

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Department of Human Services Flood Response Efforts

BISMARCK, ND – At Governor Hoeven’s direction, North Dakota Department of Human Services employees are responding to spring flooding and providing support to vulnerable individuals and other state residents.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND SHELTERS

- **MENTAL HEALTH AT SHELTERS** - Mental health professionals from the Department’s regional human service centers in Grand Forks, Fargo, and Bismarck are on-site at American Red Cross shelters.
- Human Service Centers continue to staff their client crisis lines. Human Service Center contact information is available on-line at www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc/
- The Department is a liaison to the ND Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and is available if support is needed in shelter efforts and securing needed resources. The Department remains in contact with state and local emergency operation centers to identify and communicate needs and line up additional resources as needed.

HEALTH CARE FOR LOW-INCOME ELDERLY AND DISABLED MEDICAID CLIENTS

- Staff have requested and expect to receive federal approval to waive paper work usually required when transferring Medicaid clients from one facility to another. This will keep the focus on client safety and care, and ensure that funding to pay for care follows Medicaid clients evacuated from nursing homes or other care facilities to unaffected facilities.
- The Department has asked for and expects federal approval to simplify the eligibility process for Medicaid and the Healthy Steps Children’s Health Insurance Program. This temporarily waives documentation and other requirements for low-income individuals impacted by flooding who evacuate without important papers and apply for health coverage through these two government-funded health coverage programs.

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SAFETY OF VULNERABLE PERSONS

- **SHELTERING VULNERABLE** - The Developmental Center in Grafton is preparing to shelter 75 clients and 25 caregivers who are being evacuated from Friendship Incorporated facilities in Fargo. In addition, the State Hospital has identified space to serve people who may be evacuated from private in-patient mental health facilities, and has identified housing options for caregivers who accompany them.
- Department human service center case managers, county case managers, and senior citizen programs have contacted elderly and disabled clients to talk to them about their flooding risks, relocation plans, and the importance of having medication and medical equipment ready to go.
- West Central Human Service Center case managers helped temporarily relocate 18 mental health consumers from low-lying apartments and supported housing in Bismarck and addressed their medication needs. The consumers have been able to return home.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY NEEDS

- **FOOD ASSISTANCE** - Department employees are working with federal officials and county social service offices in the 34 counties declared disaster areas to begin replacing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamp) benefits for existing clients affected by flooding so they can buy needed groceries.
- **CHILD CARE** – The Department is working with county social service offices, local child care providers and the Child Care Resource and Referral network to assess the impact to child care facilities and homes in the disaster areas. The focus is on helping parents find child care, and planning for the resources needed to help providers resume caring for children after the emergency. Parents and providers should call 1-800-450-7801.
- **FOSTER CARE** – Department and county social service office employees have already contacted all foster parents in the state to gather contact information in the event families are evacuated. This will help in monitoring whether children in county and state custody are safe and ensures continued regular payments for the care foster parents provide.
- **CHILD SUPPORT** – Customer service staff are assisting with payment and problem resolution and receiving contact information updates at 1-800-231-4255; www.childsupportnd.com, and via e-mail: socscs@nd.gov.