



DD Community Forum

**Thursday, July 1
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
on Zoom**

Register here:

www.tinyurl.com/JulyDDForum

Hosted by Advocates in Action.

Please submit any questions you have
about this event to:

MichelleWhite@AdvocatesInAction.org



Congratulations to Richard Charest, the New BHDDH Director



Congratulations to the new Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals Director Richard Charest. He has more than 30 years' experience in the health care arena, previously serving as President and CEO of Landmark Medical Center and the Rehabilitation Hospital of Rhode Island.

Our new Director said this about heading up BHDDH, "I was honored when Governor McKee nominated me to take on the role of Director and grateful when my nomination was approved by the RI State Senate. My clinical and business educational training, as well as the management of large healthcare organizations has prepared me to assume this responsibility.

As the CEO of Landmark and the Rehabilitation Hospital, I saw firsthand the importance of choice and opportunity, something we all deserve. Everyone should live the fullest life possible, which includes the ability to live, work, and spend time in the community of their choice. Additionally, everyone deserves to find meaningful employment, with a good wage, that centers around individual interests, desires, and needs.

I look forward to participating in the DD Services Virtual Community Forum on Thursday, July 1st with DD Director Kevin Savage, as well as the opportunity to hear directly from all those in attendance."

Drive-Up Vaccine Clinics Coming to RIPIN!
Saturday, June 19th & Saturday, July 10th, 9:00 - 11:00 AM
at RIPIN, 300 Jefferson Blvd, Warwick



Get vaccinated without having to leave your car! Ideal for children, youth, or adults with disabilities, or for anyone unable to receive a vaccine at other sites. Ages 12+.

Registration is strongly encouraged. Use the links below to register for your first and second doses.

[First: click here to register for the first vaccine clinic on June 19th](#)

[Next: click here to sign up for your second dose on July 10th](#)

RI DD Council 5-Year Plan Survey

[Click here to participate in the survey](#)

The Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities Council is currently updating its five-year plan for submission to the federal government. As part of this process, the Council is doing a survey to get input and ideas to help develop the plan and set priorities for the Council. The link above will take you to the survey so you can share your thoughts.



If you have already participated in this survey, please do not fill it out again. However, the Council encourages you to share the link with interested family members, friends, and associates who may also want to submit their thoughts and ideas for the development of the Council's five-year plan.

Sherlock Sentinels Recruiting New Members

The Sherlock Sentinels Advisory Committee has openings for new members. If you or someone you know would like to become a member, please contact Conor O'Brien by email at cobrien@ric.edu or leave a message at (401) 456-2763. Interested individuals will complete an application and participate in an interview.

Members can be people with disabilities, family members, or representatives from organizations in Rhode Island that support people with disabilities and the disability community

Members will:

- meet six times a year
- give input on the Sherlock Center's goals and five-year plan
- help the Sherlock Center to understand the needs of persons with disabilities living in Rhode Island and their families

The Sherlock Center's goal is to have an Advisory Committee that represents all of Rhode Island. Physical, language, and material accommodations are provided as needed. Members receive a stipend for attending meetings and to help with transportation expenses. All meetings are currently held on Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions.

For more information about the Sentinels or the Sherlock Center, visit www.sherlockcenter.org.

Advocates in Action RI
Rhode Island's 2021 Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference:
Hot Topics and Cool Ideas
Thursday, June 24 – Friday, June 25, 2021
[Register Here](https://tinyurl.com/2021ConferenceRegistration)

Advocates in Action RI is excited to host Rhode Island's 2021 Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference, "Hot Topics and Cool Ideas"!

This year's 2-day event will be virtual through Zoom on Thursday, June 24th, and Friday, June 25th, and we're thrilled to inform you that there's **NO COST** to attend!

While the Conference is free, everyone who plans to join the fun needs to register at this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/2021ConferenceRegistration>
[\[tinyurl.com\]](https://tinyurl.com/2021ConferenceRegistration)



Hot Topics and Cool Ideas: 2021 Conference Presentations

Thursday, June 24 th , 11:15 am to Noon		
 <p>Who's the Boss?</p>	 <p>The Director is IN</p>	 <p>The Power of Your Plan</p>
<i>Your support staff work for YOU. We'll talk about the role they play in your life</i>	<i>What it means to Self-Direct your DD Services and how to do it</i>	<i>Use your ISP to support things that are most important to you & for you</i>
Thursday, June 24 th , 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm		
 <p>Let's Get to Work!</p>	 <p>Pursuing Your Dreams</p>	 <p>Save the Planet</p>
<i>Information and ideas about choosing a career path and landing the job you want</i>	<i>Ideas about how to dream BIG and what you can do to make those dreams come true</i>	<i>Things you can do to help take care of the environment and make a difference</i>
Friday, June 25 th , 11:15 am to Noon		
 <p>Circles of Connections</p>	 <p>Taking Care of Business</p>	 <p>FREE Fun</p>
<i>Connect with people who share your interests, build your network, and meet someone new</i>	<i>Learn what it means to be Self-Employed and how to start or grow your own business</i>	<i>You don't need lots of money to have tons of fun. Online and in-person activities for everyone</i>

www.advocatesinaction.org/2021Conference

Circles of Connections

Now more than ever, people are looking for ways to connect with each other. Join [The Arc Rhode Island](#) for a safe and easy way to do this with Circles of Connections!

Circles can provide:

- New friends and an online circle of support
- A way to learn new things
- A listening ear, advice, or help navigating complicated systems
- A way to make sure you are getting all the services and supports you or your family need
- Advocacy skills to help you live the life you want

Groups can help you understand:

- Adult services
- Eligibility
- Transition services
- Family dynamics
- Mental health
- Special education eligibility and advocacy
- Making friends and participating in the community together
- And more!

Start building your Circle and join today! [Click Here to Apply](#)

People with disabilities, parents and foster parents, grandparents, siblings, other family members, and allies are all welcome. Participants will be matched and placed in online groups of 5 – 6 people based on shared interests and topics.

What Family Caregivers Need: Findings from Listening Sessions



This report, developed with the University of Massachusetts at Boston and Community Catalyst, shares information collected from family caregiver listening sessions. This report is a part of the Recognize, Assist, Inform, Support and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act of 2017. The sessions were intended to give family caregivers the opportunity to communicate their challenges and needs, and suggest recommendations for services, supports and policies. Findings address a range of topics including emotional and financial stress, caregiving education and training, workplace flexibility, and tax policy changes that could support caregivers. [Click here to read the report.](#)

Online Learning About Mental Health

The Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (MHDD) National Training Center has developed free easy-to-read online learning modules for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their family members, and their supporters, to learn more about mental health. They also have modules designed for mental health professionals and clinicians.

These trainings can be found here:

<https://www.mhddcenter.org/learn-now>



June is Pride Month



[Elevatus Training](#) provided these three graphics for Pride Month.

During one of their [Breaking Down the Walls: Supporting LGBTQ+ People with I/DD with Healthy Sexuality Trainings](#), a participant shared these amazing graphics.

The gathering was hosted by [SOJOURN](#) and [Compassionate Atlanta](#) and sponsored by [Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities](#), [Global Ubuntu](#), and [Atlanta Pride](#).

In November 2020, a group of LGBTQIA people with disabilities discussed this question: *What is an inclusive community and what are the ways to help people feel included?*

LGBTQIA people with disabilities spoke about what they need and want and how we can ALL create inclusive communities!

These graphics were created by the graphic artist, Claudia Lopez.



As national leaders in the field of sexuality and intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and autism, [Elevatus Training](#) offers evidence-based and trauma-informed curriculum, online training, in-services, workshops, and products to help self-advocates, professionals and parents skillfully and confidently navigate the topic of sexuality.

TechACCESS June Focus: Sensory Tools and Supports

New Sensory-Focused Treatment Room

Thanks to the amazing support of grantors, TechACCESS has created a sensory space that is used during evaluations and treatment. There are LOTS of sensory tools in this space including:

- [Crash Pad](#)
- [Inflatable PeaPod](#)
- [Portable Trampoline](#)
- [Liquid Floor Tiles](#)
- [Sensory Wall Panel](#)
- [Ball Chairs](#)

Very special thanks to the grantors who made this possible: Shriners of Rhode Island Charities Trust and Frederick C. Tanner Memorial Fund

Switch-Controlled Sensory Activities

How can we help switch users independently participate in sensory activities? Easy! There are many different switch accessible sensory toys, devices, and activities available. Let's consider three different types of sensory input and how they can be adapted for switch control.

Light: There are many different light-based sensory devices available such as light boxes ([here's a DIY version](#)), fiber optic lights, moving lights, etc. Some are available in switch-adapted form from companies such as [Enabling Devices](#) and [Ablenet](#). If your light toy/device is not switch adapted, you can connect a switch using the Ablenet [PowerLink](#) or the [iClick](#) from [Inclusive TLC](#).

Sound: Sound-based sensory activities include music, musical toys, toys that produce sound, sound machines, etc. These are also available in switch adapted form. The Powerlink and iClick can also be used to connect a switch.

Tactile Input: Devices such as a fan, vibration toys, or a massage cushion can also be adapted for switch control.

For those requiring increased sensory input, try connecting two different types of sensory input to one switch for engaging switch controlled sensory activities! You can purchase switch-adapted devices from companies such as [ablenet](#) or [Enabling Devices](#) or you can [make your own](#)! Need ideas for activities? Check out this [great resource](#)!

Make Your Own Sensory Tools

Teaching individuals to be aware of and, in part, manage their sensory needs can be very empowering for them. Engage individuals in making their own sensory tools. These projects provide an opportunity to have some fun while also providing individuals with inexpensive sensory options for home.

Calm Down Jar: There are many ideas for making a calm down jar, but this one has been successfully tested. You need a plastic bottle, glitter glue such as Elmer's that comes in some great colors, food coloring, and warm water. You will need to use about half a bottle of glue to get a good looking result. Pour the glue in the bottle and about a cup of very warm water. Shake hard to break up the glue. Next, add the rest of the water, food coloring, and, if you want, small objects. Put on the cap and shake to finish mixing. You may want to hot glue the cap to prevent spills.

Seek and Find Rice: Place one pound of rice and one Kool-Aid packet in a Ziploc bag along with 1-2 tablespoons of warm water. Seal the bag and squish it between your fingers until the color is spread evenly. Pour the colored rice onto parchment paper to let it dry. Pour the rice into a small empty, dry water bottle. Next, choose small items to add, such as legos, letter beads, buttons, and other small items. Seal it well. Individuals can try to find each item when they need a break.

Marble Maze: Use scraps of fabric or even old clothes such as flannel shirts and a marble to create an easy to sew sensory tool. Follow the link to see the directions and examples of this easy project. These simple rectangles can be sewn by hand. This tool is small enough to take along and is great to keep fingers busy as you move the marble through the maze. Be sure to choose a fabric that appeals to you.

Wearable Fidget: Do you need a fidget that you can't lose, that can travel with you on the bus or in the car? This easy to make tool can be added to a zipper on a jacket or backpack. Simply get a keyring and 4-5 beads. Choose the colors you like best. Put the beads on the keyring and attach the ring to a zipper pull. If you'd like to see examples, click on the link.

Sensory bag: This is a quick and easy project that can be used for squishing and calming down. Take one large Ziploc baggie and pour in 1/2 cup of hair gel and some food coloring. Squeeze out the air, seal, and fold a strip of duct tape over the top for extra protection. Individuals can squeeze and spread the color throughout. These are great to lay flat and draw designs or write letters with your finger.

Sensory Diets for Adults & in the Workplace

Some adults today have sensory processing issues that were never properly diagnosed and treated simply because this wasn't a widely understood diagnosis 15+ years ago. As these individuals have transitioned into adulthood, they may have found it challenging to adapt to their workload or environment. That's where a sensory diet can help!

A sensory diet is something that is typically prescribed by an occupation therapist and will vary depending on the individual and how they process different stimuli. As an example and depending on the environment, the individual could be hypersensitive to noise and a 10 minute walk will help that person regulate themselves so they can continue to work at their desk. Another individual may need dimmed lights to reduce visual stimulation. Some individuals rely on apps on their phones or other strategies to help regulate and calm themselves.

In 2002 the American with Disabilities Act passed a law stating that individuals who need a [reasonable accommodation](#) from an employer shall receive one. This is something that an individual with sensory processing disorder (SPD) should be aware of as they identify strategies and tools they can use to help regulate themselves throughout their work day. It is important that individuals with SPD work with their employers to address their specific needs.

If you feel that you have a SPD, you can work with your primary care physician in order to properly diagnose and treat your symptoms. Once you have a proper diagnosis your doctor can refer you to a specialist that will give you treatment based on your individual needs.

Check out this great [Fact Sheet](#) from [AOTA](#) about "Using a Sensory Integration–Based Approach With Adult Populations". There is also a guide created by SPIRAL (The Sensory Processing Institute of Research and Learning) called [SPD Education Toolkit For Adults and Adolescents](#) that's worth checking out!

Apps for Sensory Processing

There are many apps available to help individuals with sensory processing disorders - Individuals and adults - focus, relax and engage. Here are a few to try to incorporate within an individual's sensory diet:

[Heat Pad - Relaxing Surface](#) (free)

This app simulates various heat-sensitive surfaces reacting to the heat of your fingertips. Simple, yet surprisingly relaxing and entertaining!

[Dropophone](#) (free)

Create your own melodies. This app allows you to make songs that sound like drips and drops falling on a tiny orchestra of instruments.

[BrainWorks](#) (\$8.99)

This app was developed to “provide Individuals with the sensory breaks they need to function their best!” It contains more than 130 sensory activities.

[Miracle Modus](#) (free)

This app was developed by an individual with autism who stated: “I’m autistic, and I wrote this because I wanted something to mitigate sensory overload. I find mathematically-patterned rainbow lights very soothing.” Contains hypnotic rainbows and soft bells.

[Wa Kingyo Goldfish Pond](#) (.99)

Relax watching the goldfish swim elegantly through crystal clear waters.

[Fluidity HD](#) (free)

Interactive real-time fluid dynamics simulation, control fluid flow and stunning colors at your fingertips.

[Sensory Light Box](#) (\$3.99)

This is not just a great sensory app, but can be used for developing cause and effect touch skills and sensory integration support or for introducing touch awareness.

Visit a National Park Virtually!

Did you know that you can travel across the country to 31 national parks without ever leaving home?

Use the link below to take a virtual hike or simply see breathtaking trails and views.

<https://earth.app.goo.gl/t7ZZge>



Sequoia National Park, photo courtesy of Ray_Explores

Beekeeping athlete turns honey into money for Special Olympics RI

<https://www.wpri.com/news/street-stories/beekeeping-athlete-turns-honey-into-money-for-special-olympics-ri/>

There's more to Ian Shepherd than meets the eye. The Newport resident is not only a decorated Special Olympian, he's also a beekeeper.

"Beekeeping is a lot of work," he said. "But it's a lot of fun."

And working hard is also in Ian's DNA.

During his time with Special Olympics Rhode Island and has proudly represented the organization both nationally and internationally. He's won dozens of medals, including during his trips to Japan, South Korea and Canada.



When he's not on the slopes or working part-time at the Castle Hill Inn, Ian cares for a number of bee hives, including several at his parents' house in Newport.

Ian walked 12 News anchor Mike Montecalvo through his routine, but not before making him don a special suit to protect him from the bees.

"You don't want the bees to sting you, that's why you need to wear a protective suit," Ian explained.

Ian uses a smoker to calm the bees before harvesting the honey.



The bees fly in and out of the hives, bringing pollen and nectar with them from trees and flowers. He said while the worker bees store the honey, the drone bees focus on mating with the queen. The queen bee also heads out on "mating flights," Ian said. When she returns to the hive, she lays her eggs.

"Then in a couple of weeks, there will be newborn worker bees," Ian explained.

Once harvested, Ian bottles the honey and sells it, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting Special Olympics Rhode Island.

Ian takes everything seriously, according to his father, Mike Shepherd.

"About 10 years ago he said 'dad, remember when you used to have honey bees? Let's start it up again' and I said 'gosh, OK start reading up about it and YouTube it' and he did," Mike recalled.

In January 2022, Ian hopes to compete in the skiing competition at the Winter World Games in Russia.

His motto during competitions is, "You're not going to get a gold medal a lot, but you're going to try your best."

Ian's honey won't be available for purchase until the end of the summer. Anyone interested in purchasing Ian's honey once it's ready can contact Special Olympics Rhode Island by clicking [here](#).

[Watch the video of this story on the WPRI website.](#)



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 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

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website cdc.gov/coronavirus

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

Includes a link to ASL videos

BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website bhddh.ri.gov/COVID

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email 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

Sign Up for Our Email List

SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can sign up on by clicking the link at left or on our website.

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

Contacting DD Staff

DDD has put extended hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers on the next page. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

AM **M T W Th F** **PM**

401-462-3421

8:30 AM → → → → → **4:00 PM**

WEEKDAYS DURING BUSINESS HOURS FOR:

- **VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS**
- **QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES**

PM **M T W Th F** **PM**

401-265-7461

4:00 PM → → → → → **10:00 PM**

AFTER HOURS ON WEEKDAYS FOR:

- **VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

AM **SAT SUN** **PM**

401-265-7461

8:30 AM → → → → → **10:00 PM**

ON WEEKENDS FOR:

- **VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

E-MAIL THE DIVISION

BHDDH.AskDD@BHDDH.RI.GOV

HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!

WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:

- **NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS** about Your Services and Supports
- **GENERAL QUESTIONS** about Your Services or the RI DD System

911

FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

CALL 911

RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!

For medical or healthcare related emergencies, call your Primary Care Physician or 911

During business hours
(Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00),
for questions or support
(401) 462-3421
Para español, llame
(401) 462-3014

For emerging or imminent care
related questions,
Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and
weekends 8:30am-10pm
(401) 265-7461

Send general questions to the
AskDD email address. Please
do not email critical issues.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

CALL FOR:

- ROUTINE Healthcare Questions
- NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care

FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE
DON'T go to their office unless they tell you to!

OSCIL CARES 2!

June 21 –25, 2021



Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) has launched a new grocery card assistance program to help Rhode Island residents with disabilities and their families who have experienced hardship and food insecurity due to COVID-19 and the associated economic downturn. OSCIL will be distributing grocery gift cards and supplies to qualified Rhode Island residents only on a first come, first served basis.

To qualify residents must meet the following criteria:

- Must be Rhode Island residents with at least one member of the household having a disability. (*Those living in congregate care settings are not qualified for this program*).
- Must attest to financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- Must complete an application and be approved.



To fill out an online application, visit our website on at www.oscil.org. Qualified applicants will be given instructions on when and where to pick up their grocery gift card. If you are unable to complete the online registration, or need assistance, contact our office at 738-1013 between the hours of 9 am – 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

If you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing & need assistance please contact Margaret Molloy (MM) on her VP at 401-244-7792.



This program is made possible by funding from the federal CARES Act. There is a limit of one grocery gift card per qualifying household and gift cards are available on a first-come, first-served basis until all cards are distributed.



OBTAINING A DISABILITY PASS

Rhode Island State Law 32-1-17: No fee shall be charged to any person with a disability regardless of age, or to automobiles transporting a non-driver with a disability at any recreational facility owned by the state, provided, however, proper identification is presented as prescribed by the Department of Environmental Management. For the purpose of this section "person with a disability shall mean an individual who has a physical or mental impairment and is receiving: [A] **Social Security disability (SSDI)**, [B] **Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI)** or **Veterans benefits** and who shall be determined under applicable federal law by the Federal Department of Veteran's Affairs to be 100% disabled through a service connected injury.

For this section "fees" shall **include** all fees for parking, admittance, or other user-fees for playing golf. The term "fees" shall **not include** licensing fees; camping fees, picnic table fees or specialized facility use fees, including, but not limited to fees for the use of equestrian areas, performing art centers, game fields and mule shed.

DISABILITY PASSES ARE ISSUED BEGINNING IN MAY AT FOLLOWING LOCATION:

DEM Parks Headquarters

1100 Tower Hill Road
North Kingstown, RI 02852

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday
9:00AM – 3:00PM

CONTACT INFORMATION

Tel: (401) 667-6200
Email: dem.riparks@dem.ri.gov

***All Applicants Must Present a Valid Form of Photo Identification [Birth Certificate for Children]**

***All Applicants Must Appear in Person to Obtain Disability Pass**

***All Applicants Must request their Benefit Verification Letter from Social Security (see bottom of second page for instructions)**

First Time Disability Pass:

- Applicants, **under the age of 65**, must present a current Benefit Verification Letter from the Social Security office stating the following:
 1. Your full name and address
 2. Current date
 3. Letter must state that you are receiving/entitled to **monthly disability benefits**

***This pass is required to be renewed each year until the age of 65. To renew, applicants must present current year Benefit Verification Letter from Social Security Office stating Steps 1-4 (See above).**

- Applicants, **over the age of 65**, must present a current letter from the Social Security office stating the following:
 1. Your full name and address
 2. Current date
 3. Letter must state that you **were receiving monthly disability benefits before the age of 65**
 4. ***This pass does not require renewal; Applicants will receive Lifetime Pass**

Disabled Veterans must present a current letter from the Veterans Administration stating the following:

1. Your full name and address

2. Current date
3. Letter must state that you are **100% disabled due to service-connected injury**

*This pass is **required to be renewed each year unless you are no longer required to be reevaluated**

a) Please follow steps 1-4 for renewal

Disability Passes are Valid at the Following Locations:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Charlestown Breachway State Beach | 5. Misquamicut State Beach |
| 2. East Beach State Beach | 6. Roger Wheeler State Beach |
| 3. East Matunuck State Beach | 7. Salty Brine State Beach |
| 4. Goddard State Golf Course (Not Valid for Golf
Cart Rental) | 8. Scarborough North & South State
Beach |

To obtain your Benefit Verification Letter through Social Security you may do either of the following: Option 1: Call your local Social Security office and request to have your letter mailed to you

Local Social Security Office phone numbers:

- Warwick: 1-866-964-2038
- Providence: 1-877-402-0808
- Pawtucket: 1-866-931-7079
- Woonsocket: 1-877-229-3542
- Newport: 1-866-253-5607
- Fall River: 1-866-964-3967

Option 2: Visit the Social Security website: www.ssa.gov/myaccount and login to print out your letter

Providing Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Direct Support Professionals Survey, 12-Month Follow Up

Over the past 12 months, direct support professionals have experienced high risks of infection, financial hardship, and exhaustion. Many have become ill and lost loved ones. The voices of DSPs matter, now more than ever. Show them you care about their wellbeing by passing along this confidential survey. The University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration, in partnership with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals, developed this survey to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on direct support professionals and identify the most effective ways to protect DSPs and the people they support. Please visit z.umn.edu/dsp-covid19-survey to complete the survey.

Please forward this survey to the direct support professionals that you employ, including paid family members. Their answers will be anonymous. National and state-specific results from the survey will be shared widely in September 2021. Two similar surveys of DSPs were conducted by ICI and NADSP and each was completed by more than 9,000 DSPs. [Those results are available here](#). The new survey is for both DSPs who completed the earlier survey and those who did not.

About the RTC-CL and NADSP

The Research and Training Center on Community Living for Persons with intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (RTC-CL) has operated at the University of Minnesota's [Institute on Community Integration](#) since 1976. During this time, it has made many substantial contributions that have positively affected the field and the lives of people with disabilities by developing effective, research-based interventions and creating new knowledge that has influenced practices and policies for increasing community living and participation for people with disabilities. The RTC-CL is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In 1996, the National Alliance for Direct Support Professional's ideological founder, John F. Kennedy Jr., wrote "Quality is defined at the point of interaction between the staff member and the individual with a disability." Given this, NADSP's mission is to enhance the quality of support provided to people with disabilities through the provision of products, services, and certifications which elevate the status of direct support workers, improve practice standards, promote systems reform and, most importantly, advance the knowledge, skills, and values of direct support workers. For more information, please visit www.nadsp.org.