

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 21, 2019

Human Services partners with Prairie St. John's to provide First Episode Psychosis services in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division provides funding to Prairie St. John's in Fargo to offer evidence-based First Episode Psychosis treatment services to young adults suffering from psychosis, which can include symptoms like hallucinations, paranoia, delusions, incoherent or nonsense speech, confused thinking and behavior inappropriate for a situation.

During this month – designated as Mental Health Month – the department encourages everyone to learn about the symptoms of psychosis in order to connect individuals in need with evidence-based treatment early. About 100,000 individuals in the United States experience a first episode of psychosis each year according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

"Research has shown that early, appropriate treatment and supports can help prevent the full onset of illness, improving long-term outcomes for those who have already had a first episode of psychosis," said Behavioral Health Division Director Pamela Sagness.

Generally, a first episode of psychosis will occur between the ages of 15 and 25. Because the illness often begins during a young person's transition into adulthood, psychosis can disrupt their vocational, academic and social development. View this video, published by Prairie St. John's, to learn more about first episode psychosis and how individuals can access help if they are experiencing symptoms: www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/about-us/mental-health/first-episode-psychosis-fep-treatment-services.

"At Prairie St. John's, we are excited to partner with the North Dakota Department of Human Services to implement the First Episode Psychosis Program. We have seen great outcomes. Patients are regaining a healthy level of functioning," said Program Director Monica McConkey, MA, LPC.

The division is funding the program through the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG). The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides this block grant funding to states to support statewide, comprehensive community mental health services for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbances.

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For more information on Prairie St. John's program, visit <https://prairie-stjohns.com/first-episode-psychosis-program/>.

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.nd.gov.

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