

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 E. Boulevard Ave. - Dept. 325, Bismarck N.D. 58505**

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Media contacts: Heather Steffl at 701-328-4933 or LuWanna Lawrence at 701-328-1892

Parents Lead expands focus to children's behavioral health, launches new website

BISMARCK, N.D. – Recognizing the power of a parent to influence a child's life, the North Dakota program - Parents Lead - has expanded to not only support parents in taking the lead to prevent underage drinking, but also to provide tools and resources for parents to support their child's overall behavioral health. The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division, in partnership with the North Dakota Department of Transportation and North Dakota University System, has launched a new website with this expanded focus: www.parentslead.org.

"Expanding the focus to all children's behavioral health topics is a natural transition that will allow us to better meet the needs of all North Dakota families," said Laura Anderson, assistant director of the Behavioral Health Division.

According to Anderson, healthy bonding and attachment between a parent and child is one of the biggest factors in preventing behavioral health issues like underage drinking, drug use, depression and anxiety. The website highlights information about the four primary parental behaviors making up the foundation of Parents Lead: ongoing communication, effective monitoring, positive role-modeling and support and engagement.

"When parents talk to their kids, monitor their whereabouts, act as good role models and are consistently supportive, they can have a positive impact on the lives of their children," said Anderson. "And when the community and professionals with whom families interact share the same values, our children can grow up in an environment where they are safe and healthy."

Parents, communities and professionals can find a wide variety of information to support the behavioral health of children. Key features of the website include searchable resources organized by behavioral health topic, everyday parenting tips, real-life conversation scenarios, promotional materials for community implementation such as posters, radio and broadcast public service announcements and professional handouts.

The new site has a responsive design, is easy to navigate, and features a search function designed to help visitors easily find the information they need. Visitors can also order materials and access behavioral health data maintained by the North Dakota Prevention Resource and Media Center (PRMC).

Parents Lead is an evidence-based prevention program with the primary goal of providing parents and caregivers with tools and resources to support them in promoting the behavioral health of their children. To learn more, visit www.parentslead.org or connect with Parents Lead on Facebook and Instagram.

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