

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 23, 2022

Human Services and UND Center for Rural Health announce virtual resource and training center to support direct care workforce

BISMARCK, N.D. - The North Dakota Department of Human Services and the Center for Rural Health at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences today announced the launch of the North Dakota Qualified Service Provider (QSP) Hub – a virtual resource and training center developed to support the state’s direct care workforce.

The hub will support individuals enrolled as qualified service providers with the department. These direct care workers provide in-home and community-based services to older adults and individuals with disabilities, including traumatic brain injuries and dementia.

“Our goal with the hub is to support those who make it possible for older adults and others with physical disabilities to live at home and in our communities,” said the department’s Adult and Aging Services Division Director Nancy Nikolas Maier. “Qualified service providers work hard to provide personal care services, prepare meals, help with housekeeping and other chores, and more. The hub can help them be successful as service providers.”

Maier said stakeholders and the department have discussed the need for training and support to help QSPs be successful and to support the growth of in-home and community-based services in the state, which is a key department priority.

Rebecca Quinn who is the program director for the Center for Rural Health explained the hub’s role: “The ND QSP Hub is a customer support center for the state’s direct care workforce. Individuals can contact us for assistance via email, phone and online. Our team is prepared to offer personalized support.”

The ND QSP Hub can assist providers with questions about enrollment requirements, billing, the electronic visit verification system, employee recruitment and retention strategies, and small business operations, including marketing; and will provide training, support and technical assistance to increase the number of direct service providers.

Quinn’s team is already accepting calls. The ND QSP Hub is staffed Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT, and is supported by a full-time coordinator and additional staff.

Service providers can contact the ND QSP Hub at (701) 777-3432, 711 (TTY), info@ndqsphub.org, or online at www.ndqsphub.org.

-MORE-

ND announces new customer service hub for direct care workforce – Page 2

There are currently 983 individual qualified service providers and 138 qualified service provider agencies in North Dakota who can receive support from the hub.

North Dakota participates in a workforce collaborative through the federal Administration on Community Living and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. While a few states are already doing this, at the federal level, officials are recognizing the need to support individuals and agencies providing in-home and community-based long-term support services.

The department chose to partner with UND's Center for Rural Health because it already operates a resource center to assist service providers to obtain their National Provider Identifier for Medicaid, connect to Therap, the case management system the department uses, and use the Electronic Visit Verification System. UND has been providing that support for over 18 months.

In preparation for the launch of the hub, UND sent a survey out to individual and agency QSPs to gather their input on their needs and how best to support them.

Quinn said, "We hope this leads to a stronger support system among QSPs and provides a voice for these service providers that include individual independent contractors and agencies."

The hub is funded through the department's Money Follows the Person (MFP) program capacity funds. The funds help states with MFP programs to strengthen in-home and community-based service systems so that individuals with disabilities can live as independently as possible in the community with support.

The hub grew out of an initiative involving the department's MFP program, tribal nations in North Dakota, UND's Center for Rural Health and North Dakota State University's Department of Public Health. The MFP Tribal Initiative focuses on strengthening the caregiving infrastructure by developing QSP agencies so that more culturally responsive care services are available to tribal members.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer
N.D. Department of Human Services
701-328-4933 | hsteffl@nd.gov

Jena Pierce, Communications Manager
Center for Rural Health, UND School of Medicine & Health Sciences
(701) 777-4205 direct | jena.pierce@UND.edu