

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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N.D. Department of Human Services announces the North Dakota Behavioral Health Vision 20/20 survey and website

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division today announced the Behavioral Health Vision 20/20 survey and website. The goal of this effort is to realize North Dakota's vision of a good, modern and equitable behavioral health system.

"North Dakota is taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the behavioral health needs in our state by investing in community-based services and supports. By focusing on supports for housing, employment, education and peer support, we will improve outcomes and provide for savings by avoiding expensive emergency and psychiatric inpatient care. These investments will also help to develop the state's work force and expand access to behavioral health supports in rural areas," said Gov. Doug Burgum.

In April 2018, the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division released the North Dakota Behavioral Health System Study - an evaluation of the capacity of the state's behavioral health system to prevent and respond to behavioral health challenges and promote the well-being of North Dakotans. The report, written by Human Services Research Institute (HSRI), identified a shortage of prevention and early intervention services and an overreliance on residential and inpatient services. It serves as a component of the legislative committee studies during the 2017-2019 interim.

"The report points to a number of areas where the state is moving in the right direction, while also providing recommendations that can be implemented as we transform behavioral health services in the state," said Behavioral Health Division Director Pamela Sagness.

As part of the continued implementation of this work, the Behavioral Health Division, in partnership with HSRI, is announcing the launch of a project website to support public input in the process: www.hsri.org/NDvision-2020.

Currently, strategic goals based on the study's recommendations are being prioritized. As part of this effort, the public is invited to provide feedback by participating in an online survey. The survey can be accessed until Dec. 14 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NDVision-2020>.

The division and HSRI are working closely with the North Dakota Behavioral Health Planning Council to support system transformation based on the study's recommendations.

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“HSRI is supporting the North Dakota Behavioral Health Planning Council to engage in coordinated, data-driven system transformation activities based on the recommendations from the 2018 Behavioral Health System Study,” said Bevin Croft, PhD, HSRI project director. “Working with stakeholders - including service users and families, advocates, providers, administrators and other North Dakotans - we’re helping the state set its course for ongoing system monitoring, planning and improvements in the long term.”

The 2018 report was presented to the legislature’s Health Services and Human Services interim committees and endorsed as a blue print for future efforts.

“Behavioral health, including mental illness and substance use disorders, indiscriminately affects our families and our neighbors,” said Sen. Judy Lee of West Fargo who chaired the interim Health Services Committee. “Behavioral health is everybody’s business.”

“Over the last five years, many behavioral health partners and the legislature have studied and implemented many things to address this major crisis. The HSRI study is a major milestone that outlines the next steps all our key partners need to work on over the next five years,” said Fargo Sen. Kathy Hogan, interim Human Services Committee chair.

To review the full report, visit

https://www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/sites/www/files/images/ND_FinalReport_042318.pdf.

Individuals who have questions, want help completing the survey or have additional feedback, can contact Melissa Burnett at mburnett@hsri.org or 617-876-0426, ext. 2305.

The Department of Human Services’ Behavioral Health Division is responsible for reviewing and identifying service needs and activities in the state's behavioral health system to ensure health and safety, access to services and quality services. It also establishes quality assurance standards for the licensure of substance use disorder program services and facilities and provides policy leadership in partnership with public and private entities. For more information, visit www.behavioralhealth.dhs.nd.gov.

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