

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Department of Human Services highlights prevention resources during National Prevention Week

BISMARCK, N.D. – National Prevention Week is observed from May 14 to 20 this year. Each year around this observance, communities and organizations across the country come together to raise awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and positive mental health.

Substance misuse is a serious public health issue impacting North Dakota communities, businesses and families. Approximately 30 percent of North Dakota high school students report current alcohol use¹; 43.2 percent of fatal crashes in the state are alcohol-related², and in the state, the number of opioid overdose deaths has increased from 20 in 2013 to 61 in 2015³.

Laura Anderson, prevention administrator for the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division, said change takes time, persistence and collaboration.

"Substance abuse is a community problem, requiring a community solution," she said. "This journey will take time, but it is worth it when we consider the lives that can be saved."

Anderson said North Dakota communities support substance abuse prevention with a common goal to create safe and healthy individuals, families, businesses and communities. The department's Behavioral Health Division offers free resources and assistance to support local activities through the **North Dakota Prevention Resource and Media Center** at www.prevention.nd.gov and the **Parents LEAD** program at www.parentslead.org.

The North Dakota Prevention Resource and Media Center (PRMC) provides effective, innovative and culturally-appropriate substance abuse prevention infrastructure, strategies and resources to individuals and communities across the state. Parents LEAD is an evidence-based underage drinking prevention program for parents, which uses statewide, web-based communication and outreach.

"Effective prevention is rooted directly in science with input from many systems including health, education, justice and social services. Prevention efforts make economic sense too, saving up to \$64 dollars for every dollar invested,⁴" Anderson said.

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¹ North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 2015

² ND Department of Transportation (DOT), 2015

³ Center for Disease Control (CDC)/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality

⁴ Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (2016). Benefit-cost results. Retrieved from <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost?topicId=>. Accessed on September 26, 2016.