

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Feb. 18, 2020

Human Services accepting public comments on draft Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment to expand behavioral health services coverage, hosts webinar to give overview of amendment

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services is accepting public comments on its draft Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment to expand Medicaid coverage for in-home and community-based behavioral health services for children and adults. Comments will be accepted until March 19, 2020 at 5 p.m. Central Time.

The draft Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment allows North Dakota Medicaid to pay for additional in-home and community-based services for individuals with mental health conditions, substance use disorders and/or brain injuries. These services include housing, educational and employment supports; community transition services; peer support; care coordination; respite care and other supportive services.

“In recent years, stakeholders in North Dakota have increasingly called for improvements in the state’s behavioral health system. This state plan amendment will increase access to vital services and supports for adults and children with behavioral health needs in the state,” said Pamela Sagness, Behavioral Health Division director. “More than 200 stakeholders provided comments this past fall, which were helpful in crafting the draft plan.”

The draft Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment is online at www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/1915i. Copies are also available upon request.

Individuals can submit comments online at www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/1915i. Comments will also be accepted by emailing bhbell@nd.gov, or calling toll-free 800-755-2719, 701-328-8958 or 711 (TTY), or by fax at 701-328-8979. Interested individual can also submit comments by mail to the North Dakota Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Division, Attn: Bianca Bell, 1237 W. Divide Ave., Ste. 1C, Bismarck, ND 58505-1208.

Department officials will host a webinar on March 4 from 10 to 11 a.m. Central Time to provide a brief overview of the draft state plan amendment and to answer questions related to the public comment process. Individuals interested in participating in the webinar must register online at www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/1915i.

“A tremendous amount of collaboration has occurred to create the draft state plan amendment,” said Caprice Knapp, Medical Services Division Director. “This is a very exciting opportunity to expand access to behavioral health services that can make a difference in the lives of people we serve.”

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During the 2019 legislative session, North Dakota lawmakers authorized the department to create a Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment.

After the public comment period ends, the state plan amendment will be submitted to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for review and approval. To be eligible for services, individuals must qualify for Medicaid or Medicaid Expansion, have a qualifying behavioral health diagnosis and meet required needs-based criteria.

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