

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 19, 2020

## **Human Services' Behavioral Health Division creates behavioral health toolkit for employers to create supportive workplaces during COVID-19 pandemic**

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota employers have a unique ability and responsibility to support the behavioral health needs of their employees as they navigate these challenging times. To support their efforts, the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division has created a behavioral health toolkit for employers to support employees' behavioral health. The toolkit is available online at [www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/EmployeeToolkit.pdf](http://www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/EmployeeToolkit.pdf).

"The pandemic has taken an emotional toll on many in our state, and the impacts can affect individuals well beyond the immediate crisis both at home and at work," said Pamela Sagness, the Behavioral Health Division director. "This toolkit is designed to help employers promote awareness about the importance of behavioral health and to keep a productive engaging workplace."

The 31-page toolkit provides employers with information on supporting employees while teleworking, utilizing an employee assistance program and finding behavioral health services and supports in North Dakota. The toolkit also has tips for supervisors on how they can provide one-on-one support to their staff members and ready-to-use information for employee newsletters or other employer communications on behavioral health resources, including tools for parents.

"We at the Department of Commerce are thankful for the work of Pam Sagness and her Behavioral Health team for providing these resources for North Dakota employers and employees, in recognition of the importance of mental health to a high-functioning workplace," said Michelle Kommer, Commerce Commissioner.

The employer toolkit is one of many resources available to support individuals and families during the pandemic. The division continues to develop behavioral health-related information on various topics for adults, children and behavioral health providers at [www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/covid-19](http://www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov/covid-19).

The department's 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 on the North Dakota Department of Human Services response to COVID-19, visit [www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid19/index.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid19/index.html). For details about the state's COVID-19 response, visit [www.ndresponse.gov](http://www.ndresponse.gov).

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**CONTACT:**

LuWanna Lawrence | 701-328-1892  
[llawrence@nd.gov](mailto:llawrence@nd.gov)

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933  
[hsteffl@nd.gov](mailto:hsteffl@nd.gov)