



# NORTH DAKOTA FEDERATION OF FAMILIES

*For Children's Mental Health*

SPRING 2022

## Stories in this newsletter



Community Expo



Supported Decision-Making



Acute Psychiatric Treatment Committee



Mental Health Awareness Month

## Native American Development Center Community Expo



NDFFCMH staff participated in Native Community Development Inc.'s second Bismarck Metro Community Resource Fair held at Bismarck High School in March.

Many organizations participated in the event, providing information on available resources and programs to help people who are struggling with basic needs, including housing and mental health needs. Attendees were also able to receive free, quality children's clothing in many sizes from Operation Warm.

NDFFCMH shared information and resources to families who have children with mental health needs and promoted NDFFCMH's family and youth peer support services.

Native Inc. is a Native American-led organization that provides culturally holistic services for Native Americans in North Dakota. They provide many services, including: financial education and counseling services, housing assistance and referral, financial lending services, transportation assistance, career development, peer support, cultural programming for youth and adults, and much more. For more information, please visit: <https://www.ndnadc.org>

## Supported Decision-Making Presentation



Matthew McCleary will be presenting information on Supported Decision-Making (SDM) in April.

The transition to adulthood can be nerve wracking for parents and youth alike. Sometimes youth may need a lot of help making decisions and may be at risk for guardianship. North Dakota enacted legislation to give more options to people with disabilities. SDM is a less restrictive alternative to guardianship that allows a person with a disability to retain their decision-making authority by entering a voluntary agreement with a "supporter" (think of them as advisors) who can help in any area of life the person with a disability wants assistance with. The individual being supported and the supporter sign a document called a Supported Decision Making Agreement that spells out what the person with a disability wants assistance with and how. The agreement can be terminated at any time by either party.

For more information about Supported Decision-Making, please visit: <https://www.ndpanda.org/resources/supported-decision-making>

## Schulte Delivers Draft Report for Interim Acute Psychiatric Treatment Committee



Renee Schulte released her findings from her research into the acute psychiatric treatment needs of North Dakota. The Schulte team recommended that a new State Hospital be built, with the capacity of serving between 75-85 people. Schulte and her team found that despite popular opinion, the state has enough psychiatric beds, but it is improperly utilizing them, most particularly in critical access hospitals. The team argued that North Dakota has much work to do to address existing gaps in services, including tailoring the State Hospital for a narrowly defined set of individuals most in need of specialized care or are requiring court-ordered services. In addition, it was recommended that the 8 regional human service centers should tailor their services for those with serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Lastly, Schulte recommended that the state of North Dakota revamp its data collection and reporting practices. Schulte argued that accurate and reliable data related to behavioral health is hard to come by. Schulte argued that an audit of the Department of Human Services will enable better decision-making when expanding services.

## **Mental Health Awareness Month and Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week**



NDFFCMH joins the rest of the United States in raising awareness of mental health during the month of May. Since 1949, the Month of May has observed mental health awareness. During the first week of May, it is Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week.

The color green has been used for the month of May. This year’s theme is “Back to Basics,” which has the goal of providing foundational knowledge about mental health and information about what people can do if their mental health is a cause for concern.

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Next Edition: Summer 2022