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**N.D.'s Developmental Center Earns Accreditation**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The Council on Quality and Leadership has notified Gov. John Hoeven and the North Dakota Department of Human Services that the state's Developmental Center in Grafton, N.D., has earned a four year accreditation/partnership agreement.

Developmental Center Superintendent Alex Schweitzer said, "The accreditation from the Council validates the high quality services and supports that Developmental Center staff provide to clients residing not only at the Center, but in communities."

Schweitzer said the designation recognizes more than health and safety standards. The Council, he said, focuses on the achievement of individual consumer goals and promotes community inclusion and quality of life for people with disabilities.

He said reviewers commended the Developmental Center for its active leadership of the Statewide Transition to Community Task Force, which is working to relocate about 30 residents to community settings by the end of 2009.

The Council also applauded the Developmental Center for its Clinical Assistance, Respite, and Evaluation Services (CARES), a consultative program that supports consumers in community settings. CARES staff work with local providers and community resources to prevent crises that could cause some people with disabilities to lose jobs, community housing, and family and other social contacts.

North Dakota's Developmental Center currently provides structured residential services and other specialized services to about 127 individuals. It remains the safety net provider for people with cognitive impairments whose needs may temporarily exceed community resources. Services are based upon individual consumer needs and personal goals.

The state-operated residential center first attained accreditation from the Council (formerly the Accreditation Council on Services for People with Disabilities) in 1989 when about 250 people resided there. The designation follows site visits by reviewers who met with staff, consumers, consumers' relatives or guardians, advocates, and community members, to evaluate personal outcomes of clients, responsiveness of services to individual needs, community participation, as well as health, safety and welfare practices.

During the next four years, Schweitzer said, the Developmental Center will continue quality improvement efforts including assisting willing consumers to transition to community settings, and will benefit from training and consultation provided by the Council.