

North Dakota Behavioral Health Plan

with North Dakota Behavioral Health Planning Council
& Human Services Research Institute



Partners & Purpose

Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) supports the North Dakota Behavioral Health Planning Council (BHPC) and works with service users and families, advocates, providers, administrators, and other North Dakotans to **engage in ongoing system monitoring, planning, and improvements.**



Vision of the Behavioral Health Planning Council

We aspire to a North Dakota where behavioral health is recognized as essential to well-being across the entire lifespan. From childhood through older adulthood, every person is valued and supported through a full continuum of care—delivered at the right time, in the right place, in the right way, and by the right people. Through these services, North Dakotans can thrive—living meaningful, productive, and healthy lives, free from stigma or shame, and sustained by caring, resilient communities.



Behavioral Health System Study

HSRI and the North Dakota Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Division conducted an analysis of the state's behavioral health system, including service use and expenses. The [final report](#) details the findings and provides recommendations.



Plan

Building on the study recommendations, we identify priority goals within each of 13 aims and establish implementation strategies to enhance the comprehensiveness, integration, cost-effectiveness, and recovery orientation of the behavioral health system to meet the community's needs.

Aims

- 1 Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan
- 2 Invest in prevention and early intervention
- 3 Ensure all North Dakotans have timely access to behavioral health services
- 4 Expand and enhance outpatient and community-based service array for adults
- 5 Expand and enhance the outpatient and community-based service array for children, youth, and families
- 6 Strengthen diversion and reentry practices through cross-system collaboration to reduce incarceration, promote community integration, and support justice-involved people
- 7 Engage in targeted efforts to recruit and retain a qualified and competent behavioral health workforce
- 8 Increase access and improve outcomes for rural populations
- 9 Ensure the system reflects its values through person-centered and trauma-informed practices and ensuring access for all
- 10 Encourage and support communities to share responsibility with the state for promoting high-quality services
- 11 Partner with Tribal nations to increase access and improve outcomes for American Indian populations
- 12 Diversify and enhance funding for behavioral health
- 13 Conduct ongoing, system-wide, data-driven monitoring of need and access



www.hsri.org/nd-plan

Understanding the BHPC Project Dashboard



Consensus Ratings

In summer 2025, BHPC members engaged in a consensus rating process to identify the level of progress made to date on each of the strategic plan aims. The process involved an anonymous survey followed by a daylong structured discussion. BHPC members were asked to rate progress along the following scale:

- 1

Not Yet

We have not made any significant progress toward this aim.
- 2

Modest Progress

We have made some steps toward achieving this aim but have not made significant progress.
- 3

Progressing

We have made significant progress but still have a long way to go.
- 4

Well on Our Way

We have made significant progress and are well on our way to achieving this aim.
- 5

Achieved

This aim is nearly or fully achieved.

Active & Completed Goals

Active goals are displayed below the aim and under the following heading: “*The following [Aim Number] goals are active.*” The goal name appears in a horizontal green bar; associated objectives and progress status appear in a list separated by lines:

Goal	
Objectives	Status
Objective title	Listed status
Objective title	Listed status

Completed goals are displayed after active goals in a list with bullet points. Locate completed goals under the following heading: “*The following [Aim Number] goals have been completed.*”

AIM 1

Consensus Rating:
Well on Our Way

Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan

4

The following Aim 1 goals are active:

Develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan

Objectives	Status
Develop a strategic plan based on the recommendations in the 2018 HSRI report that reflects community priorities and contain actionable, feasible strategies for behavioral health systems change.	Complete
Secure funding for ongoing strategic planning support.	Complete
Perform ongoing strategic plan monitoring and revisions as appropriate using quarterly progress reports.	In Progress
Create 2022 strategic plan based on progress to date and lessons learned.	Complete
Strengthen linkages between the BHPC and related stakeholder groups (governmental advisory bodies, coalitions, and community initiatives).	Complete
Update dashboard to reflect Behavioral Health Planning Council feedback	Complete

The following Aim 1 goals have been completed:

- No goals have been completed as of October 2025

AIM 2

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress

Invest in prevention and early intervention

2

The following Aim 2 goals are active:

Develop a comprehensive suicide prevention approach

Objectives	Status
Develop a cross-cutting workgroup (including both public and private entities).	Complete
Develop a suicide prevention logic model to guide Behavioral Health Division suicide prevention activities.	In Progress
Engage with the community to enhance awareness and collaboration around the activities in the suicide prevention logic model.	In Progress

Enhance prevention efforts to support children's behavioral health through Parents Lead

Objectives	Status
Increase resources and tools available to parents/caregivers, professionals, and communities.	In Progress
Enhance communication efforts to increase the use of Parents Lead resources.	In Progress



AIM 2

Reduce underage drinking, adult binge drinking, and related consequences

Objectives	Status
1. Increase implementation of evidence-based and culturally relevant prevention activities at the community level.	In Progress
2. Increase implementation of evidence-based and culturally relevant early intervention activities.	In Progress

The following Aim 2 goals have been completed:

- Expand suicide prevention activities to populations most at risk of dying by suicide (completed in 2025)
- Establish and implement a Suicide Fatality Review Commission to review instances of suicide and recommend policies, protocols, and other actions that work to improve community, service, and system responses to individuals at risk of suicide (completed in 2025)

AIM 3

Ensure all North Dakotans have timely access to behavioral health services

Consensus Rating:
Not Yet



The following Aim 3 goals are active:

Incorporate brain injury screening and referral protocols into community-based behavioral health services

Objectives	Status
Develop a standardized process for brain injury screening and referral.	Complete
Promote brain injury screening across behavioral health community-based programming.	Complete
Incorporate brain injury screening into existing behavioral health programming.	In Progress

The following Aim 3 goals have been completed:

- Establish statewide mobile crisis teams for children and youth in urban areas (completed in 2021)
- Reduce access barriers to behavioral health services for individuals with brain injury (completed in 2023)
- Develop and execute planning, implementation, and communications strategies to establish a 988 behavioral health crisis service line (completed in 2025)
- Enhance the brain injury system of care through the Administration for Community Living State Partnership Program (completed in 2024)



Expand outpatient and community-based service array for adults

Consensus Rating:
Progressing



The following Aim 4 goals are active:

Expand evidence-based, culturally responsive supportive housing

Objectives	Status
Receive technical assistance through the Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program.	Complete
Increase access to supportive housing in rural areas.	Complete
Establish quality standards for all supportive housing services in the state.	Complete
Engage in evaluation and continuous quality improvement to support sustainability of supportive housing services.	Complete
Finance additional permanent supportive housing.	In Progress
Examine available data to understand community needs for supportive housing and other housing supports	In Progress



Establish a formalized training and certification process for peer support specialists

Objectives	Status
Designate personnel to oversee formalized training and credentialing process.	Complete
Establish a formalized training and credentialing process based on local and national best practice that includes endorsements for specific sub-groups	In Progress
Establish endorsements for American Indian peer services.	In Progress
Establish an endorsement foreign-born peer services.	Complete
Establish a training and credentialing process for parent/caregiver peer services.	Complete
Establish endorsement for youth peers.	In Progress
Establish endorsement for brain injury peer support.	Complete
Establish endorsement for military peer support.	Complete

Establish standards for integration of peer support into the behavioral health system

Objectives	Status
Consult with local and national experts in peer support to establish the scope, audience, and topic areas covered by the standards.	In Progress
Establish standards for integration of peer support into the behavioral health system.	Pending

Establish a state Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) certification program and certify all eight regional Human Service Centers (public behavioral health clinics) as CCBHCs

Objectives	Status
Establish a state CCBHC certification program aligned with federal requirements and best practice.	In Progress
Certify CCBHCs throughout the state of North Dakota	In Progress
Secure a state plan amendment or demonstration waiver to sustainably fund CCBHCs	In Progress

The following Aim 4 goals have been completed:

- Provide targeted case management services based on assessed need, with a focus on enhancing self-sufficiency and connecting to natural supports and appropriate services (completed in 2021)

AIM 5

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress

2

Expand and enhance the outpatient and community-based service array for children, youth, and families

The following Aim 5 goals are active:

Develop a sustainable infrastructure to support the System of Care approach for North Dakota children and families

Objectives	Status
Establish and convene a local steering committee in each of the two implementation regions.	In Progress
Develop governance structure for System of Care.	In Progress
Build strong and effective partnerships with youth and families through engagement with advocacy groups and provision of family peer support training.	In Progress
Identify collaborative contacts and opportunities to partner in tribal nations. Partnerships activities will be ongoing and reflected in objectives throughout this aim. These include Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidasta Arikara Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.	Complete
Complete a needs assessment addressing gaps in service delivery for children and families to be served.	Complete
Develop a System of Care Funding Structure and Sustainability plan.	In Progress

AIM 5

Increase access to high-quality and culturally appropriate services for children and their families in the identified System of Care regions

Objectives	Status
BHD and two regional, publicly funded behavioral health clinics will partner on implementing grant data requirements and build upon current youth and family services and supports in two identified System of Care regions.	Complete
Enter into partnerships between BHD and private agencies in the WCHSC and LRHSC regions to enhance current services and fill gaps in children's behavioral health continuum of care.	Complete
Expand culturally responsive, evidence-based, and trauma-informed wraparound services for children and families in the System of Care regions to lay the groundwork for statewide expansion.	In Progress
Establish fidelity standards and engage in evaluation and continuous quality improvement to apply to all wraparound services in the state.	In Progress

Expand school-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment services

Objectives	Status
Maximize opportunities for Medicaid reimbursement of school-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment services	Complete
Develop and disseminate a tool for schools to use in developing comprehensive behavioral health supports	Complete
Provide grant funding to schools to address gaps along the behavioral health continuum of care	In Progress
Engage Behavioral Health Resource Coordinators in each school in North Dakota to address behavioral health in schools	In Progress
Offer free, evidence-based, online, virtual, mental health and suicide prevention training for school personnel and students across North Dakota	Complete

The following Aim 5 goals have been completed:

- Establish funding and full-time staff to support the development of System of Care for Children with complex needs and their families (completed in 2023)
- Establish a residential substance use treatment program for pregnant and parenting women (completed in 2025)

AIM 6

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress

2

Strengthen diversion and reentry practices through cross-system collaboration

The following Aim 6 goals are active:

Implement training on trauma-informed approaches—including vicarious trauma and self-care—for all criminal justice staff

Objectives	Status
Select trauma training curricula.	Complete
Develop internal staff resources to help move the DOCR from trauma-sensitive to trauma-responsive and trauma-informed.	Complete
Secure buy-in and commitment from Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) divisions.	Complete
Implement trauma screenings in DOCR prisons and use the screening data to develop an evidence-guided trauma treatment program.	In Progress
Create a detailed plan for sustainability for trauma-reform projects to be integrated in the DOCR strategic plan.	Complete

Review jail capacity for behavioral health needs identification, support, and referral, and create a plan to fill gaps

Objectives	Status
Obtain buy-in from local jails to examine and address behavioral health needs.	Complete
Conduct a review of behavioral health identification, support, and referral capacity in jails.	Complete
Create a plan to address gaps based on review of behavioral health needs identification, support, and referral capacity.	Complete
Implement universal mental health and substance use disorder screening tools in at least one jail in each HSC region.	Complete
Strengthen referral pathways between jails and behavioral health clinics	In Progress



AIM 6

Enhance brain injury support capacity within the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Objectives	Status
Secure funding for implementing training, screening, and referral support for brain injury within DOCR	Complete
Develop a brain injury screening implementation plan and data tracking plan with input from NDBIN, DOCR, DHHS-BHD, treatment providers, individuals with lived experience, and their family members	In Progress
Implement a brain injury training curriculum for DOCR	Pending
Implement a support and referral protocol to provide resource facilitation during community reentry	Pending

The following Aim 6 goals have been completed:

- Implement a statewide Crisis Intervention Team training initiative for law enforcement, other first responders, and jail and prison staff (completed in 2024)

AIM 7

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress

Engage in targeted efforts to recruit and retain a qualified and competent behavioral health workforce*

2

* Note: The “behavioral health workforce” encompasses all licensed and unlicensed staff providing prevention, early intervention, treatment, services, or supports to people with mental health conditions, substance use disorders, or brain injury.

The following Aim 7 goals are active:

Establish a statewide peer support organization as an alliance to expand and strengthen the peer support workforce

Objectives

Status

Establish the Peer Support Association of North Dakota as a peer-run 501 c3 nonprofit corporation.

In Progress

Expand and strengthen the peer workforce through resources and trainings.

In Progress

Expand and strengthen the behavioral health workforce through the Training Academy for Addiction Professionals

Objectives

Status

Create an addiction professionals pipeline at universities by providing scholarships and expanding training.

In Progress

Support addiction counselor trainees while in training with a living wage.

In Progress

Build capacity by increasing training sites and clinical supervisors.

In Progress

Establish a pilot to create a seamless pathway to licensure for members of rural, disadvantaged, and diverse populations - including American Indian participants - who can remain in in their communities throughout their education

In Progress

The following Aim 7 goals have been completed:

- Develop and implement a Behavioral Health Workforce strategy based on community summits and national best practices (completed in 2024)
- Develop a program for recruitment and retention support to assist with attracting and retaining skilled providers (completed in 2022)
- Expand loan repayment programs for behavioral health students working in areas of need (completed in 2024)



AIM 8

**Increase access and improve outcomes
for rural populations**

Consensus Rating:
Progressing

3

There are no active Aim 8 goals.

The following Aim 8 goals have been completed:

- Increase the types of services available through telebehavioral health (completed in 2025)
- Enhance capacity of community providers to provide telebehavioral health services through education and awareness (completed in 2024)
- Enhance mobile crisis capacity & reach by providing technology, training, & telebehavioral health crisis response through law enforcement entities in rural areas (completed in 2025)

AIM 9

Consensus Rating:
Progressing

3

Ensure the system reflects its values through person-centered and trauma-informed practices and ensuring access for all

The following Aim 9 goals are active:

Develop and initiate action on a statewide plan to enhance overall commitment to person-centered thinking, planning, and practice

Objectives	Status
Apply for technical assistance to support statewide plan development and initiation.	Complete
Designate an entity to facilitate the development and initiation of statewide plan to enhance person-centered thinking, planning, and practice.	Complete
Engage with public stakeholders to outline the importance of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice and inform the statewide plan development.	Complete
Build capacity among HHS leadership and administration on person-centered thinking, planning, and practice.	Complete
Conduct a cross-system organizational self-assessment of person-centered thinking, planning, and practice.	In Progress
Develop and execute action plans to enhance the Behavioral Health Division's commitment to person-centered thinking, planning, and practice based on the self-assessments.	In Progress

Build provider awareness in responsiveness to serving foreign-born populations

Objectives	Status
Provide responsiveness training to providers serving foreign-born populations.	In Progress



AIM 9

The following Aim 9 goals have been completed:

- Convene behavioral health leaders in foreign-born communities to understand and identify community-specific strengths, needs, and priorities, and identify opportunities to partner with HHS (completed in 2023)
- Through consultation between the Behavioral Health Division and the Community Engagement Unit, identify populations currently underserved by behavioral health program and initiatives, and strategies for promoting health for those underserved populations (completed in 2023)
- Fund ethnic, faith, and community-based organizations serving foreign-born communities to provide behavioral health programming that builds on community specific strengths, needs, and priorities (completed in 2025)



AIM 10

Encourage and support communities to share responsibility with the state for promoting high-quality services

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress



The following Aim 10 goals are active:

Provide support and resources to enhance lived experience involvement in behavioral health advocacy, programs, and initiatives

Objectives	Status
Fund a community-based organization to provide support and resources to enhance lived experience involvement in behavioral health advocacy, programs, and initiatives.	Complete
Provide support and resources to enhance lived experience involvement of adults in behavioral health programs and initiatives.	In Progress

The following Aim 10 goals have been completed:

- Include dedicated trainings and sessions at the state Behavioral Health Conference on advocacy skills and partnerships with advocacy communities (completed in 2023)



AIM 11

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress

Partner with Tribal nations to increase access and improve outcomes for American Indian populations

2

The following Aim 11 goals are active:

Establish a coordinated strategy within HHS (between BHD, CEU, and other relevant divisions) to support and partner on initiatives that are responsive to Tribal communities' priorities and needs.

Objectives	Status
Establish a coordinated strategy within HHS (between BHD, CEU, and other relevant divisions) to support and partner on initiatives that are responsive to Tribal communities' priorities and needs.	In Progress

The following Aim 11 goals have been completed:

- Convene behavioral health leaders in Tribal nations and Urban Indian communities to understand and identify community-specific strengths, needs, and priorities, and identify opportunities to partner with HHS (completed in 2023)
- Through the System of Care Initiative, create sustainable funding pathways for Tribal nations to provide behavioral health programming for children, adolescents, and young adults and their families that builds on community-specific strengths, needs, and priorities (completed in 2025)

AIM 12

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress

Diversify and enhance funding for behavioral health

2

The following Aim 12 goals are active:

Establish 1915(i) Medicaid state plan amendments to expand community-based services for key populations

Objectives	Status
Secure legislative approval for the 1915(i) state plan amendments	Complete
Draft 1915(i) state plan amendments	Complete
Submit 1915(i) state plan amendments to CMS for approval	Complete
Provide guidance and support to increase participation in the 1915(i)	In Progress

Establish peer services as reimbursed service in the Medicaid state plan and the Medicaid expansion plan

Objectives	Status
Secure legislative approval to add peer support as a Medicaid state plan service.	Complete
If legislative approval is secured, amend the Medicaid state plan to include peer support as a Medicaid state plan service.	In Progress
Include peer support as covered service under Medicaid expansion.	Complete
Amend the Medicaid state plan to include long-term remission monitoring which can be provided by a peer support specialist.	In Progress

The following Aim 12 goals have been completed:

- Develop an organized system for identifying and responding to behavioral health funding opportunities (completed in 2023)

AIM 13

Consensus Rating:
Modest Progress

Conduct ongoing, system-wide, data-driven monitoring of need and access

2

The following Aim 13 goals are active:

Review epidemiological data collection and analysis processes and revise to ensure they reflect best practice in identifying and tracking variations in access and outcomes

Objectives	Status
Conduct a review of epidemiological data collection and analysis processes	Complete
Create HHS guidance on best practice in data collection to support identifying and tracking variations in access and outcomes	In Progress

Align state and local data systems to support system goals of quality, transparency, and community health

Objectives	Status
Establish a Quality and Technical Services team within the Behavioral Health Division	Complete
Modernize the Behavioral Health Division data infrastructure through the creation of a data warehouse and establishment of a data governance framework	In Progress
Modernize the electronic health record system for HHS clinics	In Progress
Develop and implement a BHD-wide quality framework.	In Progress

The following Aim 13 goals have been completed:

- Expand the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup to include data related to mental health in addition to substance use (completed in 2022)