



**DELAWARE HEALTH  
AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

August 14, 2020

Dear DDDS Provider Direct Support Professionals,

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for all you've done during these last five months of COVID-19. Having coordinated the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services' (DDDS) response to COVID-19, I have had the chance to observe and hear about the on-going commitment you have made every day to ensure the health and safety of DDDS service recipients in your care. While working in the midst of a highly complex and unprecedented public health emergency, you have continued to show up each and every day to ensure our service recipients remain healthy and safe.

As a former direct support professional myself, I know the energy and passion that it takes to do your job well. I also know that this work is emotionally intense on an average day, especially while supporting service recipients through a very challenging time, all the while also trying to make sure you remain healthy and safe for your own families. This has not been an easy undertaking, so I wanted to applaud you for all you have done.

If you look at the data of COVID-19's impact in other state's intellectual developmental disabilities services, I am incredibly proud of how well Delaware has done. The reason that our number of service recipients who live in provider managed settings who have tested positive for COVID-19 has remained comparatively low, is directly attributed to how seriously our residential direct support professionals haven taken this responsibility. I can't thank you enough.

As Stage One of day services have slowly begun and will continue throughout the next several weeks, we are all eager to get some level of normalcy back into service recipients' lives. We also recognize this resumption of services brings concern and cautious optimism. You have DDDS' full commitment to remain vigilant in tracking the data and COVID-19 spread, to ensure the health and safety of you and the service recipients.

As you are aware, all direct support professionals are required to wear a facemask during their entire shift. We know facemasks worn properly greatly reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 spreading, so it is essential that you wear your mask over your nose and mouth at all times. Since COVID-19 spreads by droplets, it is extraordinarily important to not eat or drink within six feet of service recipients or co-workers. I know this is completely different than how life pre-COVID-19 was lived, but it is necessary to reduce the potential spread of the virus. If you need a facemask, please speak with your supervisor. The provider network has purchased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. DDDS has been able to supplement providers when their supply gets low. Additionally, our providers have implemented enhanced cleaning and sanitizing protocols to reduce the transmission as well.

In closing, please give yourself a pat on the back for the wonderful care you are providing to service recipients during COVID-19. The dedication you have shown is truly commendable. On behalf of the Division and all service recipients, thank you for your on-going commitment. We are all in this together.

Thank you very much and I wish you and your families well.

Warm regards,  
Cory

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Cory Ellen Nourie, MSS, MLSP  
Director of Community Services