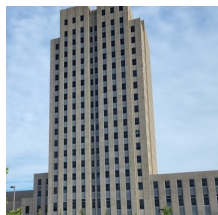


## Stories in this Newsletter



Interim Human Services Committee



System of Care Work



EAC Training



Children's Mental Health Acceptance

## Interim Human Services Committee and Children's Mental Health

The interim Human Services Committee met on April 8, 2024. One of the studies that the interim committee is tasked with studying is in regard to children's mental health. The study had parameters that were as follows: "Study the increasing need for inpatient mental health care for children and whether there are adequate home- and community-based care and outpatient services for the number of children and the location of need." NDFFCMH has attempted to prioritize focusing on home and community-based mental health services, as inpatient mental health services often become necessary because of a lack of home and community-based services.

The hearing of April 8 had Pam Sagness (Director of the Behavioral Health Division of ND Health and Human Services) and Dr. Dan Cramer (Clinical Director of the Regional Human Service Centers), presented information to the committee about the state of children's behavioral health. We will cover some of what they had to say in [their testimony](#).

First, Sagness and Cramer highlighted the existence of B-HERO, which is a technical support service for schools' Behavioral Health Resource Coordinators regarding trauma, suicide prevention, multi-tiered systems of support, PREPaRe Crisis, Restorative Conferences, Bullying Prevention, and more.

They also discussed the ND Behavioral Health School Grants, which are to help address gaps in the behavioral health system by: identifying prevention and early intervention services, supporting clinical and treatment services, and filling in gaps in service coverage. The school districts and special education units which have applied for 2023-2024 funding are: Bismarck, Carrington, Dickinson, Fargo, Fessenden-Bowdon, Grand Forks, GST Special Education Unit, Jamestown, Kensal, Lake Region, Mandan, Minot, New Rockford-Sheyenne, Oliver-Mercer Special Education Unit, Pingree-Buchanan, Rural Cass Special Education Unit, Sheyenne Valley Special Education Unit, Souris Valley Special Education Unit, South Valley Special Education Unit, Upper Valley Special Education Unit, Wahpeton, West Fargo.

They provided an update on the Voluntary Treatment Program, which provides an out of home treatment services for Medicaid-eligible children with a SED without requiring parents to relinquish custody. The program pays for maintenance costs of the treatment episode and Medicaid will pay for the treatment episode and Medicaid will pay for the treatment costs in accordance with the state plan. Currently 3 youth are being served, with 4 pending applications.

The Medicaid 1915(i) State Plan amendment was discussed, which is an amendment to North Dakota's Medicaid plan, allowing for an immense array of behavioral health services to North Dakotans in Medicaid and Medicaid Expansion. The updates for the children and youth portion of the 1915(i) are as follows:

- Care Coordination for children and youth is now available in every community in North Dakota
- Additional services such as Supported Education and Family Peer Support are growing into previously unserved areas.
- Two school districts are enrolled as 1915(i) providers (Bismarck and Grand Forks), with Fargo in process to becoming a provider.
- The Central Regional Education Association has also enrolled to provide 1915 (i) Care Coordination

## North Dakota System of Care Work



In Devils Lake (region 3) and Bismarck (region 7), the System of Care Steering Committees have had in-person meetings. Steering Committee members were given an update on the demographics of children and youth served in the two regions receiving federal System of Care dollars. Up through December 31, 2023 West Central HSC (Bismarck) served 58 youth and Lake Region HSC (Devils Lake) served 33 youth. The median age range was between 13-15 years old. The majority of youth experienced major depressive and other mood disorders, and behavioral and emotional disorders.

The Department of Health and Human Services will begin rolling out grant dollars for community providers to expand their program and service delivery, addressing known service gaps.

## Education Advocacy Consortium-NDFFCMH Co-Presents Training



NDFFCMH staff co-presented with a youth advocate to bring awareness to children and youth mental health and how it impacts school performance and attendance.

[Like much of the country](#), NDFFCMH and our system partners have observed a significant increase in school attendance and school discipline issues since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Children's positive mental health has likely declined since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and systemic challenges in the school and mental health systems are probably exacerbating struggles children and their families are having. When children's mental health are struggling, challenges surrounding going and staying in school can happen. If school attendance issues are occurring, below are some tips:

Prevention is key (develop their positives)

- Friends
- Academics
- Relationship with teachers

Document, Document, Document!

Investigate what the child sees as a problem

Try to build a team that will accept the child and work with you and your family

Keep in communication with school

Let the school know of any difficulties or information that may be useful

Try to get outside help (medical, OT, social service, etc.)

Request a Functional Behavioral Assessment

Start Child Find process

Expand evaluation net to cover "all areas of suspected disability"

The Education Advocacy Consortium is a collective of family organizations, including NDFFCMH, that represent the family voice in disability issues for North Dakota. Each fall and spring the Education Advocacy Consortium hosts trainings on various topics that are important to families who are raising children with disabilities. For more information, please visit <https://pathfinder-nd.org/>.

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## May is Mental Health Awareness Month; 1st Week of May is Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and the first week of May is Children's Mental Health Acceptance week. The following is information provided by our national organization, National Federation of Families.

"We're excited to announce the 2024 Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week theme, "Lighting the Path to Social Justice for Children and Youth." But what is social justice? What does it mean for individuals, communities, and systems? The foundation of social justice is living the "golden rule," treating others the way you would like to be treated—at every level.

As individuals, social justice means accepting each person for who they are—celebrating and embracing the diversity of our fellow man. It means accepting every member of our communities—welcoming their participation and contributions in all groups. At the system level, it means accepting that each person has their own unique strengths and goals—shaping supports and resources to be responsive to each person's dreams. Learn more about social justice in mental health and substance use systems [here](#)."

"Each year Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week gives us the opportunity to shine the light on children and youth—to focus on equity and inclusion for our young people who are impacted by mental health challenges. Only through acceptance, advocacy, and action can we move toward social justice for families and impact social change—beginning with our children and youth."

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