

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | September 5, 2019

## **Human service center is expanding behavioral health outreach services and redesigning transitional living services to better meet area residents' needs**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Field Services team is focused on providing the right level of behavioral health services and support to North Dakotans living with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, allowing individuals to stay in their communities and homes. As part of this effort, South Central Human Service Center in Jamestown will be expanding outreach services and redesigning transitional living services to better meet area residents' needs.

This fall, South Central is partnering with Progress Inc. to consolidate the center's transitional living services in Jamestown from two facilities and programs into one. This change will allow the regional human service center to devote more staff resources to directly serve clients living independently in the community, while retaining transitional living program services for individuals who do not need psychiatric inpatient care, but who may benefit from structured residential and support services as they progress in their recovery.

By Oct. 1, the center will no longer directly operate or staff its partially-full, 12-bed transitional living program called Cottage Lane. Progress Inc. intends to close its Bridgepoint Transitional Living Home and will instead assume the operation and staffing of a consolidated 15-bed transitional living program at the former Cottage Lane site.

Commenting on the upcoming changes, South Central Human Service Center Director Dan Cramer said, "We continually evaluate community needs. We have significantly more transitional living beds in the local community than people who need that level of care. Our goal at South Central is to make it possible for more individuals with behavioral health needs to live successfully and independently in their communities. This change supports that goal, sustains important services, and does not eliminate the jobs of valued employees."

"Our employees have done great work at our Cottage Lane transitional living facility. Those behavioral health team members will now be serving North Dakotans already living in their own apartments and homes in our region. It is a role change. We've talked about making changes for a while. Instead of going to one place to work with the same small group of clients, they will work in the community, serving assigned clients to help them reach their unique recovery goals," he said.

Cramer said the agencies are working to minimize the impact on clients and team members. Five Bridgepoint residents will soon be transitioned to the Cottage Lane site, and a couple of Cottage Lane residents will be transitioning into a basic care setting to meet their emerging medical and personal care support needs.

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## South Central Human Service Center adjusts services to meet regional needs – Page 2

Contracted caregivers at Progress Inc.'s Bridgepoint site will begin staffing the Cottage Lane site and have already begun shadowing South Central employees to get to know the Cottage Lane clients.

Seven full-time and three temporary state employees currently working at Cottage Lane will be reassigned by South Central Human Service Center to its main office in Jamestown to provide outreach-based services to area residents.

By realigning services, Cramer said, the center will be able to increase outpatient services and outreach for individuals with serious mental illness in the Jamestown region, which could reduce the need for a higher level of care such as crisis services or hospitalization. The transitional living program will continue to help people transition to community living.

"The Progress Inc. team does a great job of providing psychosocial rehabilitation and skill development services and support. They have helped many individuals transition from residential care to live successfully in the community," he said.

Transitional living services allow people diagnosed with serious mental illness who may also have a co-occurring substance use disorder to gain self-care skills in a supportive recovery-focused residential setting. Program clients typically also receive treatment and recovery support services at a regional human service center. Within 12-18 months, most clients are equipped with the knowledge, skills and ongoing behavioral health services and support they need to live independently in the community.

During this interim, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, in collaboration with Human Service Research Institute, will be working to identify the state's capacity to meet psychiatric inpatient care needs and other levels of behavioral health care needs.

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