



The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute




 State of New Jersey
 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
 TRENT, NJ 08646-0300
 www.nj.gov/health
 PHILIP D. MURPHY
 Governor
 SHELLY Y. OLIVER
 Lt. Governor
 JUDITH M. PERSICHELLI, R.N., B.S.N., M.A.
 Commissioner

April 25, 2020

TO: Acute Care Hospitals Licensed Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:43G
FROM: Judith M. Persichilli, R.N., B.S.N., M.A.
 Commissioner
SUBJECT: Support Person Permitted for a Patient with a Disability

On March 9, 2020 Governor Philip D. Murphy issued Executive Order 103, declaring the existence of a Public Health Emergency, pursuant to the Emergency Health Powers Act, N.J.S.A. 26:13-1 et seq, and a State of Emergency, pursuant to the Disaster Control Act, in the State of New Jersey for Coronavirus 2019 Disease ("COVID-19"). In recognition of the fact that the virus that causes COVID-19 is easily transmitted, especially in group settings, it is prudent for hospitals to implement restrictions on visitors to the facility. Such limitations must take into consideration patient care and well-being.

The Department of Health (Department) considers a designated support person essential to patient care for patients with disabilities where the disability may be due to altered mental status, intellectual or cognitive disability, communication barriers or behavioral concerns. Therefore, hospitals are required to allow a designated support person to be with the disabled patient during hospitalization. This designated support person can be a family member, personal care assistant or another disability service provider knowledgeable about the patient's care and must be allowed to remain with the patient while in the hospital, subject to the restrictions set forth below. The restrictions must be explained to the patient's support person in plain terms, upon arrival or, ideally, prior to arriving at the hospital. Hospital staff should ensure that patient's support person fully understands the restrictions.

The disabled patient's support person must be asymptomatic for COVID-19 and must not be a suspect or recently confirmed case. Additionally, hospital staff must screen the support person for symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, or shortness of breath), conduct a temperature check prior to entering the clinical area, and every twelve hours thereafter, and screen for potential exposures to individuals testing positive for COVID-19. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be given to and worn by the designated support person. Once in the unit, the designated support person must have extremely limited access to other areas of the hospital and not be permitted to leave and re-enter the hospital.

On April 25th, the [NJ Department of Health issued guidance](#) allowing a support person to accompany an individual with disabilities should they be hospitalized. The Arc of New Jersey worked with its advocacy partners and the State of New Jersey to put this guidance in place in order to provide the necessary support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who may need to be hospitalized. The attached letter should be taken with the person to the hospital, if needed.

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essential to patient care for patients with disabilities where the disability may be due to altered mental status, intellectual or cognitive disability, communication barriers or behavioral concerns. Therefore, hospitals are required to allow a designated support person to be with the disabled patient during hospitalization."



The DD Training Resources Website now has listings for COVID-19 related trainings and workshops that are available to families, professionals and self-

<https://ddtrainingresources.org>

NJ Children's *System of Care*

Administered by **PerformCare** Behavioral Health Solutions | An AmeriHealth Mercy Company

The NJ Department of Children & Families, Children's System of Care is allowing families to change their services if desired to better meet the needs of their child with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). If children were in Afterschool Programs or receiving respite in center-based settings, such as weekend respite or recreation, families may request to be discharged from those services and re-enrolled into Self-directed or agency-directed in-home respite. Intensive Support Services are available through telehealth and Mobile Response and Stabilization is still available as well.

Call PerformCare NJ at 877-652-7624 for assistance.



As of April 1, 2020, NJ FamilyCare covers ABA services for children birth to 21 years, a much anticipated benefit for children on Medicaid. This article provides information about how families can access this benefit for their child.

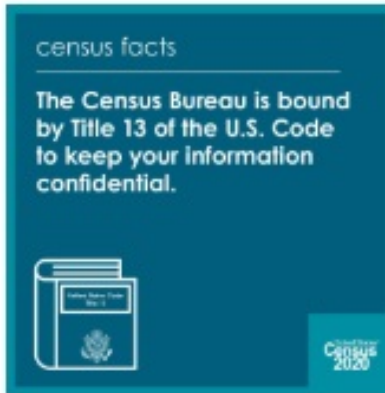
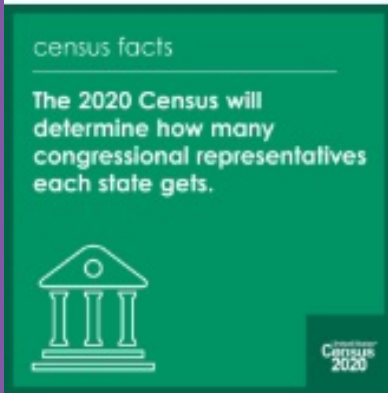
[Continue reading here.](#)



The New Jersey Department of Human Services has an easy-to

navigate website, www.njhelps.org, that may be helpful for individuals with I/DD living independently and for families who are struggling financially due to the coronavirus pandemic and lost income. Potential applicants can do an online

screening that takes just 5 to 10 minutes, to find out if they may be eligible for food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); financial assistance; or NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid (health insurance). After the brief online screening, applications for these programs can be completed and submitted online.



You Count! Be Counted.

The 2020 Census is here, and it is important that people with disabilities and their families are [ready to be counted!](#)

Every 10 years, everyone in the United States is counted through the census. It is important that everyone is counted because the census data impacts many key things. For example, the census data is used to figure out how much money state and local governments get for Medicaid, housing vouchers, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and education programs. When there isn't enough money, services and programs for people with disabilities can be cut. Census data is also used to determine how many representatives each state gets in the House of Representatives. Even with

many self-isolating, it's easy to complete. It takes just a few minutes to fill out and can be done safely right in the comfort of your home.

Check out the [resources from The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute](#) to make sure you and your community are ready to be counted!

Complete the Census



Affordable health coverage. Quality care.

The best way to apply for NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid is online, and the application can be accessed from the www.njhelps.org website (see above). New Jersey Medicaid has a helpline for questions about applying for NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid; inquiring about the start date after an application was submitted; and asking about health care services after coverage has started.

The phone number is 1-800-701-0710 and these are the hours of operation:

- Monday and Thursday - 8 am to 8 pm
- Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday - 8 am to 5 pm



Electric



Gas



Water

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, New Jersey's public electric and gas utilities have agreed to suspend service shutoffs. [Click here](#) for further information for utility customers, including eligibility for home energy assistance and how to apply.

This is one of many emails that The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute is distributing in an effort to help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families,

and staff to be safe and healthy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

To see other emails that The Arc of New Jersey has distributed on this topic, please go to <https://www.arcnj.org/information/covid-19-updates-information.html>

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