

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Agency seeks comments from clients and caregivers on new federally-required system verifying home health and personal care visits

Public meetings set in Fargo, Bismarck and Minot beginning Thursday

BISMARCK, N.D. – An increasing number of older adults and individuals with disabilities are receiving long-term services and supports in their homes. The 21st Century Cures Act enacted by Congress in late 2016 requires states to electronically verify by phone or other information technology that Medicaid-funded home health care, personal care and some other home and community-based services are being provided.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services is holding public meetings on May 24 in Fargo, May 25 in Bismarck and June 5 in Minot to listen to comments from individuals who receive services, their families, and individuals and organizations that provide home health and personal care services.

“The federal government recently provided more information, and this change will impact more Medicaid clients and the providers who help them with bathing, dressing, movement, personal hygiene, and other related needs,” said Aging Services Division Director Nancy Maier. “We are holding three public meetings to explain the change and invite public comment about the electronic visit verification (EVV) system North Dakota should implement to support quality in-home care, while also addressing any privacy, logistical, cost and administrative considerations.”

The Fargo meeting on May 24 will be held at 9:30 a.m. in the Bison Room at Cass County Social Services at 1010 Second Ave. S. In Bismarck, stakeholders are invited to meet May 25 at 10:30 a.m., in the Brynhild Haugland Room of the state Capitol. The Minot meeting is June 5 at 1:30 p.m. at the Minot Commission on Aging at 21 First Ave. S.E.

During the meetings, department staff will provide an overview of the federal legislation and verification system requirements and will also invite public comments.

Maier said the system North Dakota ultimately implements must electronically verify the date and time services were provided, the types of personal care and home health services provided, the location where services were provided, and by whom and for whom.

Public comments will be considered as the department works to secure a vendor for the system. The department intends to issue a request for proposals by the end of the year.

Caregivers impacted by the federal law include home health agency employees and agency and self-employed qualified service providers, including family members, who are

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approved to provide personal care and in-home support services to North Dakotans receiving Medicaid-funded services. Other providers may also be affected, including those who provide services in the homes of people with developmental disabilities through the traditional intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities waiver and for children receiving services through the state's autism waiver, children's medically fragile waiver and children's hospice waiver.

States must comply with federal law and start using an electronic visit verification system by Jan. 1, 2019, for personal care services and Jan. 1, 2023, for home health services, or they risk reductions in their federal Medicaid matching funds. In North Dakota, the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage is currently 50 percent, meaning the federal government pays for half of every dollar spent for most Medicaid services.

Individuals with disabilities who need accommodations to participate in the meeting can contact Amy Johnson in the Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division at 701-328-4601, toll-free 855-462-5465, ND Relay TTY 800-366-6888 or amyjohnson@nd.gov.

Other ways to provide comment

Individuals unable to attend a meeting can also provide comment on the implementation of an EVV system by mail, email, phone or fax from May 24, 2018, until 5 p.m. Central Time on June 25, 2018.

Comments can be sent to the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division, Attn: HCBS, at 1237 W. Divide Ave., Suite 6, Bismarck, N.D. 58501, email dhshcbs@nd.gov, toll-free 855-462-5465, ND Relay TTY 800-366-6888 or fax 701-328-8744.

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