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Human Services announces retirement of human service center directors in Minot and Grand Forks

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services announced today the retirement of Laurie Gotvaslee, regional director of North Central Human Service Center in Minot and Randy Slavens, regional director of Northeast Human Service Center in Grand Forks. Together, they have over 60 years of experience in the human services field.

“I would like to thank Laurie and Randy for their decades of service to improving the lives of North Dakotans,” said Jeff Stenseth, field services operations officer. “Over the years, they have played instrumental roles in implementing many human service center initiatives, including recently achieving national accreditation for outpatient behavioral health services at each center and the rollout of enhanced crisis services in the state.”

Gotvaslee began her career as a social worker at McHenry County Social Services. In 1999, she joined NCHSC and held various positions in child welfare, children’s mental health and aging services. She served as the assistant director of the Minot center for three years before being named director in 2012. At that same time, she also served as the director for Northwest Human Service Center in Williston, a position she held until 2018.

Gotvaslee and her team worked to support community-based behavioral health services and other human services during the recent oil boom when unprecedented population growth stressed all forms of community infrastructure.

Several initiatives were launched to help fill gaps in behavioral health services. An adult crisis and transitional living facility opened in Minot, and the Williston and Minot centers were the first to implement walk-in behavioral health assessments and services to provide immediate care to those in need. Gotvaslee’s last day of public service with DHS is April 30.

Slavens joined the department in 1997 as an assistant regional supervisor for child welfare services. He held other positions, including adolescent therapist, supervisor of the Ruth Meiers Adolescent Treatment Center and clinical director of outpatient mental health services and children’s mental health services. He was the center’s assistant director for nine years before being named director in 2016. He also served as director of Lake Region Human Service Center in Devils Lake from 2016 to 2019. Slavens will retire from DHS on May 28.

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During Slavens' tenure, the center transitioned to an integrated team-based care model to best meet the needs of clients and collaborated with various community partners to strengthen the emotional well-being of Grand Forks residents through Mental Health Matters and other community initiatives.

The department operates eight regional human service centers and three satellite clinics and provides medically-necessary behavioral health services to vulnerable North Dakotans. The clinics primarily serve individuals with chronic, serious mental illness and substance use disorders, including pregnant women and others who use intravenous drugs.

Other team members provide case management services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, vulnerable adult protective services and other services for older adults, and vocational rehabilitation services to help people with disabilities achieve their employment goals.

NCHSC in Minot employs about 125 team members who serve residents in Burke, Bottineau, McHenry, Mountrail, Pierce, Renville and Ward counties. NEHSC employs about 139 team members and serves residents of Grand Forks, Nelson, Pembina and Walsh counties. The center also has an outreach office in Grafton.

For more information on the state's human service centers, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/.

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