

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Marilyn Rudolph, Regional Director, North Central Human Service Center, Minot, 701-774-4684, Bonnie Schriock, Transition Coordinator, North Central Human Service Center, Minot, 701-857-8636, or LuWanna Lawrence, Assistant Public Information Officer, N.D. Department of Human Services, 701-328-1892

Department of Human Services awarded grant to serve transition-aged youth at risk in Minot region

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services announced today that it was awarded a \$125,500 federal grant to begin a pilot program to serve transition-aged youth at risk in the Minot region.

The pilot program is based at the department's North Central Human Service Center and will target youth ages 14-24 with serious mental illnesses who are transitioning to the adult system of care. Beginning in January 2010, it will serve a seven-county region including Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, Mountrail, Pierce, Renville and Ward.

"We are very pleased to receive this funding from the Federal Mental Health Services Administration and to be able to provide these important services beginning in January," said department Executive Director, Carol K. Olson.

The program will focus on building basic independent living skills, workforce training and placement, healthcare, education, establishing a support network of mentors, providing initial support to address gaps, which would hinder independence, and training for families to achieve transition goals.

"Young people living with serious mental illnesses need both treatment and support to be successful in life," Wendy LaMontagne, children's mental health administrator, said. "This program will assist transition-aged youth in getting the help they need to live as independently as possible."

Legislators this spring passed House Bill 1044, which authorized the department to develop a program and services to meet the needs of transition-aged youth at risk by accepting and receiving grants and other sources of funding to pay for the services.

The project will collaborate with the following community partners to provide the necessary support: Ward County Social Services; Job Service – Workforce Investment Act; Independence, Inc.; Homeless Coalition; Vocational Rehabilitation; Salvation Army; Community Action; Minot Housing Authority; Ward County Social Services; Head Start; Adult Learning Center; Community Food Pantries; Youth for Christ; YWCA and the YMCA.

For more information on the new services for at-risk youth, contact the North Central Human Service Center at 701-857-8500, TTY: 701-857-8666, or toll-free 1-888-470-6968.

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