

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck N.D. 58505**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Statewide Independent Living Council to meet May 2-3 in Grand Forks
Agenda includes speakers on fair housing and supported decision-making

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota’s Statewide Independent Living Council is meeting May 2-3 in Grand Forks to discuss issues impacting people with disabilities. Experts will share information with the council about fair housing and supported decision-making, which is a model that could prevent unnecessary guardianships and allow individuals to make important decisions about their own lives.

The council, which promotes full community participation and independent living for people with disabilities, is scheduled to meet May 2, from 1 to 5 p.m., and May 3, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Canad Inn, 1000 S. 42nd Street.

Judy DeWitz of North Dakota Protection and Advocacy will give a presentation titled “Supported Decision-Making: A Conversation for North Dakota” on May 2 at 1:30 p.m. Afterwards, a representative of the Department of Human Services’ Vocational Rehabilitation Division will share information about the training policy, and council standing committees will meet to conduct work.

On May 3 at 9 a.m., Michelle Rydz of High Plains Fair Housing will report on current fair housing trends and court cases related to people with disabilities. Her presentation will be followed by reports from council standing committees and directors of the centers for independent living that serve North Dakotans.

The public is welcome to attend and is encouraged to comment on the supported decision-making model, which is being studied by stakeholders across the state and involves “supporters” who can help individuals understand options, responsibilities and potential consequences of their decisions. The complete meeting agenda is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/publicnotice/index.html.

Annually about 20,000 North Dakotans receive independent living services so they can live and work more independently in their homes and communities. Core services include information and referral, independent living skills training, peer mentoring, and advocacy and transition services that assist people with disabilities to move from nursing homes or other institutions into the community each year and also assist youth with disabilities as they transition from school life to adulthood.

Individuals who need auxiliary aids or services to participate in the meeting can contact Aimee Volk, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, North Dakota Department of Human Services, at 1237 W. Divide Ave., Suite 1B, Bismarck, N.D., 58501, 701-328-8954, toll-free 800-755-2745, or ND Relay TTY 800-366-6888 or alvolk@nd.gov.

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