

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services and the ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Conference to Help Teens Transition to Adulthood to be Held July 15-16 in Bismarck**

BISMARCK, N.D. – “Nothing About Us Without Us” is this year's theme for the North Dakota Youth Transition Conference July 15-16, 2012, at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck. The conference will feature presentations for teens and their parents, school counselors, social workers, teachers, and other professionals on various topics promoting successful transition planning to adulthood.

“Transition is an exciting time for both parents and young adults, but it can also be scary, overwhelming, and confusing,” said Carlotta McCleary, executive director of the ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. “This conference will provide youth and families the opportunity to network and learn what options are available to them as the youth move into adulthood.”

The conference will kick-off with a keynote presentation by Youth M.O.V.E. (Motivating Others through Voices of Experience) National from 12:45 to 1:45 p.m. on July 15. This youth-led national organization advocates for youth rights in mental health and other systems that serve them including juvenile justice, education, and child welfare. Also, the nationally recognized CLIMB Theatre will perform at 2 p.m. Theater artists write, produce, and present plays and drama classes on topics such as bullying, self-control, respect, accepting differences, friendship, and drug prevention.

The second day of the conference will feature a special panel discussion led by teens on preparing for college from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. Other Monday afternoon events include a “career dash” that allows students to meet briefly with area employers and business leaders to explore employment opportunities and a resource roundup for parents from 11 a.m. to noon.

Conference planners said participants will gain a better understanding of how they can become better advocates for themselves by networking with peers and understanding what supports and services are available to help them in future planning.

The conference is sponsored by ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Family Voices of North Dakota, Youth M.O.V.E. BeyoND, N.D. Department of Public Instruction, Protection and Advocacy Project, and the N.D. Department of Human Services' Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division, Children and Family Services Division, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Registration and lodging scholarships are available. To register for the conference, call 701-222-1223 or toll-free 1-800-484-2263. Pre-registration deadline is June 29, 2012. Conference information is also online at [www.ndffcmh.org/](http://www.ndffcmh.org/).

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