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North Dakota's human service centers remain focused on providing vital behavioral health services

BISMARCK, N.D. – The COVID-19 pandemic is causing fear, stress and anxiety for many people, including those with chronic behavioral health needs. During these challenging times, it's important for North Dakotans to have access to vital behavioral health services.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services' eight regional human service centers and their four satellite clinics are open and safely providing both on-site and community-based behavioral health services to vulnerable North Dakotans. The centers primarily serve individuals with chronic, serious mental illness and substance use disorders, including pregnant women and others who use intravenous drugs.

"Our human service centers have remained open during this pandemic," said Dr. Rosalie Etherington, chief clinical officer for the state's human service clinic system. "We serve people with very high needs, and we've found these individuals do best when they can interact face-to-face with our clinicians in settings that are safe for both our clients and our team members."

To ensure the health and safety of clients and team members, the centers have obtained personal protective equipment and have implemented universal masking policies and enhanced cleaning practices. The centers have also purchased stand-alone wrist temperature screening kiosks and decontamination sprayers for use in high traffic areas. Designated front-line screeners help provide safe and timely check-in. In addition, a smartphone screening tool was created, which allows team members to answer screening questions electronically to expedite entry.

"These additional measures complement our existing health, safety and cleaning protocols," Etherington said. "We are doing everything we can to fulfill our mission of providing timely and effective behavioral health services that improve individuals' quality of life through achieving and sustaining recovery in a safe way."

Crisis behavioral health services are available at the centers, through community outreach and mobile crisis services. Individuals in crisis can access walk-in assessment and triage services during regularly scheduled walk-in hours, and the confidential crisis phone lines for clients will be answered 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

The centers are located in Bismarck, Devils Lake, Dickinson, Fargo, Grand Forks, Jamestown, Minot and Williston with satellite clinics in Grafton, Rolla, Valley City and the Off Main location in Fargo.

For more information, including a list of crisis phone numbers and behavioral health walk-in hours at each center, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/.

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