

**Department of Human Services
Human Services Committee
Representative Kathy Hogan, Chair
November 3, 2015**

Chairman Hogan, and members of the Human Services Committee, I am Sheryl Pfliger, Acting Director of the Aging Services Division, for the Department of Human Services (Department). I am here today to provide information on the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center initiative is a collaborative effort by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) to assist states in developing a coordinated system of information and access at the community level for persons seeking long-term services and supports. In North Dakota, the initiative is referred to as the Aging and Disability Resource-LINK (ADRL).

The primary services provided by the ADRL are information and assistance and options counseling.

Information and Assistance: The Department's Aging Services Division administers a nationwide toll-free number that provides initial access to information about services. The Department's Medical Services Division also uses the Resource-LINK as a point of contact for information regarding home and community-based services and the Money Follows the Person (MFP) project.

Resource-LINK staff answers calls Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT. A voice messaging system is available for

callers accessing the Resource-LINK afterhours, on weekends and holidays, or if staff are on another call. Calls are returned as soon as possible, or on the next working day.

When a call is received through the Resource-LINK, a caller is given the following options: to receive information on community services and resources that support independent living; to report abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult; or to reach the Direct Service Workforce Coordinator regarding jobs as Behavioral Health Technicians, Certified Nursing Professionals, Direct Support Professionals, and Qualified Service Providers. Requested information is provided and referrals are made based on the caller's needs. For quality assurance purposes, follow-up is conducted on 10 percent of the calls. During the follow-up call, staff asks if the caller had contact with any of the resources that were given, and if the services met their needs. Staff also asks if the caller experienced any problems, and if further assistance is needed.

The Department's Aging Services Division maintains a centralized database at www.carechoice.nd.gov that is available to the general public. Currently there are 3,462 resources in the database. Resource files are updated as changes are reported and on an annual basis.

The www.carechoice.nd.gov website also allows for easy access to contact information for regional staff; a calendar of events that includes up-to-date information related to senior services and activities, and training opportunities; informational materials; and useful links to other resources.

Marketing of the Resource-LINK is accomplished in a variety of ways. The Resource-LINK is promoted by state and regional staff at professional meetings, presentations, and senior activities. Informational booths are available at conferences and health fairs. Particularly in smaller communities, contacts have been made with local businesses and churches to raise awareness of the available services. Brochures and promotional items are available for distribution.

The Resource-LINK is staffed by one, full-time staff person. The current staff person has completed one year of employment in Information and Assistance and is now eligible to be certified in the professional credentialing program for individuals working within the information and referral sector of human services [Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS)]. Staff plans to begin on-line AIRS training in January 2016. The certification examination will be taken upon completion of the training curriculum.

During the 2013-2015 biennium, a total of 1,830 calls were received. Older Americans Act funds are used to provide Resource-LINK services.

Options Counseling: Options counseling is a person-centered, interactive, decision-support process whereby consumers, family members and/or significant others are supported in determining appropriate long-term care services and supports. Options counselors assess individual needs, values, and preferences with the consumer and empower the individual to make informed choices about the needed services, and help them access those services. Options

counseling is not a long-term service. For the most part, options counseling relationships are short term, usually no more than 90 days. A follow-up contact is made within 30 days of the initial assessment by telephone, e-mail, or through a face-to-face visit to assure the client's needs were met or if additional assistance is needed. Additional follow-up contacts are made based on client need.

Options counselors also assist in completing the required Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Local Contact Agency (LCA) activities with residents in long-term care facilities who are interested in transitioning back to the community.

Options counseling is available statewide and is provided by regional staff located at the human service centers and Valley Senior Services in the Fargo region.

During the 2013-2015 biennium, a total of 1,135 clients received options counseling services and a total of 46 residents received LCA services. Older Americans Act funds are used to provide options counseling and a combination of state and Medicaid funds are used to provide LCA services.

This concludes my testimony on the Department's ADRL services. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.