

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | March 18, 2020

## **Behavioral Health Division offers resources to support the behavioral health of North Dakotans during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) can be stressful for people and communities. The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division is offering resources to support North Dakotans' behavioral health during this time. The information is available online at [www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/covid-19](http://www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/covid-19).

"It is natural to feel anxiety and worry during this outbreak," said Pamela Sagness, the Behavioral Health Division director. "It is important to take some time to take care of our own behavioral health and look out for those most vulnerable in our community."

Resources include tips for managing anxiety and stress, impacts of COVID-19 on individuals with a behavioral health condition and resources for assistance.

- Individuals with a substance use disorder that need support are encouraged to call Recovery Talk 1-844-44TALK2 to visit with a trained peer support specialist in the state who has lived experience in addiction.
- Individuals struggling with thoughts of suicide can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.
- FirstLink 2-1-1 is available for listening and support, referrals to resources or help and crisis intervention.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline is also available to provide crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. Individuals can call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. TTY 1-800-846-8517 for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Sagness said, "During this time of social distancing, individuals may feel isolated, which can contribute to poor behavioral health. We can all play a role in supporting those around us, reaching out using technology or even sending someone a handwritten note."

The Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division is responsible for reviewing and identifying service needs and activities in the state's behavioral health system to ensure health and safety, access to services and quality services. It also establishes quality assurance standards for the licensure of substance use disorder program services and facilities and provides policy leadership in partnership with public and private entities. For more information, visit [www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov](http://www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov).

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