



# Alegria News

## From the CEO

Alegria is happy to start a new year with you. Hopefully it will be one where the complications and possible dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic will be lessened. I know we would all like to get back to normal.

We wish you all to be well this year and invite you to contact our competent staff if you have any issues regarding the Mi Via Waiver. We never forget that we exist to serve your needs on the Mi Vi Waiver, so please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. That's what we are here for.

Again, we look forward to serving your needs this year.

Also, we want to show our gratitude for the very good job you guys are doing in submitting your required documentation in a timely and complete manner, including the EVV regular check-ins.

So, beginning this next quarter we will hold a drawing for those whose documentation has been most accurate and timely. The names of these providers will be entered into the drawing. We will draw 3 times in selecting winners. The first-place winner will receive \$100 gift card. The second-place winner will receive \$50 gift card and the third-place winner will receive \$25 gift card. Again, just another way of showing our appreciation.

Finally, we are hoping to grow. If you know of a potential family for the Mi Via Waiver, please let them know about us. We will remember you fondly!

Looking forward to another great year!

Larry

### To Qualify for the AFS Drawing:

- *Have your documentation in to Alegria by the 5th of each month.*
- *Be accurate and complete with all documentation. Avoid repetition.*
- *Complete your Palco/EVV check-in daily and on time. Each day should end no later than 11:59pm for accurate reporting.*
- *Be current with DDS required trainings.*
- *Winners will be announced on our website and in this newsletter.*



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## Valentine's Day Feb 14

- Valentine's Day customs – sending greeting cards, candy, and flowers – developed in 19th century England.
- Valentine's Day is a major source of economic activity in the U.S , with total expenditures in 2017 topping \$18.2 billion, or over \$136 per person.
- In most Latin American countries, like Costa Rica, Mexico, and Puerto Rico, Saint Valentine's Day is known as Día de los Enamorados (Day of Lovers)



## Meet Annette Martinez Administrative Assistant

Annette Martinez joined the Alegria Family Services Staff in March of 2021. She has proven herself to be a calm and organized person who can handle the daily demands of waiver related work with ease and competence.

Annette earned an Associates Degree in Criminology from UNM in 1999 and this has given her the organizational skills needed to monitor accounting payroll reports, assists other Mi Via staff with day to day client, provider, and accounting issues, request new budgets from our consultants and many other duties associated with the complexities of the Mi Via Waiver program.

Annette has a calming nature and demeanor

which puts providers and individuals at ease, making interactions move smoothly and efficiently without ever feeling rushed or stressed. This personality trait helps keep the Alegria Family Services offices an inviting and relaxed space where our individuals feel safe and comfortable.

Annette is also a bonded Notary Public since 2003 and brings these services to Alegria. She will gladly help our providers with any notary services they may need.

Annette is a native New Mexican who likes to spend her free time with her 13 grand children, and is a regular attendant at their recitals and sporting events. She is also an avid reader.

*Each quarter we will feature two Alegria staff members and discuss their histories and what brought them to Alegria. We hope you enjoy learning more about your staff!*



### Happy St. Patrick's Day!

St. Patrick's Day falls on 17th March each year. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and St. Patrick's Day is a national holiday in Ireland. However the day is celebrated all over the world, wherever there is an Irish community.

Celebrations usually focus on the color green and symbols of Irish culture and mythology, such as leprechauns and shamrocks.

There is no one reason that green was chosen for the color of St. Patrick's Day, but some include the green in the Irish flag, the nick name for Ireland—The Emerald Isle, the green in shamrocks, or perhaps the green grass many people ate during the terrible potato famine, turning their teeth green.



## Meet Enzo Gonzales Mi Via Coordinator

Enzo comes to us all the way from Columbia, where he obtained his degree in Business Administration from Fundacion Universitaria San Martin , Villavicencio-Colombia. Enzo joined the Alegria team back in June of 2019 and has been an integral part of our Mi Via program since. Enzo has strong organizational skills, managing all completed documentation for prompt and accurate payments and insuring that the best possible service is given to our providers and individuals. Enzo excels at, and sincerely enjoys providing great customer service, and his



bilingual language skills allows him to help families and individuals all over New Mexico.

In addition to working directly with providers and individuals, Enzo spends his days communicating with EOR's, consultants, and even Conduent, solving problems and addressing issues with timesheets, payment forms, document processing and requirements, and unpaid claims. While many people would find this work daunting, Enzo approaches these challenging tasks in a way that appears effortless. He is always calm, organized, professional, and above all, helpful.

Enzo is also an accomplished artist and designer, winning numerous awards and accolades for his unique and interesting work. Enzo enjoys competing in design competition's and takes great care and attention to detail when designing his winning pieces.

*John F. Kennedy: "Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction." Presidents Day Feb. 21st*

## Mi Via Documentation Changes (again)

You are probably aware that Alegria Family Services staff are currently working on another revision of changes in Mi Via documentation. While these changes continue to be an ongoing inconvenience and source of confusion, your Mi Via staff would like to assure you that we are continually working to stream line and simplify the implementation of these changes.

Unfortunately, we are all working under the guidance and direction of Palco/Conduent. Please know that as soon as we receive notification of any changes, we will in turn notify you via phone call, email, or regular mail. For this reason it is critical to always have your most current contact information on file with our office. Always notify us of any changes as soon as it is convenient to do so. Our communication with you is very much dependent upon your communication with us.

Please note that the last revision of changes will still be accepted by Conduent until March 31st, and any new changes must be in place after that date.

Thank you very much for your continued patience, and for helping us with the implementation of the latest documentation changes.

Your Mi Via Staff

*February is Black History Month and AFS would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the great contributions of Black Americans to the wonderful fabric of American life. We encourage everyone to read about, and learn about this important part of our collective history. Black history is American History.*



## Mask Mandates and the Waiver Programs

As most of us know, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham lifted the public indoor mask mandate in NM on Feb. 17th 2022. However, there are some notable exceptions to this order that AFS felt should be explained here.

*A continued requirement of the Governor's order is that masks must be worn by persons 2 years and older in all public and private hospitals, nursing homes, and adult day cares. Also, all assisted living, hospice, residential treatment, rehabilitation, and correctional facilities continue to require masks.*

DDSD has added to this list with their own statement:

*The [order] does not change the existing mask requirements issued by DDSD. The mask mandate remains in effect for all Community Homes and Congregate Care facilities regulated by DDSD.*

So, what does all this mean to you, the providers and individuals we serve? In very general terms it means that many mask requirements for Waiver participants will

remain in place. If your individual attends any Waiver or State General Funds supported programs, a mask is required for both the providers and the individual attending the program.

Of course, mask requirements in public places like grocery stores, shopping centers, theaters, and parks are fully lifted, even for Waiver participants. However, please be aware that the Governor did allow for any business or entity to impose "more stringent requirements" to the order. We should all respectfully adhere to the mask requirements of any public space or business, as they are within their rights to have stricter requirements, and the health and well being of all New Mexicans should be our first priority.

Finally, this brings us to the mask requirements of the Alegria Family Services office. In keeping with the DDSD guidelines, Alegria will require all providers and individuals to be fully masked when entering our office. Please be understanding of this requirement, we are simply trying to provide the safest possible environment for all of us.

## Done with COVID-19? Ways to help cope with COVID fatigue.

Although we seem to be nearing the end, COVID fatigue is a real issue for many people as we get worn down dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Many clinical psychologists have provided tips for coping with COVID fatigue, here are a few:

- **Exercise** - Experts say exercise is the best thing we can do for coping with COVID-19. Even a simple walk can help.
- **Talk about your frustrations** - Finding someone – family, friend or professional – to talk to about your frustrations and anxieties is extremely helpful.
- **Find things to look forward to** - It could be walking with a friend, repeats of your favorite TV series or gathering a group of vaccinated friends. Even the smallest things can be fun to look forward to in the middle of uncertainty.
- **Let yourself laugh** - There's a healthy physical reaction to laughing. Laughter can actually induce physical changes in the body and can even set you up for overall long-term health benefits.
- **Take it day by day** - Don't look too far down the road. Realize you will have good days and bad days, or good moments and bad moments. Realize these things come in waves.

We all hope we are nearing the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. But until it is over, care for yourself so you can continue to care for others.

## March Highlights.

- **March 1** is Mardi Gras, which is the final feasting day before the Christian tradition of Lent begins.
- **March 13** is the start of Daylight Saving Time. So don't forget to "spring forward" and set the clocks one hour ahead, or you may find yourself an hour late to everything!
- **March 20** the vernal or spring equinox —marking the beginning of spring. On this day, the Sun stands directly over Earth's equator and we have 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness.



## Training and the Mi Via Waiver

If you are familiar with the various Waiver Programs in New Mexico, you will have some understanding of the training requirements of these programs. Trainings are essential to the successful implementation of care for your individuals needs. However, some programs training requirements are quite formidable and difficult to maintain.

The Mi Via training requirements are far less overwhelming than that of other Waiver Programs in the state. Currently you are required to take only one training course - Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation. This online, self-paced course can be done from the comfort of your own



home and easily worked into your personal schedule. It requires an annual recertification that must be completed for providers to continue to work on the Mi Via Waiver.

Alegria's Communications Officer, Richard Salazar, will send an e-mail notice to each provider with a link to the course when their certification is due. Please take time to follow up with this course training, and notify Richard when you have completed your certification or recertification. Remember, this is a state requirement that must be met each year.

AFS also offers CPR/First Aid training at no cost to you. Take advantage of this free course. You could help save a life.

### Did you know?

*"March" is named for the Roman god of war, Mars. March was the time of year to resume military campaigns that had been interrupted by winter.*

## Alegria Family Services and Provider Verification of Income

For many IHLS providers working on the Mi Via Waiver Program, their Mi Via stipend payment makes up a significant portion of their monthly income. A verification of income letter is often required when making large purchase like buying a home, getting a new rental, buying a vehicle, or even purchasing furniture. Alegria Family Services is more than happy to help with this.

Please contact us in advance of making these purchases, and AFS will provide a verification of income letter stating your monthly income from your waiver payment. Getting this letter prepared in advance will help insure that you go into your next large purchase armed with everything you need to succeed.



**The Last Word!** If APS is closed for weather issues, AFS will be closed as well. Our building is open 8am - 6pm and you will be able to place paperwork under the door of Suite #508 anytime during these hours. Thanks for Reading!

**Alegria has updated our website!**

<https://www.alegriafamily.com>

*Here you can find contact information, employment opportunities, past newsletters, and even drawing and contest winner announcements! Take some time to check us out!*



## SCAM ALERT

### Employee of Record (EOR) Scam Alert.

An unfortunate situation has come to the attention of Alegria Family Services. Agencies have reportedly witnessed a few bad apple EOR's attempting to charge providers and families for their services. Please remember that the Mi Via guidelines clearly state *"An EOR assists in the management of the participant's budget and should have no personal benefit connected to the services requested or approved on the budget"* This means that an EOR's role is **unpaid**. If you suspect that an EOR is charging for services, please notify the associated consulting agency immediately.