

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | April 22, 2022

## **Human Services and ND National Guard partner to offer early intervention program to service members**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division and the North Dakota National Guard have partnered to provide an evidence-based early intervention program to help reduce the risk of substance use disorders among active service members.

The division, which licenses all substance use disorder treatment programs in the state, recently licensed the NDNG Substance Abuse Program to offer myPrime®, an interactive online training aimed at changing beliefs and attitudes about substance use, preventing harmful behaviors and building resiliency in an individual's military and civilian life. North Dakota is the first state to partner with a military branch on a program like this.

"Our organization is committed to the health and well-being of our soldiers. Programs like this help strengthen the resilience of our service members and let them know that it is okay to ask for help," said Command Sgt. Maj. Derek Heck, NDNG state command sergeant major.

The training can be used for a variety of situations and is available in four, eight and 16-hour intervals. Users can complete it at their own pace on any device including smart phones, tablets, laptops or home computers.

"The flexibility of this online training makes it easier for our service members to actively engage in it on a schedule that fits their military and civilian time commitments," said Amy Ruff, Resilience, Risk Reduction & Suicide Prevention program coordinator for the NDNG.

Service members can refer themselves to the training or be referred by military leadership. Completion of the training also meets any civilian court-related requirement for a driving under the influence or minor in possession of alcohol violation.

"We are grateful for this unique opportunity to join with the North Dakota National Guard on an initiative that provides resources and support to service members to help enhance their well-being and resiliency," said Pamela Sagness, director of the department's Behavioral Health Division.

The department and the NDNG have collaborated on several behavioral health initiatives for service members and their families. The department's regional human service centers became in-state Tricare providers, which allowed individuals with Tricare coverage to receive behavioral health services sooner without prior authorization. The two entities were also recognized by the U.S. Army with the [2020 Army Community Partnership Award](#) for efforts to mitigate the risk of suicide by service members.

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The 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 and access to quality services. It 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](http://www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov).

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