

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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**ND Medicaid Program offers new service to help people manage
chronic health conditions**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services announced today that its Medicaid program is offering a new service to help recipients manage chronic health conditions. The disease management program called *Experience HealthND* is a voluntary program for Medicaid recipients who have asthma, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or congestive heart failure. About 3,000 individuals may qualify for the service.

“This program is intended to help people better manage their own health by providing important health information, telephone access to professional nurses, and ongoing support,” said program administrator Tania Hellman, R.N. “The goal is to help patients understand and comply with the treatment plan provided by their healthcare providers.”

The department has a contract with U.S. Care Management Inc., formerly known as Specialty Disease Management, to provide a 24-hour toll free health information line and to manage a team of nurse care managers based in North Dakota. The registered nurses are available for face-to-face and telephone care coordination, patient education, and monitoring services.

U.S. Care Management Inc. is collaborating with the University of North Dakota’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences and College of Nursing to conduct continuing education for healthcare providers and to augment outreach and information services for Medicaid recipients.

Medicaid recipients with chronic conditions received letters about the new service earlier this month. The program is available statewide. To participate, Medicaid recipients must call 1-866-435-4306. Participation is free.

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“People who understand their health conditions and who take steps to effectively manage their conditions may reduce complications, emergency room visits, and future hospitalizations. This, in turn, can conserve healthcare resources,” Hellman said.

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved North Dakota’s Medicaid State Plan Amendment and waiver application in December 2006. These steps were necessary to access federal funding for disease management services.

The North Dakota Medicaid program is a federal and state funded program that pays for approved health care services for qualifying low-income individuals. In June 2007, there were about 50,000 Medicaid recipients in North Dakota. Fifty-one percent were children under the age of 21, 16 percent of the recipients had disabilities, and 12 percent were senior adults.

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