

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services 600 E Boulevard Ave, Bismarck ND 58505-0250**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **N.D. Department of Human Services awarded crisis counseling grant to support flood-affected residents**

BISMARCK, ND – The federal government has awarded the N.D. Department of Human Services a \$730,894 grant to provide confidential crisis counseling and emotional support to flood-impacted residents of Burleigh, Morton, McHenry, Renville, and Ward counties this summer.

“This grant provides funding for 42 crisis counselors to serve residents in counties affected by Mouse River flooding that received a federal Individual Assistance Declaration,” said Lauren Sauer of the Department’s Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division. “It also funds one team of seven counselors in the Bismarck-Mandan area, and provides funding for First Link’s 211 statewide helpline in order to connect people to services.”

Grant funds will pay for services through August 23, 2011, to help people through the immediate trauma, address crisis situations, and promote resiliency among North Dakotans experiencing loss and distress from this year’s flooding disaster.

Sauer said crisis counselors will work with people to improve their coping strategies, review their options, and connect them with agencies that can assist them.

The Department applied for grant funds on July 8 and is pleased with the prompt approval from federal FEMA and Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration officials, he said.

The N.D. Department of Human Services plans to contract with Lutheran Disaster Response to provide the counseling services, which will begin as soon as hiring and training are completed.

Because many people and communities have experienced significant losses and the full impact is still unknown, the Department intends to apply for grant funding to support crisis counseling for up to nine months after this initial grant ends.

The Department is also submitting a funding request for counseling resources to serve residents of Barnes, Ramsey, and Richland counties, and the Spirit Lake Nation, which qualified to receive federal flood aid under the Individual Assistance Program last week.

The Department’s central office divisions and its eight regional human service centers continue to work with Lutheran Disaster Response, the American Red Cross, and other mental health providers and volunteers to provide emotional support to people affected by the flooding.

For information, contact the Department of Human Services’ Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services at 701-328-8920 or [dhsmsas@nd.gov](mailto:dhsmsas@nd.gov).

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