lives of persons with disabilities of all ages. Attended each year by hundreds from Rhode Island, New England, and beyond, the conference focuses on uses of technology in education, communication, employment, recreation, home, and independent living. The Bringing Access to Life Expo is a feature of the ATCNE added in 2015. The Expo features entrepreneurs with disabilities, and offers conference attendees an opportunity to purchase products created by our guests.

You can view General Information about the conference [here](#).

Developing Employment Opportunities at RI College



On September 22, the DD Employment Team of Jay MacKay and Elvys Ruiz met with Maggie Sullivan, Director of Human Resources at Rhode Island College (RIC), Andreina Batista, Assistant Director of Human Resources (Talent Acquisition and Retention); Danielle Silva, Human Resources Coordinator, and Phareth Theul, Associate Director of Human Resources to talk about employment opportunities at RIC for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).

Jay and Elvys talked to the RIC team about the consent decree and DD's mission to support people with I/DD in reaching their employment goals, our partnership with licensed provider agencies, our business and community engagement initiatives, as well as other projects and programs supporting employment for adults with I/DD.

Maggie Sullivan expressed that one way RIC might employ people with I/DD who want to work part-time is through an option they have for temporary, non-state employee positions. These are specific short-term work assignments over a period of less than 6 months or a yearly contract.

The RIC team will keep Elvys and Jay informed of job opportunities where people with I/DD can be a good fit. Some examples of jobs and places that people have worked through this program, include the athletic facilities, kitchen, and other areas of the college.

This is a good opportunity to employ people with I/DD even if it is on a part-time or temporary basis. DD's Employment Team will be working to foster a good relationship with the Human Resource division at RIC, which may lead into better employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the future.

If you are an employer or know an employer who might be interested in tapping into the under-utilized workforce of people with I/DD, please contact the Division at (401) 462-3421.

Parity Rule Comment Deadline Extended to October 17

The deadline to submit comments on requirements related to the [Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act](#) has been extended to October 17.

In July, the Biden Administration proposed new rules to advance parity — the idea that insurance companies should cover mental health condition and substance use disorder care at the same level of care for physical health conditions. Now, the public can comment on the proposal.



[Mental Health America](#) is asking anyone who is interested to tell the federal government how important it is to ensure equal treatment of mental health and substance use disorder care by insurance plans by submitting a comment on the proposed updates. MHA has set up a simple [online form](#) to help people submit a comment of support. You can also submit comments directly at <https://www.regulations.gov/>.

For more information, you can [watch the recording of MHA's Youth Town Hall on Parity](#).



FTC Consumer Alert: Free COVID Test Kits Are Back: Here's How To Get Yours

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2023/09/free-covid-test-kits-are-back-heres-how-get-yours>

Starting September 25, you can order four free test kits per household through COVIDtests.gov.

The tests will detect the [currently circulating COVID-19 variants](#) and are intended for use through the end of 2023. The kits will include [instructions on how to verify extended expiration dates](#). Many kits have had their expiration dates extended beyond what may be printed on the packaging.



You don't have to pay for shipping, and you'll never be asked for a credit card or bank account number. You only need to give a name and shipping address. If you'd like an email confirmation and delivery updates from the U.S. Postal Service, you can submit your email address. **Anyone who asks for more information than that is a scammer.** So, remember:

- Only go to COVIDtests.gov to order your free test kits from the federal government. When you click to order, you'll be redirected to special.usps.com/testkits. If you're following a link from a news story, double-check the URL that shows in your browser's address bar.
- No one will call, text, or email you from the federal government to ask for your information to "help" you order free kits. Don't give out your credit card, bank account, or Social Security number. Do not respond. Instead, report it to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

CDC Recommends Updated COVID-19 Vaccine for Fall/Winter Virus Season Do you need help getting information or scheduling an appointment for a booster?

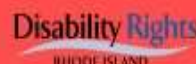


The CDC recommends everyone 6 months old and older get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against the potentially serious outcomes of COVID-19 illness this fall and winter. Updated COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are now available.

We can help you get the information you need to decide when, how and where to get a booster.

We can also help you arrange an appointment at a pharmacy, clinic or drive thru site to get your vaccination or booster. If going to one of these sites is very difficult for you, it is possible to arrange to be vaccinated in the comfort of your home.

If you need assistance or have questions about accessing, scheduling an appointment or finding transportation for a vaccine or booster shot, you can call 401-834-1171 or email vaxhelp@AccessibleRI.org. Then we will call back to assist you.



Report Suspected Abuse

Mandated Reporting

Reporting suspected occurrences of abuse, neglect, and mistreatment of individuals with developmental disabilities

To report abuse and serious incidents call the QA hotline at **(401) 462-2629**

The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit at BHDDH operates a 24 hour hotline, seven days per week, 365 days per year. Staff respond to reported incidents of abuse, neglect, mistreatment and financial exploitation.

For More Information on DD Initiatives

Consent Decree: see <https://bhddh.ri.gov/developmental-disabilities/consent-decree>

Conflict Free Case Management: see the [EOHHS CFCM website](#) or [DD Initiatives-CFCM](#)

RI DSP State Workforce Initiative: see <https://riswi.org/> or [DD Initiatives-SWI](#)

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

Contacting DD Staff

See the full Division Contact List attached to this newsletter.

Monday-Friday
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM
call **(401) 462-3421**

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

Send general questions to the AskDD email address.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

Please do not email critical issues.

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. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org.

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

VISIT the 24-HOUR/7-DAY Triage Center at:
975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Call **911** if there is a risk of immediate danger.

If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text **988** or chat 988lifeline.org



Division of Developmental Disabilities - All Staff Contacts

Main Phone #: (401) 462-3421 **TDD:** (401) 462-3226 **Website:** <https://bhddh.ri.gov/>
Fax: (401) 462-2775 **Spanish Line:** (401) 462-3014 **BH Link:** (401) 414-5465

To report abuse/neglect:
(401) 462-2629

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[\[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

[REGISTER HERE](https://r20.rs6.net)
[\[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

Event: What is Self-Direction?
Time: October 10 at 6:00 PM
Location: [Zoom \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

We are excited to invite you to our upcoming webinar, "**What is Self-Direction?**" hosted by RIPIN's Self-Directed Support Program. This informative live webinar will provide valuable insights into self-direction for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

During the webinar, we will cover:

- The fundamentals of self-direction
- Access to essential resources
- Q&A session with experienced and knowledgeable families who have embraced self-direction

Whether you're an individual with disabilities, a family member, caregiver, or advocate, this event is tailored to meet your needs. Don't miss this opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of self-direction and connect with experts in the field.

[SIGN UP TODAY! \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://r20.rs6.net)

RIPIN is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. Please contact communicationsteam@ripin.org to request disability accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreters, alternative formats). Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

If you have any questions or need assistance, feel free to contact us at selfdirectedsupport@ripin.org.

Looking forward to seeing you at the webinar!



**The Rhode Island Self-Direct Coalition Presents “Supporting
Healthy Relationships and Boundaries”
Hyatt Place Warwick Providence Airport
800 Jefferson Blvd.
Warwick, RI 02886**

Featuring Terri Couwenhoven

Terri Couwenhoven, M.S. is an AASECT certified sexuality educator who specializes in developing programs and resources for people who have intellectual/developmental disabilities, their families and the professionals who support them. She is the author of *Teaching Children with Down syndrome about their Bodies, Boundaries and Sexuality: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*, *The Girls’ Guide to Growing Up: Choices & Changes in the Tween Years*, *The Boy’s Guide to Growing up: Choices & Changes During Puberty*, and *Boyfriends & Girlfriends: a Guide to Dating for People with Disabilities*.

When she is not teaching or writing, she is Clinic Coordinator for the Down Syndrome Clinic at Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin. She is the mother of two girls. Her oldest daughter has Down syndrome.

Agenda, Day 1 – November 3, 2023, for Parents and Professionals
**9-11:45 – Changing Scripts: Supporting Healthy Sexuality in
Teens & Adults with I/DD**

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch Break (Provided)

1:00 pm -4:00 pm - Supporting Healthy Dating Relationships

Agenda, Day 2 – November 4, 2023, for Teens and Adults with I/DD

9:00-10:00 Boundaries and Relationships.

10:00-12:00 Dating Basics

To register for *Supporting Healthy Relationships and Boundaries* workshop, please visit www.risdc.org and complete the registration form.

**Please note seating is limited for both events.
Registration is required.**

SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS NETWORK

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

Online Meeting
Wednesday, October 18, 2023
7:00 – 8:30 PM

**Victoria Ferrara, M.A., Access to Integrated Employment Coordinator and
Christine Botts, Deputy Administrator, Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental
Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH):**

Learn about the Employment and Day Activities Survey and Access to Independence Program.

Invite your Direct Support Professionals to join.

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.

AGENDA

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 7:00 – 7:15 | Introductions & Updates |
| 7:15 – 7:45 | Dialogue with Vicki Ferrara
Topic: Day & Employment Activities Survey |
| 7:45 - 8:15 | Dialogue with Christine Botts
Topic: Access to Independence Program |
| 8:15 - 8:30 | Questions and Closing Remarks |

This session will be recorded.

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

Please RSVP using the link above. Click the link or cut and paste it into your browser. 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, call or email Crystal Cerullo, Sherlock Center on Disabilities:
Email: ccerullo@ric.edu Voice: 401-456-8915 TTY: 711

TechACCESS of RI

Providing Assistive Technology

Services for Individuals

with Disabilities

Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities or age-related health conditions to perform tasks that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.

Assistive technologies allow people to communicate, learn, navigate their environment, accomplish daily living tasks, perform functional work tasks and achieve independence.



www.techaccess-ri.org



161 Comstock Parkway
Cranston, RI 02921

Adult Services available:

- **Evaluation/Consultation**
 - Workplace Accommodations
 - Workplace Ergonomics
 - Higher Education Curriculum Access
 - Home/Independent Living
 - Communication
 - ADA/Physical Access
 - Smart Home Technology
- **Training**
 - Equipment
 - Hardware
 - Software
 - Devices
 - Disability Awareness
 - Professional Development
- **Assistive Technology Tech Support**
 - Hardware
 - Software
 - Devices
 - Custom Fabrication
 - Device Modification

For additional information,
contact
TechACCESS of RI
(401) 463-0202

techaccess@techaccess-ri.org



The Link Center invites you to participate in the first of its Shared Learning Groups virtual gathering series.

These Shared Learning Groups are an opportunity to dive into important topics and tap into your expertise and experiences related to people with cognitive disabilities, including I/DD, brain injury and others, and MH conditions. These meetings will be led by members of our Steering Committee and project partners.

Please join us for our first Shared Learning Groups as we discuss “Supporting Someone in Crisis”.

Live Captioning and ASL Interpretation will be provided during all live webinars.

There are four sessions on the same topic for different target audiences. Please register for the session most relevant to you.

Registration is required and is limited to 200 participants for each session.

<u>October 24, 2023</u>	<u>October 25, 2023</u>
<p>Direct Support Professionals: 1:00-2:30p EST</p> <p>Register in advance for this webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QwIUcs1DTD2QxU-4hDJyzQ</p>	<p>Families: 1:00-2:30p EST</p> <p>Register in advance for this webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_PzMzc36zTOihDcemSc4biA</p>
<p>Clinical Professionals: 3:00-4:30p EST</p> <p>Register in advance for this webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_c1KhxYu-T12J_xoMcxaUgA</p>	<p>Individuals: 3:00-4:30p EST</p> <p>Register in advance for this webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DZuuCFCpTmm3A2vJjAlpqA</p>

Upcoming quarterly Shared Learning Groups topics:

January 2024: Supports for Trauma | April 2024: Supporting Someone through a Transition | August 2024: Supporting the Whole Person

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