

Stories in this Newsletter



Human Services Committee



Tips for Supporting a Successful School Year



House Panel Advances Bill for Parents' Rights at IEP Meetings



Mental Health Advocacy Network Podcast

Interim Human Services Committee-Children's Mental Health Services



The Interim Human Services Committee met on August 29th in Bismarck. The agenda was full and included a broad overview of the studies before it this interim session: the implementation of previous report recommendations for people needing acute psychiatric and residential mental health services; the study of mental health care for children; a study of child care programs and services; the study of payment rates for intermediate care facilities; and the expansion of federally qualified health care centers.

The children's mental health system study originated as a study that was primarily focused on the needs of children needing psychiatric residential care. That study received advocacy to be broadened to consider the entirety of the mental health system for children.

Carlotta McCleary, Executive Director of the North Dakota Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NDFFCMH), provided education to the committee about the needs of children throughout the children's mental health system. Carlotta said that best practices require that community-based services be available to children before they need hospitalization, and that North Dakota's children's mental health system has significant gaps at every level of care. Carlotta highlighted that recent ND Department of Health and Human Services (ND DHHS) data indicates that only 135 of more than 18,000 children with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) have received ongoing services and supports in North Dakota Human Service Centers and that the children's mental health crisis system are also weak across the state.

To view the Interim Human Services Committee Hearing, you may visit the link [here](#). Minutes from the hearing are also available [here](#).

Tips for Starting the New School Year



SAMHSA, the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, has a great article published by Dr. Sunny Patel about the return to school. Below is an excerpt from this article. There are many more great suggestions for families and educators to try to implement. You may find the full article, "Back to School and Mental Health: Supporting Our Children for a Successful Year Ahead," [here](#).

"Promoting a Healthy Transition

The return to school can be a stressful time, whether it's a child's first day of kindergarten, a transition to middle or high school, or just the end of the freedoms of summer. It's normal for children to feel anxious about these changes. Here's how you can help ease their worries:

- **Communicate:** Encourage your child to express their feelings about going back to school. Acknowledge their fears, make them feel understood, and reassure them that it's perfectly normal to feel anxious about these changes.
- **Create Routines:** A consistent routine fosters a sense of security in children. Establishing a regular sleep schedule, eating healthy meals, and setting aside time for homework and relaxation can help children adjust to the rhythm of the school year.
- **Make Advance Preparations:** If possible, attend any scheduled school orientations. Meeting teachers, locating classrooms, and becoming familiar with the school layout can help students feel more confident on the first day of school. And if there is not a scheduled orientation, make time to visit the school ahead of time to help children familiarize themselves with the environment. It can also be helpful to practice morning routines like getting ready for the bus or identifying routes to school.
- **Encourage In-person Social Interactions:** Facilitate interaction with classmates to rekindle old friendships and make new ones. This may be one of the first years of schooling for many children without the COVID-19 pandemic interrupting normal social interactions. Social relationships can make the transition smoother and more enjoyable."

Disability Scoop: House Panel Advances Bill Clarifying Parents' Rights at IEP Meetings



Per Disability Scoop, a prominent online disability news outlet, there is movement in the United States' Congress toward strengthening parents' rights during the IEP Process.

“The bill would require schools to notify parents before their child’s first IEP meeting each academic year of their right to include experts and other third parties in such meetings. That could mean inviting a lawyer, a therapist or other subject-matter expert or even a family member with knowledge of the child.”

To read more, see [Disability Scoop’s article “House Panel Advances Bill Clarifying Parents’ Rights At IEP Meetings.”](#)

Mental Health Advocacy Network Podcast Released on Youtube



The Mental Health Advocacy Network launched a podcast during 2022. The hosts are Matthew McCleary, Deputy Director for NDDFCMH, and Patrick Kirby, the Founder of Do Good Better Consulting. That podcast has now been uploaded to Youtube. Below are episode listings.

1. MHAN Podcast Episode 0: Pilot Episode
2. MHAN Podcast Episode 1: Everything You Should Know About Your

State Hospital

3. MHAN Podcast Episode 2: An Analysis of the ND Mental Health Crisis Response System (Part 1)
4. MHAN Podcast Episode 3: An Analysis of the ND Mental Health Crisis Response System (Part 2)
5. MHAN Podcast Episode 4: ND CFN President Siobhan Deppa Shares Her Personal and Professional Journey
6. MHAN Podcast Episode 5: Special ND Consumer Family Network Q&A with Dr. Etherington
7. MHAN Podcast Episode 6: ND Behavioral Health 1915(i) Program Administrator Monica Haugen Shares Details
8. MHAN Podcast Episode 7: The Importance of Person-Centered Planning
9. MHAN Podcast Episode 8: Juvenile Justice Reform with Karen Kringlie
10. MHAN Podcast Episode 9: Veterans Services & Suicide Prevention with Guest Tammy Monsebroten
11. MHAN Podcast Episode 10: Safe Places for Homeless Youth and Youth with Disabilities (Fraser Ltd. & Youthworks)
12. MHAN Podcast Episode 11: Special "Best Of" Episode-Our First Ten Episodes

Even though these episodes had been recorded over the last year or two, we think they have held up well. In addition, information gleaned from these episodes are still quite informative about the current strengths and opportunities in the North Dakota mental health system of care.

[So come check us out on Youtube!](#)

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Next Edition: Winter 2024