

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | November 11, 2019

*CORRECTION: The meeting in Devils Lake is from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. The end time was incorrect in the original announcement.*

## **Agency to hold community meetings to update stakeholders about efforts underway to redesign social services and transform behavioral health**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) is holding community meetings across the state Nov. 20-26 and invites service providers, partners, legislators, other community leaders, and other interested individuals to attend and learn how social services and behavioral health services are being redesigned and transformed to better serve individuals' needs more efficiently and effectively.

Department Executive Director Chris Jones said, "We want to share information about important work that has already been done with our partners to improve services to North Dakotans, as well as additional opportunities in the future. Significant beneficial changes are underway guided by Senate Bill 2124 and the North Dakota Behavioral Health Strategic Plan, and naturally with change there are questions. That's why we are having these community conversations."

At the community meetings, Jones will review the department's role and responsibilities. DHS Transformation Manager Sara Stolt will share information about work that began two years ago with county social service partners to redesign work processes, structure and culture with the goal of improving services to clients. Initial efforts focused on child protection services. Pilot projects involving child care licensing, a specialized Medicaid and state-funded long-term care eligibility team, in-home services to reduce foster care placements, and other child welfare system enhancements are in various stages of planning and implementation.

Pamela Sagness, director of the department's Behavioral Health Division, will share information about initiatives underway to improve access to behavioral health care and to strengthen prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery support services.

Meeting will be held on the following dates in these communities:

### Nov. 20, 2019

- **Jamestown:** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Central Time (CT), Gladstone Inn, 111 Second St. N.E.
- **Fargo:** 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. CT, Ramada Inn, 3333 13th Ave. S.

### Nov. 21, 2019

- **Grand Forks:** 1 – 3 p.m. CT, Canad Inn, 1000 S. 42nd St.

### Nov. 22, 2019

- **Devils Lake:** 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. CT, Great American Inn & Suites, 1116 Hwy 2 E.
- **Minot:** 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. CT, Sleep Inn & Suites, 2400 10th St. S.W.

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Nov. 25, 2019

- **Bismarck:** 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. CT, ND Heritage Center, 612 E. Boulevard Ave.

Nov. 26, 2019

- **Williston:** 8 – 10 a.m. CT, Williston Community Center, 822 18th St. E.
- **Dickinson:** 12 – 2 p.m. Mountain Time, West River Community Center, 2004 Fairway St.

Individuals with disabilities who need accommodations to participate in a community meeting can contact Amy Marshall at 701.328.2538, 711 (TTY) or [amarshall@nd.gov](mailto:amarshall@nd.gov) by Nov. 18, 2019.

DHS strives to provide quality, efficient, and effective human services, which improve the lives of people. To achieve that mission, the agency believes services should support access to the social determinants of health: economic stability, housing, education, food, community and health care and should be provided as close to home as possible and consistently across service areas to promote equity of access.

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