



Children & Family News

June 2005

N.D. Dept. of Human Services' Children & Family Services Division Update

Children & Family Services Conference is July 25-27

The N.D. Department of Human Services' Children and Family Services Division is sponsoring a child welfare conference *Dreams For All Children: Safety, Permanency, And Well Being*, July 25-27, 2005, in Bismarck at the Ramkota Inn.

Social workers, foster parents, and others affiliated with child welfare services are encouraged to attend. Continuing education credits are available for social workers and foster parents.

The opening day will include a welcome from department Executive Director Carol K. Olson; an overview of safety, permanency and well being by division director Paul Ronningen; the Safety Keynote: "A Timeline For Survival," featuring Teena Patenaude, and a presentation on "The Historical And Cultural Environment Of Children On the Great Plains," by Dakota Goodhouse.

July 25 afternoon workshop sessions include: assessing sexual abuse; reducing restraints and seclusions; locating and engaging family members of children placed in out-of-home care; managing wraparound services; the independent living program; and anxiety disorders. In the evening, Rev. W.C. Martin will share his personal and congregational experience in fostering and adopting children from the Texas foster care system.

Martin will provide the Permanency Keynote: "How To Save A Generation Through The Adoption And Fostering Of Abused, Neglected, And Hard To Place Children" on July 26. This will be followed by a cultural considerations panel discussion and a presentation titled: "Pieces Of Our Past."

Afternoon sessions on July 26 include: safety threats and safety plans; family group decision making; legal issues in

assessments and appeals; partnering with the faith community; PRIDE Model outcomes; a foster youth panel; secondary trauma; adult survivors panel; Adults Adopting Special Kids program; and managing visits and helping children maintain family connections.

The concluding day of the conference will feature the Well Being Keynote: "Sharing Power With The People - Family Group Conferencing As A Democratic Experiment," by Lisa Merkel-Holguin. An awards brunch will follow honoring four people for their significant roles in making the dreams of children a reality. A discussion about changing practices through the Children and Family Service Reviews follows.

The registration fee is \$100 and includes materials, the Tuesday luncheon, Wednesday brunch, and refreshment breaks. One-day registration (\$50) is available. The registration deadline is July 15, 2005.

For information, contact the Children and Family Services Training Center at UND, 701-777-0789 or view the brochure at <http://www.cfstc.und.edu/text/59856%20Dreams.pdf>.

N.D. Passes IV-E Review

North Dakota has been notified that the state passed its federal Title IV-E review. The state participated in the federal review of payment and program standards in May. Title IV-E provides funds for foster care payments for eligible children, adoption assistance payments, and related administrative and training costs. A team of six federal officials joined eight North Dakotans to review 80 randomly selected case files for eligibility errors and court order errors, and to assure appropriate expenditures. Acceptable foster care payments include the cost of providing food,

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IV-E Review - continued

shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, reasonable travel home for visitation, and insurance for foster children.

All states undergo the reviews. N.D. passed its initial review in 2002 when eight errors were allowed. In this round, states could have no more than four errors. The department is very pleased that North Dakota once again passed the stringent review.

States that fail face fiscal sanctions (fewer federal funds). North Dakota's foster care program is already facing funding challenges because the Federal Financial Participation (FFP) rate in Title IV-E is based on a state's federal Medicaid matching rate (FMAP). North Dakota's FMAP has decreased as the state's per capita income has grown.

North Dakota is providing additional documentation on one case and expects to learn the formal review results soon.

Partners Collaborate on ND OneStop Center

The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) at Minot State University is implementing a planning project designed to make it easier for families of children with both developmental disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders to get the supports they need. *ND OneStop* seeks to better align two different service delivery systems. The project supports a statewide partnership of agencies that currently serve these families: the North Dakota Department of Human Services, the System of Care State Review Team and Task Force, the Federation of Families of Children with Mental Health Challenges, The Arc, ND Protection & Advocacy, Family-to-Family, Cultural Diversity Resources, various tribal social service agencies, and families.

"Currently families of children with intellectual disabilities or mental health challenges may find the supports they need for raising their children. If a child has BOTH conditions, a family faces the daunting task of working with multiple systems that may each offer some support in a different way,"

said Cathy Haarstad, *ND OneStop* project director.

"There are gaps between existing resources and families' needs. This is a problem for families as well as service providers who want to coordinate services," she said. "We intend to develop a statewide plan for system change with input from families, human service agencies, and legislators, and to build consensus for implementing the plan."

The project began September 30, 2004. Since that time, project staff and the state review team have met with consultants to review how North Dakota currently uses funding to serve the target population and how funding could be braided through the *ND OneStop Center* to best serve families. Project staff recently completed an analysis of the capacity of the department's eight regional Human Service Centers to use information technology to serve families. Recommendations will be shared with the state review team.

Project staff have also conducted focus groups interviewing case managers and care coordinators through Disability Services, juvenile justice, the partnership project, hospitals, private psychologists, and residential treatment centers. Family focus groups were also conducted in Fargo and Bismarck. Data from these interviews are being analyzed and will be shared with the state review team and task force.

Planners recently learned that the federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities will not be able to fund plans once they are developed, and the state review team may consider other funding sources. Haarstad said project staff will be attending a technical assistance conference in July and hope to learn about additional funding sources for plan implementation.

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