

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 29, 2011

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Note: Options counselors and an individual who has used this service will be available for media interviews from 12 to 1 p.m. on May 5 prior to the start of the Forum.

Governor's Committee on Aging Forum is May 5 in Bismarck Includes speakers, Region VII Council meeting, and public awareness campaign kick-off

BISMARCK, N.D. – The Governor's Committee on Aging is sponsoring a Region VII Council meeting and community forum on **Thursday, May 5, 2011**, from 1:15 to 3:30 p.m. at the **Bismarck Senior Center**, 315 North 20th Street. It will feature speakers on vision health, crime prevention and services for older adults.

Department of Human Services representatives will also kick-off a new public awareness campaign called *"Engaging in Life."* It promotes North Dakota's Aging and Disability Resource LINK that connects people to care and support options including alternatives to nursing home care so they can live independently in their homes and communities. The launch coincides with Older Americans Month in May.

"Participants will appreciate the good information provided by the speakers. We are also excited to introduce the Resource LINK to people who can benefit from it," said Jan Engan, director of the Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division.

The agenda for the forum includes the Resource LINK kick-off, a legislative update, comments from the Governor's Committee on Aging, healthy eye care, crimes against the elderly, and an overview of the volunteer ombudsman program that serves residents of long-term care facilities.

"Burleigh County Senior Adults Program and Burleigh County Social Services are key partners in our Aging and Disability Resource LINK. We are working closely together to help people live independently longer by simplifying access to services," said Department of Human Services Executive Director Carol K. Olson.

Attendees will learn how the Aging and Disability Resource LINK gives people options. Trained professionals, called options counselors, work one-on-one with older adults, adults with physical disabilities and their families to link them to care supports and services available in their communities.

Options counselors are on-site at West Central Human Service Center in Bismarck, the Bismarck Senior Center, and at North Central Human Service Center in Minot. To explore options, people can also call toll-free 1-855-GO2-LINK (1-855-462-5465) or go online to www.carechoice.nd.gov.

A senior meal will be served at noon before the formal program. The suggested donation for the meal cost is \$3.50 for people over the age of 60, and \$6.50 for other attendees. Reservations are required and can be made by calling the Bismarck Senior Center at 701-258-9276 by Wednesday, May 4, 2011.

Individuals with questions should call Cherry Schmidt at West Central Human Service Center at 701-328-8787.

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