

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services 600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Professionals Required to Report Child Abuse and Neglect Benefit from Online Interactive Training**

Bismarck, N.D. – North Dakota state law requires certain professionals to report possible child abuse and neglect. The North Dakota Department of Human Services reminds mandated reporters about an interactive web-based training that educates them about the responsibility they have in recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. The training can be found on Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota's website at [www.pcand.org/](http://www.pcand.org/).

"Last year, nearly 900 professionals completed the training," said Marlys Baker, child protection services administrator for the department. "We are very pleased with the outpouring of support and participation from various professionals who all have an important role in helping keep children safe."

Baker said, one partner who has made the mandated reporter training a cornerstone of their child abuse prevention efforts is the West Fargo Police Department.

"It's vital for our officers to understand their responsibilities as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect," said West Fargo Chief of Police Michael Reitan. "We have placed a high priority on this training by including it as part of our new officer training program in addition to our annual training. It is a highly effective, efficient, and flexible method to train our officers."

The online training features exercises customized for child care and medical professionals, law enforcement officials, educators, clergy, and others who are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Each training section gives participants an in-depth look at the importance of reporting, the various indicators of abuse and neglect, how to file a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, and the law pertaining to abuse and neglect. There is also a self-test that participants can take that enhances the learning points.

The training also includes a narrated life-like scenario called "*Lisa's Story*," which puts an elementary teacher's training, courage, and compassion to the test to report suspected abuse and neglect of a six-year old student.

A certificate of completion is sent online to individuals who register their name and email address and complete the training. There is no charge to access the training, which takes about one hour to complete.

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Baker said since the launch of the training in April 2012, the department has received several inquiries from other state child protection agencies to use North Dakota's online training as a model to create similar training.

In North Dakota, anyone may report suspected child abuse and neglect by calling their county social services office. Contact information is at [www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/). County social service offices serve as the department's authorized agents for child protection services.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division funds child abuse and neglect prevention efforts across the state and partners with Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota, the North Dakota State University Extension Service - Parent Resource Centers, and other public and private partners to provide statewide education and prevention programming.

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