

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Agency postpones developmental disabilities provider payment changes

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services is postponing a new rate-setting system for providers of developmental disability services and will not be implementing it on Jan. 1, 2017, as previously planned.

The department's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Division has been working with consultants, developmental disability service providers, the North Dakota Association of Community Providers (NDACP), and other stakeholders since state lawmakers enacted Senate Bill 2043 in 2011 directing the department to develop, with providers, a new payment system. The project involves converting the state's current retrospective, cost-based, rate system to a prospective fee-for-service system.

The DD Rate Setting Steering Committee, which includes providers and their association, met 48 times to help the department make decisions throughout the project. The department also provided updates to lawmakers throughout the development process.

Explaining the decision to delay implementation, Division Director Tina Bay said, "A newly-developed rate system typically does not provide the exact same reimbursement to providers as the system it replaces. Some providers may receive more and some less. Staff worked hard to address each concern raised by steering committee members."

Bay said some service providers support the new rate-setting system and want to move forward with implementation. However, it has been difficult for the department to evaluate the number of clients who could be impacted if their provider chooses to provide less support or to discharge them.

"As the implementation date approached, the department did not want to impact the services and supports for individuals," Bay said.

According to the department, NDACP has raised several funding questions and requests, and association members have indicated they may bring those forward during the 2017 North Dakota Legislative Assembly.

The department will reconvene the steering committee after the legislative session to assess the viability of moving forward with the new system, and if appropriate, to identify a new implementation date.

Bay thanked the providers, family members, and advocates who participated in the public comment period on the Medicaid waiver related to the new rate-setting system.

The DD rate setting system identifies how providers are paid for services they provide to individuals with developmental disabilities. Services include day supports, congregate care, transitional community living facility, minimally supervised and individualized supported living arrangements, specialized placement, family care option III, intermediate care facility for the intellectually disabled, and extended services.

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The authorization to develop the new rate-setting system appears in state law in N.D.C.C. § 50-06-37, which can be found online at www.legis.nd.gov/general-information/north-dakota-century-code.

Information about the Developmental Disabilities Division and services for individuals with developmental disabilities is available online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/disabilities/dd.html.

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