

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | September 30, 2019

**Hundreds provide feedback at community meetings seeking input on expanding behavioral health services through a Medicaid state plan amendment**

*Public comment meetings scheduled in Dickinson and Williston in October*

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services hosted several community meetings last week to gather input on the development and implementation of a new Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment to expand home and community-based behavioral health services for children and adults. Over 200 individuals provided comments by attending the meetings or submitting comments online.

“The feedback so far supports the development of expanded services and has highlighted the need for service coordination, housing supports, employment and education supports, peer support and crisis stabilization for both adults and children,” said Caprice Knapp, Medical Services Division director.

“The response from individuals, family members and providers has been very positive,” said Pamela Sagness, Behavioral Health Division director. “We look forward to hearing from individuals and providers in western North Dakota in early October.”

There are still opportunities for the public to provide input on the population needing expanded services, defining the expanded services, and identifying who should deliver services. Additional meetings have been scheduled and written comments can also be submitted online at [www.nd.gov/1915i](http://www.nd.gov/1915i) until Oct. 17 at 5 p.m. Central Time.

**Public Meeting Schedule:**

**Oct. 1, 2019**, 1 to 2:30 p.m. Mountain Time

- **Dickinson:** West River Community Center, 2004 Fairway St., Meeting Room 1

**Oct. 10, 2019**, 12 to 1:30 p.m. Central Time

- **Williston:** The ARC Williston Community Center, 822 18th St. E.

People with disabilities who need accommodations to participate in a meeting should contact Bianca Bell in the department’s Behavioral Health Division at 701-328-8958, toll-free 800-755-2719, 711 (TTY) or [bhbell@nd.gov](mailto:bhbell@nd.gov).

During the 2019 legislative session, North Dakota lawmakers authorized the department to create a Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment, which will allow North Dakota Medicaid to pay for additional home and community-based services to support individuals with mental health conditions, substance use disorders and/or brain injuries.

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For adults these services could include, but are not limited to supports for housing, employment, education, transitions out of homelessness or institutional living and peer support. Potential services for children may include respite care, educational support and transition to adulthood supports.

After the community input meetings, the department will begin to write the Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment and submit it to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for approval. The anticipated implementation date is July 1, 2020. To be considered eligible for services, individuals must qualify for Medicaid or Medicaid Expansion. Other needs-based eligibility criteria will also be considered by the department when developing the services.

For more information about the Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment, visit [www.nd.gov/1915i](http://www.nd.gov/1915i).

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