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Contacts: JoAnne Hoesel, Director of the Division of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, 701-328-8924; Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer, 701-328-4933.

Social science research is thriving in N.D. *Experts to gather in Bismarck to network and share results*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Social science research conducted in North Dakota is accelerating and is beginning to shape services. On May 15, researchers, clinicians, graduate students, state agency professionals, and others are gathering in Bismarck-Mandan to strengthen collaboration, learn about research projects, and receive training to ensure that the rights of people who participate in research are protected. The North Dakota Department of Human Services is sponsoring the pre-conference event in conjunction with its Third Annual Clinical Forum on Mental Health: Turning Knowledge into Practice.

The department's Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division Director, JoAnne Hoesel, said the effort complements a national initiative aimed at bridging academic research and practice.

"It is important for us to find ways to shorten the time it takes for research results to be used in the delivery of services and to provide opportunities for clinicians to inform researchers of their successes in service delivery," Hoesel said.

The department's Institutional Review Board (IRB) members organized the pre-conference sessions, which feature training by federal representatives from the Office of Human Research Protections and highlight a cross-section of research completed or underway in North Dakota.

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Faculty members of several North Dakota universities will share information about their research. Rebecca Salvesson, Ed.D., University of Mary, examined the life experiences of seven individuals with chronic mental illness. North Dakota State University professor Kevin M. Thompson, Ph.D., analyzed treatment outcomes of juvenile drug court participants and substance abusing juveniles not involved in the program. Vicki Michels, Ph.D., and Deborah Olson, Ph.D., of Minot State University examined perceptions about foster care placements.

In addition, Mariah Tenamoc, Ph.D., lead research analyst for the N.D. Department of Human Services, will preview a proposal to study the outcomes of an evidence-based practice for treating adults who have both serious mental illness and chronic substance abuse disorder. Tenamoc chairs the department's Institutional Review Board, which is comparable to university IRBs.

The department serves many vulnerable individuals, and its review board offers additional protection for clients and staff involved in studies. Conference attendees will receive information about the department's IRB application process. The review board routinely assists researchers because the department values quality research and the promise it holds for enhancing services to clients.

Information, including research application forms and abstracts of 43 completed projects, is posted on the department's Web site at www.nd.gov/humanservices/info/research/index.html.

Information about the entire clinical forum conference can be found at www.conted.und.edu/clinicalforum.

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