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North Dakota Medicaid and public health officials selected to partner in State Oral Health Leadership Institute

BISMARCK, N.D. – In an effort to improve access to dental services and oral health outcomes for low-income children and adults in North Dakota, the North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the North Dakota Department of Health (DOH) announced today that Jodi Hulm and Kimberlie Yineman are a part of North Dakota’s cross-agency state team chosen nationally to participate in the State Oral Health Leadership Institute.

Led by the Center for Health Care Strategies with support from the DentaQuest Foundation, the State Oral Health Leadership Institute is designed to build capacity of Medicaid dental program directors and state oral health program directors, and to support them in transforming their states’ oral health care systems through cross-agency collaboration.

Hulm, Health Tracks and the Healthy Steps (Children’s Health Insurance Program) administrator for DHS, and Yineman, Oral Health Program director for DOH were competitively selected to participate in the leadership development program along with four other teams from Missouri, North Carolina, Oregon and Washington, D.C.

“I am so excited to work with the North Dakota Medicaid program to help increase access to dental services delivered to Medicaid recipients, said Yineman. “I want to thank the State Oral Health Leadership Institute for giving us this opportunity.”

The curriculum for the 12-month program focuses on enhancing oral health policy, delivery system knowledge, and individual leadership skills that will assist in improving oral health access and outcomes for low-income children and adults. Each team will also develop a joint transformation project focused on a specific oral health goal. A national advisory group that includes leadership from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors will provide guidance to teams throughout the year.

“North Dakota Medicaid serves about 70,000 low-income people annually and many face an increased risk for oral disease and obstacles to oral health care,” said Hulm. “Anytime there is an opportunity to collaborate on developing innovative strategies to increase access to dental services for low-income North Dakotans it is a positive thing.”

The two state agencies have collaborated on other oral health initiatives. In 2012, DHS developed a nonprofit clinic dental access project with technical assistance from the DOH’s Oral Health Program. The effort focused on increasing access to dental services for Medicaid and Healthy Steps recipients by supporting recruitment of dentists to serve in nonprofit dental clinics.

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