

Tri-County Care Newsletter

The 'What's Happening' at Tri-County Care:
News, Stories, Articles, & Important Information for Families We Service



Issue #6
1/2021-First Quarter

EXCLUSIVE

COVID-19 Vaccine



Along with the changing landscape of world politics, specifically related to COVID-19, Tri County Care is a solid support to the individuals we service. By providing guidance at times of confusion, we aim to be a source of reliable information and assistance.

As a result of Operation Warp Speed, the brand new COVID-19 vaccine finally made its appearance. The government has set forth a plan of distribution, with Developmentally Disabled individuals high up on the list for first dibs. Click [HERE](#) for the vaccine rollout eligibility guide.

However, hesitations are prevalent. Is it safe...? When will I get it...? Must I take it...? What are my rights...? At Tri County Care, we compiled a list of most frequently asked questions and answers, so that our individuals and Care Managers can make an informed, educated decision.

Q: How many versions of the COVID-19 vaccines are out there?

A: Two; Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

Q: Are they different?

A: The only difference is their storage/transport requirements. The Moderna vaccine does not need refrigeration like Pfizer-BioNtech does.

Q: How many shots of the vaccine will be needed?

A: Both available vaccines need two rounds. There is another vaccine under clinical trial in Phase 3 that only has one shot.

Q: Are there other vaccines that can help prevent me from getting COVID-19

A: Currently, there are no vaccines to prevent the virus. Yet there are multiple groups and agencies working within the US to rapidly develop a safe and effective vaccine.

Q: Can the flu shot prevent COVID-19

A: No, but getting the flu shot minimizes the risk of infection, which can be exponentially dangerous if caught along with COVID-19.

Q: What are the side effects of the vaccine?

A: Some side effects may include swelling in the arm that received the shot, fever, chills and muscle aches.

The CDC also implemented a vaccine side effects tracking system called V-Safe. V-Safe is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messages and web surveys to check in with patients after they receive the COVID vaccine. V-Safe will also remind you to take the second shot. Through V-Safe, you can notify the CDC of any side effect of the shot, helping to keep the vaccine safe.



Tri-County Care Diversity Council

In a world that hosts millions of people of varying cultures and backgrounds, creating a cohesive, functioning unit for the benefit of humanity is crucial. At Tri County Care, that is our mission. Our goal at TCC is to support diversity and cross-cultural inclusion, in order to open the lines of **successful communication with our individuals**.

We need YOU.

We need your input; we need your ideas, your opinions, your feedback.

That is so we can create a better environment for our individuals, and to ensure that they receive first rate care and a care plan designed with them in mind.

By gathering a diversity council consisting of members representing various cultures, we hope to accomplish many objectives, including:

- Identifying and addressing any systemic policies and/or procedures that may unintentionally isolate a specific demographic group, whether in a positive or negative way.
- Identifying regional practices that may alienate a specific demographic group in a negative way.
- Developing cross-cultural inclusion initiatives (events, training, activities) that will effectively increase diversity and provide support to various groups within the organization, including the individuals serve.
- Working with individuals, families, and our workforce in identifying and addressing health disparities and social injustices that affect the different demographics of individuals that we serve.
- Assessing demographic information of the individuals we serve and train staff to develop communication skills specific to our individuals' needs.
- Ensuring that individuals are given the opportunity to be assigned to care management staff that is capable of communicating with them in their preferred language as well as care management staff that can identify with their culture, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, or physical disability.
- Exploring options that allow contributions such as volunteer work or sponsorships at local events connected to local nonprofit organizations that serve a diverse demographic population.

To become a member of TCC's Diversity Council, led by **Japhe Deliat**, email diversity@tricitycare.org.

We want to hear from you.

" NEXT TO EXCELLENCE IS THE APPRECIATION OF IT"

- William Makepeace Thackeray

On December 1st 2020, Tri-County Care hosted a **Virtual Staff Appreciation Day**, where Care Managers and other workforce personell got together for a loaded, insightful program.

Tri-County Care employs amazing Care Managers to provide the top-tier care for our individuals. Showing appreciation and gratitude towards our devoted Care Managers warrants a higher level of dedication and support to those we service.

As statistics show, workplace recognition motivates, provides a sense of accomplishment and makes employees feel valued for their work. Recognition not only boosts employee engagement, but has also proven to be a direct cause for increased productivity and higher success.

The program commenced as the nominated MC's—Japhe Deliat and Michele Blias—opened the floor

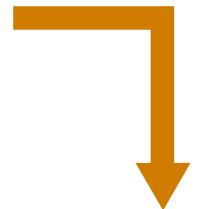
Following that, Mr. Bernath, CEO of Tri County Care, stepped up for an indroduction and speech.

The camaraderie and support in the room was palpable. Our Care Managers and office staff were then treated to a short entertainment show by magician David Blatt, and various raffles were held at intervals in the schedule.

After a short break, Mr. Bernath introduced Governor Patterson, and all attendants listened to the motivating speech he delivered. Then, a parent of an individual gave a short speech, providing a personal perspective.

Mr. Bernath then read a letter from Governor Cuomo, which supported and praised the work Tri-County Care does.

This staff appreciation day imbued the Care Managers at TCC with a sense of purpose, inspiring them to expend utmost effort in caring for the individuals, beyond the letter of the book. We included anecdotes in this newsletter which illustrate the dedication and commitment our Care Managers typically exhibit when working on a case.





Tri-County Care
Café
Japhe

Tri-County Care

Care

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STAFF
APPRECIATION
EVENT
2020

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APPRECIATION
EVENT
2020

OPWDD HELPFUL LINKS

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/coronavirus-guidance/covid-19-vaccine>

<https://opwdd.ny.gov/news/message-about-covid-19-vaccine-people-developmental-disabilities>

Find out more TCC news by clicking below:

[NEWS](#)

It's a regular day at TCC's office and a few Care Managers are perched around a desk, discussing the pandemic and how it's affecting individuals. There's an earnest round table discussion and ideas are thrown around how to make the situation a wee bit easier on a personal scale. One of the concerns raised is boredom: most extra curricular activities that individuals usually participated in are cancelled due to COVID.

The general consensus is: "If our individuals cannot participate on any trips, we'll bring the trip to them!"

We came up with a collection of links that lead to your next adventure...virtually, of course!

With a bit of creativity combined with technology, the world is at your fingertips.

- **Children love animals.** Have them greet their furry friends here:

<https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos>

<https://www.sheddaquarium.org/experiences>

- **Marine tours are a soothing pass time.** Explore the underworld here:

<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/>

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>

- **For the lover of art.** We've got The Louvre showing a virtual tour here:

<https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne>

- **Disney enthusiasts....** You will appreciate these virtual tours:

<https://www.visitorlando.com/en/things-to-do/virtual-tours/walt-disney-world-resort>

- **Discover faraway China.** These paid virtual tours are amazing!

<https://www.thechinaguide.com/virtual-tours>

<https://www.virtualvisittours.com/blarney-castle>

- **The mysteries of space are awaiting!** There's a virtual tour of Mars, and a guided tour by Nasa here:

<https://oh.larc.nasa.gov/oh/>

<https://accessmars.withgoogle.com>

- **We haven't forgotten about our frequent flyers...** Take a tour of the sky birds here:

<http://www.nmusafvirtualtour.com/>

The world's awaiting....

With a mask on, it's all yours for the taking!

A Care Manager Superstar

Chana Oster is a dedicated Care Manager in charge of handling the caseload for Vinny*, a 14 month old baby with Down's Syndrome. Being that the parents of this delightful baby were buckling under the emotional and physical strain, the care manager in charge of Vinny's case prior to Chana taking over had applied for respite at the beginning of the year. To their distress, the case was denied.

Why was Vinny denied services? He was already benefiting from early intervention services which cannot be simultaneously provided with respite services.

The family was very disappointed as they had been waiting quite a while. When Chana entered the picture, she promptly put in a request for a fair hearing with OPWDD via phone conversation, hoping he will get approved for respite.

Despite all the efforts until now, it was to no avail. After weeks of follow up phone calls and tireless efforts, Chana finally hit upon the problem... The judge presiding over the fair hearing mistakenly added a note that the child's family wanted to withdraw the case!

Chana put in a request for another fair hearing, which the judge then ruled in favor of. When services still did not follow, Chana spent a copious amount of time trying to iron out all the kinks. Finally, she successfully connected with a compliance officer who was able to make sure that the claim went through.

Ultimately, after tireless effort on the part of a devoted TCC Care Manager, Vinny's approval for respite came through.

Wow, Chana, you are a superstar!



Are you in the process of applying for a Fair Hearing?

By reading Chana's story, are you starting to consider applying for one?

We want you to know that our competent Care Managers are here to help you and guide you towards a positive outcome, as illustrated in Chana's account.

What is a Fair Hearing, and what is the process?

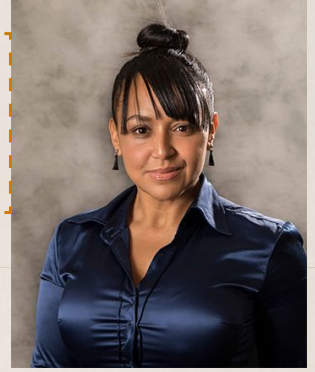
A Fair Hearing is an appeal to reverse a decision about your case made by a social services agency. Fair Hearings may be requested via mail, phone, fax or online, and are handled by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). At the Fair Hearing, the judge will review the paperwork, listen to your claim and ask pertinent questions.

It is best to request a Fair Hearing as soon as any decision is made about your case. During the Fair Hearing, evidence will be required to plead your case. TCC's Care Managers are familiar with the process and can help procure necessary documents to present to the judge.

Additionally, if you win the Fair Hearing and your benefits or services are being withheld despite the decision having been made in your favor, your Care Manager can help with requesting compliance.

It is our ultimate goal to ensure our individuals receive services in an efficient manner. A TCC Care Manager is here to help.

Fatima Nunez,
Regional Director



November 16, 2020

Dear Ms. Nunez:

We are the family and advocates of Kareem Poller. Kareem received care management services from Tri-County Care while living at home in the Bronx with his parents.

We would like to express our gratitude for the service and care provided to Kareem for the past 9 years by his Care Manager— Ms. Melinda Melendez— prior to his move to residential care. Melinda was an extension of Kareem's immediate family and provided support for him in times when he was isolated from other family members.

Kareem was comfortable in his interactions with her, which is rare due to his autism. This was nice to see. She put services in place for him even when she met resistance from his mother. She patiently explained why the services were needed and why he would benefit from them. She used her skills to convince his mother time and time again to accept services. This was tiresome, but she persevered. We are sure Melinda's work was not easy due to the household dynamics.

We appreciate her dedication to Kareem over the years as well as her efforts in working with us to move him to an IRA when it was determined that his parents could no longer provide the care and supervision he required. Kareem and the Pollers are fortunate to have had Melinda's support and guidance through the years.

We thank Melinda for her time and care of our loved one.

Sincerely,

Laverne and Anthony Poller

Talent in our Midst



Aiden T. Heyward is a 16 year old individual receiving services at Tri-County Care. Aiden has an amazing talent: ART.

Oh, the projects Aiden has created....!

These days, Aiden is very busy designing a comic strip, using digital media to draw his funny cartoons. With the full support of his Care Manager, and the staff at Tri-County Care, he is in the process of having them copyrighted!

Some of his artwork is displayed below:





Scheidise Paul, a Care Manager at Tri-County Care, shared the following speech given by an individual under his care.

David Morris Poliak, the individual, delivered this speech on December 7, 2020

We received consent to publish this inspiring speech.

Dear Educators,

It would be very helpful if you taught social skills to students who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder, how to interact with other students—the unwritten social rules. If they see a student who has an Autism Spectrum Disorder do something socially inappropriate, tell them what inappropriate thing they did and explain how it was inappropriate. I suggest for you to let all educators know that they have a social deficit and make all the kids in the class aware.

A monotone voice is one of the symptoms of an Autism Spectrum Disorder. People with an Autism Spectrum Disorder have various areas of sensitivities. I have improved.

It is a neurological disorder.

There are different severities in which you can have an Autism Spectrum Disorder ranging from very severe Autism to very mild Asperger's Syndrome. You wouldn't find severely Autistic kids in a regular school, but in a special school for kids with severe Autistic Disorder. But sometimes, kids with Autism Spectrum Disorders—including the moderate form which used to be called PDD-NOS and a mild form which used to be called Asperger's Syndrome—can be found in a regular school and some other times in a special school such as The Summit School of Queens and a school specifically for Autism Spectrum Disorders. All forms of autism got looped together and are called Autism Spectrum Disorder in 2013 in the DSM 5.

Back to the point, when a person with a social problem does something socially inappropriate they might not be aware that they are doing so. It would help for a teacher to tell them in private. I stress it is very important to teach kids with an ASD how to interact with other kids; to teach them the unwritten social rules in therapy.

Some people, when they think of us as inept, don't realize is that our brains are wired differently than theirs. People with an ASD have to learn social skills because it doesn't come naturally; that is what can make you feel tense.

But everything could be learned.

Contact Us



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www.tricountycare.org



[Instagram](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[Facebook](#)



Albany

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Monroe

1 Hamaspik Way
Kiryas Joel, NY 10950



Williamsburg

44 Lee Ave, 3rd floor
Brooklyn, NY 11211



Monsey

58 NY-59
Monsey, NY 10952



Long Island City

2215 43rd Ave 4th Fl
Queens, NY 11101



Staten Island

260 Christopher Ln
Staten Island, NY 10314



Five Towns

700 Rockaway Turnpike
Lawrence, NY 11559



Middletown

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Middletown, NY 10940



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*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals