

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 13, 2014**

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Ruth Meiers Adolescent Treatment Center receives national award

BISMARCK, N.D. – The N.D. Department of Human Services' Ruth Meiers Adolescent Treatment Center (RMAC) has received a national award for community-based facilities serving youth. The PbS Learning Institute presented the *2014 PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen Award* to the Grand Forks residential treatment center for using performance-based standards and data to improve care and outcomes for youth, staff, and families.

In announcing the award, PbS Learning Institute said Ruth Meiers Adolescent Treatment Center was selected for its work to improve fairness around discipline issues and for its focus on providing services in a way that was sensitive to and recognized the prevalence and impact of trauma on many of its young clients.

A trauma-informed approach involves providing a safe environment, building trust, and appreciating individual strengths while helping clients develop new coping skills and resilience. It also includes collaborating by giving clients choices and engaging them in decisions about themselves.

RMAC became a PbS pilot project site in 2012 through support from the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations' Division of Juvenile Services and Youth Correctional Center. DOCR's goal was to divert young people from the juvenile correction system by supporting effective community-based services.

Facilities serving juveniles in 32 states use the PbS performance-based standards data-driven improvement model.

Ruth Meiers' Program Director Bryon Novotny said all staff, clients, and parents complete surveys every six months and outcomes are reviewed.

"We analyze the data to help us make decisions about how we provide services to achieve the best outcomes for those we serve," Novotny said. "If you have good data, you can respond to it."

RMAC most recently worked to assure clients understood the behavior management system. They also worked with staff to raise awareness about clients' perceptions about staff fairness, and developed a team approach to behavior management decision-making, while retaining individualized approaches to address individual needs.

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RMAC is a program of Northeast Human Service Center, which is part of the North Dakota Department of Human Services. It serves children ages 12-18, and is licensed as a 10-bed psychiatric residential treatment facility.

The center opened in 1989 to help meet the need for in-state residential treatment options for North Dakota youth, and has provided treatment services to about 500 young people during the past 25 years.

The center holds national accreditation by the Council on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. More information is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/northeast/ruth-meiers.html#Admissions.

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