Reach for Resilience program launches new website to support ND health care workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

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The North Dakota Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Division has partnered with Sanford Health to respond to pandemic-related stressors for health care workers through a program called Reach for Resilience. In October, this program established a free and confidential 24/7 help line open to all North Dakota health care workers during the pandemic. This month, Reach for Resilience launched a website dedicated to resources supporting wellness at the individual and organizational level in health care, www.Reach4ResilienceND.com.

Health care workers who call the Reach for Resilience help line at 701-365-4920 will get confidential help at whatever level they need. Licensed behavioral health professionals provide support over the phone, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT. FirstLink answers the help line on evenings, weekends and holidays, and offers support and referrals as needed.

Stephanie Schafer, a behavioral health professional on the Reach for Resilience team shared, “Our program is passionate about helping our fellow health care workers at different levels to meet their needs. We are available by phone for those who are feeling overwhelmed and needing someone to talk to in the moment. For those who prefer self-guided options like an article or a mobile app, our website is a great place to start.”

This effort is supported by the Emergency Grants to Address Mental and Substance Use Disorders During COVID-19 federal grant the department's Behavioral Health Division received this summer. The grant also supports mental health and addiction treatment services offered by Agassiz Associates in Grand Forks, Heartview Foundation in Bismarck and Cando and Sharehouse Inc. in Fargo.

"We are grateful for the extraordinary work being done by so many health care workers in North Dakota," said Pamela Sagness, the department's Behavioral Health Division director. "Whether working in an intensive care unit or a care center in rural North Dakota, support is available."

The Reach for Resilience program also reaches out to long-term care facilities, community medical hospitals, clinics and other health care organizations with resources, coping strategies and best practices for building resilient workplaces to support their health care workers during the pandemic.

Individuals interested in learning more about the Reach for Resilience help line can call (701) 365-4920 or visit www.Reach4ResilienceND.com.

Health care workers experiencing a crisis and in need of immediate assistance can call the suicide prevention lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text HOME to 741741.

The Behavioral Health Division is responsible for reviewing and identifying service needs and activities in the state's behavioral health system to ensure health and safety and access to quality services. It establishes quality assurance standards for the licensure of substance use disorder program services and facilities and provides policy leadership in partnership with public and private entities. For more information, visit www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov

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