

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Sturn honored for work on behalf of children and families

BISMARCK, N.D. – Dean Sturn, the foster care administrator for the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division, received the Ruth Meiers Award from the North Dakota Conference of Social Welfare for devoting his career toward achieving healthy outcomes for children and families involved in North Dakota's foster care system.

Sturn administers the state's foster care system including oversight of the foster care budget, child placements and licensing and training of over 1,000 foster care providers. He provides direct supervision to other areas that focus on providing stability to children including adoption, guardianships and independent living services. Sturn engages with foster care constituents and is the department's liaison with tribal partners. He is also involved in the department's onsite case reviews, which evaluate how child welfare services are provided in the state.

Sturn has an undergraduate and master's degree in social work from the University of North Dakota. His career spans over three decades in child welfare centered around group and family foster care. He began his career at the Dakota Boys Ranch in Minot as a direct care professional. In 1989, he joined the department's Ruth Meiers Adolescent Treatment Center in Grand Forks where he worked for nine years in various roles including case manager, program director and administrative director. He later went on to work for a residential child care facility (RCCF) and psychiatric residential treatment facility, Casey Family Programs based in Bismarck and PATH ND. Sturn rejoined the department in 2008 overseeing the independent living program and licensing of RCCFs before becoming the state foster care administrator in 2009.

"Dean has been involved in every level of the foster care system from working one-on-one with children to supervising individuals involved in providing important clinical support and supervising the administration of foster care services," said Lauren Sauer, acting division director. "This well-rounded experience has made him a champion for ensuring that children have permanent and stable living situations and families are connected to services and supports needed to achieve positive outcomes."

The Ruth Meiers Award was established by the North Dakota Conference of Social Welfare in honor of the late Lt. Governor Ruth Meiers who worked to improve the lives of those less fortunate. Meiers' career also included work as a caseworker and child welfare worker.

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