

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Nov. 15, 2019

Department of Human Services hires Pedersen to lead Children and Family Services Division

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) has named Cory Pedersen director of its Children and Family Services Division, which works to support the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families.

Prior to joining DHS, Pedersen was the deputy director of the Division of Juvenile Services for the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. After dedicating the past 24 years of his career to serving high-risk youth and families involved in North Dakota’s juvenile justice system, Pedersen views his new role as a natural progression.

“My work in juvenile justice focused on helping young people and their families get the services and supports they needed, often through the human service system, so they could change the direction of their lives,” he said. “I’ve been collaborating with human service partners for years and appreciate the opportunity to now support prevention and early intervention efforts and multi-agency efforts to build stronger families and prevent juvenile justice involvement.”

Pedersen has been involved in North Dakota’s Dual Status Youth Initiative to better coordinate services and supports to youth and families served by both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. He has also participated in federal Child and Family Services Reviews that measured the performance of the state’s child welfare system. He said the review process is being replaced by a new, on-site case review process, and he is looking forward to being a part of that and other transformational changes underway in human services.

He has lived and worked in many counties in the state during his career, and he said those relationships will be helpful as the department, counties and other partners continue redesigning how North Dakota provides services to at-risk children and families.

Pedersen has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from the University of North Dakota.

The 18-person Children and Family Services Division is responsible for developing policy and providing technical assistance related to child welfare services, including child protection, foster care, independent living services for older foster youth, family preservation services and adoption. The division also licenses service providers and provides criminal background checks on regulated foster care and child care providers and staff, adoptive families, court-appointed guardians, and staff at residential facilities.

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