

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 5, 2022

Human Services highlights prevention resources during National Prevention Week

BISMARCK, N.D. – National Prevention Week is May 9-14. The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division, along with community partners, are raising awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and positive mental health and resources that are available to all North Dakotans.

"Everyone has a role in creating a healthier North Dakota. Prevention should weave into all aspects of our lives, including where and how we live, learn, work and play," said Laura Anderson, assistant division director. "National Prevention Week is a good reminder about the need to invest in and support prevention efforts."

Supported by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Prevention Week includes daily themes that focus on major mental health and substance use topics:

- Monday, May 9 – Strengthening Community Resilience: Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention
- Tuesday, May 10 – Preventing Substance Use and Promoting Mental Health in Youth
- Wednesday, May 11 – Preventing Suicide: Everyone Plays a Role
- Thursday, May 12 – The Talent Pipeline: Enhancing the Prevention Workforce
- Friday, May 13 – Prevention is Everywhere: Highlighting Efforts Across Settings and Communities
- Saturday, May 14 – Celebrating Prevention Heroes

With the state's continued focus on prevention, North Dakota has seen some positive outcomes. According to the 2021 North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, in the last 20 years, alcohol use among high school students went from 59.2% in 2001 to 23.7% in 2021, and the percentage of high school students who smoked cigarettes dropped from 35.3% in 2001 to 5.9% in 2021.

Anderson said effective prevention not only saves lives, but is also cost-effective, saving up to \$64 dollars for every dollar invested.

The division provides funding to 28 communities, including four tribal communities, to implement data-driven, evidence-based prevention strategies targeting either underage drinking, adult binge drinking, suicide or opioid abuse and overdose. These communities cover 47 of the state's 53 counties.

Parents and caregivers can find conversation starters and other resources to help them support the behavioral health of their children at parentslead.org or by following Parents Lead on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) or [Pinterest](#).

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Additional prevention resources are available year around on the division’s website at behavioralhealth.nd.gov/prevention.

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. Learn more about the work of the Behavioral Health Division at behavioralhealth.nd.gov.

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