

## Spotlight on State I/DD Successes

NASDDDS members have been **essential** in ensuring that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are prioritized for and receive COVID-19 vaccinations. This marks the first of a series NASDDDS will issue to feature strong practices used in states. While there is much work to be done, there are emerging practices that provide insight and learning.

*State Agencies Supporting Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities  
Leadership, Partnership and Innovation*

### Ensuring Vaccine Access for Individuals with I/DD & Direct Support Professionals



#### Louisiana

- Engaging in an array of intense targeted strategies to encourage all communities to access the vaccine, including forging partnerships with local faith-based organizations.
- Launched an aggressive campaign, using data and geo-mapping strategies to target areas where vaccine uptake is low. The state engages in partnership with local governmental entities and civic groups to engage in tailored outreach, which could include phone calls and, eventually, knocks on doors.
- Conducting regular surveys of I/DD service providers, triangulating information with case managers, who do strategic outreach to ensure individuals with I/DD and the people who support them are scheduling appointments and getting to points of vaccine distribution.
- Pursuing dedicated points of distribution to ensure that individuals with I/DD have ready access to the vaccine.
- Educating, supporting, and vaccinating all priority groups, through a variety of resources publicly available on the [COVID-19 Information for Developmental Disabilities](#) webpage.



#### Colorado

- Created, at the direction of the governor, a cross agency team that was co-chaired by a Medicaid long-term services and supports (LTSS) expert and a senior leader at the state health department to develop and implement the residential care strategy.
- Adapted its existing EM Resource database to collect key information on current personal protective equipment (PPE) supply, available beds, COVID-19 cases, and staffing; the state used the data to identify facilities needing support or resources.
- Considered people with disabilities and their caregivers in Colorado's [vaccine prioritization framework](#).
- Facilitation by Colorado's Strike Team to connect the federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program with facilities, including the teams working to ensure that providers who failed to sign up through the federal program had vaccine clinics completed by the state.
- Partnering of 923 facilities with CVS and Walgreens for COVID-19 vaccinations, completing 2,603 clinics to date.
- Managing an ongoing vaccination plan has been put in place with long term care pharmacies to ensure long-term care (LTC) facilities have continued access to COVID-19 vaccine for residents and staff after the federal pharmacy program ends in March.
- Including group homes for individuals with I/DD within the category of LTC facilities in addition to a wide array of other settings.

- Providing a [Colorado COVID-19 Vaccination Data](#) dashboard on statewide vaccine progress, which includes some key demographic information.
- Offering long term care guidance and opportunities for assistance through the [Ongoing COVID-19 Long-Term Care Vaccination Plan](#) website.



## Missouri

- Issued a [Memorandum for Home and Community Based Services](#) requiring reporting of COVID-19 testing and cases through the state's incident management portal and an additional Electronic COVID-19 Case Reporting system.
- Established a role for the state's regional reporting Quality Enhancement Registered Nurse process for follow-up with service providers supporting individuals testing positive for COVID-19.
- Developed a [DD Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information](#) webpage in March 2020 to provide the most current details about the virus to stakeholders of the Developmental Disabilities Division, including individuals, families, and contracted providers. This page features real-life stories from providers and families "from the field" describing successes among the challenges during COVID. This is in addition to regular stakeholder meetings.
- Conducted surveys with contracted providers regarding COVID-19 testing and vaccination needs for individuals served and direct support professionals (DSPs).
- Facilitated collaboration between the Developmental Disabilities Division and the Missouri Pharmacy Association to "match" providers with approved vaccinators if they were struggling to obtain access to the vaccine.
- Used repeated messaging statewide about free testing and vaccines.
- Reporting of statewide vaccination progress is updated regularly on [Missouri's COVID-19 Dashboard](#) webpage.



## Ohio

- Identified several key lessons as a result of its COVID-19 management efforts, focusing on the importance of:
  - internal agency coordination across policy, residential, regulatory, and support divisions
  - relationships at the local level between local departments of health (LDHs) and County Boards as well as across state agencies
  - ability of the state and local County Boards and providers to exchange data
  - facility-based services (e.g., ICF/IID) having relationships with local County Boards
  - assisting residential providers to coordinate and communicate with each other during DSP staffing crisis that occurred throughout the pandemic
  - using Major Unusual Incidents (MUI) Daily Monitoring, which includes data and trends on case, hospitalization, and mortality
  - Ohio County Boards of DD tracking positivity rates and partnering for on-the-ground response using the Agency Weekly COVID-19 Report and using data to inform prioritization decisions
- Developed a full array of education and outreach materials including a [COVID-19 Guidance](#) webpage with current resources for all stakeholders, [plain language information on the vaccination program](#), and social stories for individuals and families to increase education, which was developed in partnership with the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).



## Indiana

- Included DSPs as part of Indiana's Phase 1-A roll-out effective December 31, 2020.
- Partnered with the Indiana Department of Health, Walgreens, and seven community-based disability service providers to vaccinate people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in residential settings serving 2 or more individuals. This included approximately 4,800 individuals served by over 70 residential providers who were not otherwise vaccinated through the federal Pharmacy Partnership.
  - To accomplish this, the eight disability service providers were supported in becoming vaccine providers and developing their capacity to support both in-home and clinic-based vaccine administration.
  - Coordinated, in partnership with Walgreens, nearly 3,500 appointments across over 75 Walgreens stores, twice.

- Building on the success with congregate settings, expanded eligibility to individuals with disabilities ages 16 – 49 who are receiving home and community-based waiver services. This expanded group included nearly 19,000 who were potentially eligible.
  - Relied on the independent waiver case managers to confirm individuals’ interest in receiving vaccine, gather preferred contact information, and submit that information to DDRS.
  - This information was then uploaded into the state’s vaccine scheduling system, which generated a personalized scheduling link sent to the individual through either email or text message. For individuals without access to email or text messaging, they were able to call the 211 system for assistance with scheduling an appointment.
  - To support individuals and families, a brief fact sheet was provided that included information about their eligibility, provided information on what to expect in terms of the scheduling link, and offered resources about the vaccine. These resources included [a link to a video developed by Self-Advocates of Indiana](#) and a [plain language COVID-19 Vaccine Information guide developed by Self Advocates Becoming Empowered](#).
- Related to both efforts, developed the Hoosier Homebound Portal through a partnership between registered vaccinating agents, emergency medical services (EMS) provider agencies, the Indiana Department of Health, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, and the Family Social Services Administration. For this program, individuals identified as homebound are entered into the Homebound Hoosier online portal. The portal then facilitates matching local health departments, hospitals, or federal quality health centers (FQHCs) with available vaccine, to an individual in their community needing home vaccine administration. EMS then serves as a connecting point gathering available vaccine and administering it to the individual.



## Maryland

- Prioritized the health, safety, and wellbeing of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, staff, and providers throughout the public health emergency.
- Gave prioritization to individuals with developmental disabilities in the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out in January 2021.
- Relying on the close collaboration and partnership between State agencies, local health departments, providers and regional Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) staff to reach individuals, their families, and valued direct support professionals statewide.
- Hosting bi-weekly webinars for the DDA Deputy Secretary Bernard Simons to provide access to accurate, clear, and timely information. These recorded webinars are available, along with other COVID-19 resources, at the DDA dedicated [DDA COVID-19 Resources](#) webpage.
- Volunteering of DDA providers to host mass vaccine clinics for people with I/DD which were made successful by the partnership of the health department, Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid and Giant.
- Conducting weekly provider surveys on vaccination efforts, including information about vaccines for individuals, staff, and families, supported by the state’s provider relations team contacting providers who are not reporting or who have plateaued in numbers of vaccinations.
- Conducting weekly provider surveys electronically via Google on vaccination efforts, including information about vaccines for individuals, staff, and families, supported by the state’s provider relations team contacting providers who are not reporting or who have plateaued in numbers of vaccinations.