

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Agency launches new online system to report abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults

BISMARCK, N.D. – The N.D. Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division has launched a new secure website to report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults in North Dakota. People can now report concerns online at <https://fw2.harmonyis.net/NDLiveIntake/>.

“Our goal is to make it easy to report concerns, especially for those professionals such as health care providers, who are required by law to report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults,” said Michelle Gayette, the department’s vulnerable adult protective services administrator.

Gayette stressed that the reporting system is for non-urgent concerns. Anyone concerned that a vulnerable adult is at imminent risk of serious injury or death should call 911, she said.

Reports are reviewed and responded to by Vulnerable Adult Protective Services professionals throughout the state. They may gather more information to completely assess the situation, and may make referrals for appropriate services to help reduce or eliminate risk or harm to vulnerable adults.

To be considered a vulnerable adult, an individual must be age 18 or older or a minor considered independent because he or she is married, who has substantial physical or mental impairment that affects the individual’s health, safety, and independence.

People who prefer to report possible abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults by phone or other means can find contact information and more details on the department’s website at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/reporting.html.

In 2013, the N.D. Legislature passed a law requiring more than 20 different types of professionals, including medical and mental health professionals, to report possible abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Mandated reporters include addiction counselors, caregivers, chiropractors, congregate care personnel, dentists, dental hygienists, emergency medical personnel, firefighters, hospital personnel, law enforcement officers, nurses, nursing home personnel, optometrists, pharmacists, physicians, podiatrists, social workers, therapists, and other individuals.

North Dakota is one of five states using the Harmony for Adult Protective Services External Web Intake form.

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