

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
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## **Human Service Center in Jamestown opens access to behavioral health assessments; no appointments needed**

BISMARCK, N.D. – To increase access to behavioral health services and engage people in treatment earlier, the North Dakota Department of Human Services has expanded the number of regional human service centers that offer mental health and substance use assessments without appointments.

South Central Human Service Center (SCHSC) in Jamestown is the third center to change how it provides mental health and addiction assessments. Residents of the nine-county service region can come in for unscheduled assessments on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12 to 2:30 p.m., and Wednesdays from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

In February, North Central Human Service Center in Minot began offering Open Access behavioral health assessments Mondays through Thursdays, between 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., Central Time. Northwest Human Service Center in Williston launched open access assessments last fall.

“Our goal is prompt access to behavioral health assessments and follow-up services,” said the department’s Chief Clinics Officer, clinical psychologist Rosalie Etherington. “We started addressing access issues last year when all regional human service centers began providing walk-in substance addiction assessments on designated weekdays.”

Etherington said the department hopes to expand open access behavioral health assessments statewide at its remaining five regional human service centers by June 30, 2017.

An assessment at a participating regional human service center can take about an hour, she said, and individuals who have the highest need, such as a pregnant woman seeking an addiction evaluation, receive priority.

“We hope we can prevent crises and significantly reduce no-shows. This will also allow us to serve new clients more quickly and manage staffing more efficiently,” SCHSC Regional Director and clinical psychologist Dan Cramer said.

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People seeking assessment services at SCHSC can go to the center at 520 Third Street N.W., in Jamestown during Open Access hours, or they can call the center at 701-253-6300, toll-free 800-260-1310, ND Relay TTY at 800-366-6888, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to schedule an assessment.

Cramer said a triage specialist meets with individuals to assess their current situation. There may be a wait time before a clinician is able to see a person depending on individual needs.

Walk-in assessments benefit individuals whose work schedules vary, and those who have limited access to transportation or child care or who experience challenges that may prevent them from following through with assessments scheduled too far in advance.

“We are reshaping how we provide services,” Etherington said. “Once fully implemented, Open Access will include not only daily access to behavioral health assessments, but also eventually interventions, including urgent care, and other behavioral health services.”

The department operates regional human service centers in Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Minot, and Williston. Some centers also have rural outreach offices.

Centers provide an array of community-based behavioral health services, aging services, developmental disability program management, and other human services to North Dakotans either directly or through contracts with other service providers.

As publicly-funded behavioral health treatment providers, the centers serve those individuals with the greatest treatment needs. These include adults with serious mental illness, children with serious emotional disturbance, adults and children with both substance use disorders and serious mental illness, pregnant women with substance use disorders, and I.V. drug users.

Fees for some services are adjusted for income, ability to pay, and the number of household members. Insurance is accepted if available.

Regional human service center information is online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/).

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