

Initiative to focus on suicide prevention support, training for rural health workers

North Dakota is launching a new rural health care suicide prevention initiative aimed at strengthening follow-up care and closing critical gaps after suicide risk is identified. The effort follows recommendations from the ND Suicide Fatality Review Commission and supports the Zero Suicide framework across rural and tribal health care systems.

The initiative will support rural and tribal health care providers in implementing standardized suicide risk screening, follow-up care after suicide attempts, and improved referral pathways into mental health and behavioral health care services.

"This effort is about turning what we already know into consistent action inside the health system," said ND Health and Human Services (HHS) Commissioner Patrick Traynor. "In rural North Dakota, health care is often the only touchpoint. We have to make sure those moments are not missed opportunities."

The announcement comes during Mental Health Awareness Month and amid continued concern about the growing number of North Dakotans, including students, parents, farmers, veterans and health care workers, experiencing mental health challenges and suicide risk.

Funding opportunity details

The competitive funding opportunity provides approximately \$400,000 in year-one federal funding, with one award expected. It is part of North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation Program, a five-year federal initiative to strengthen rural health systems and improve outcomes.

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, private sector agencies, educational institutions, hospitals and clinics, and other health care providers.

The selected awardee will serve as a statewide implementation support partner, working directly with rural and tribal health care facilities across North Dakota to help operationalize suicide prevention strategies in clinical settings. This includes coordinating training, providing technical assistance, supporting implementation of standardized screening and follow-up protocols and strength-

ening referral pathways into behavioral health care.

The program will support:

- Routine suicide risk screening in clinical settings
- Standardized follow-up protocols after suicide attempts
- Strengthened behavioral health referral pathways
- Integration of ND Suicide Fatality Review Commission recommendations into clinical practice

Why this matters now

This initiative focuses on moving evidence-based suicide prevention practices into consistent use across rural and tribal health care settings by supporting implementation at the system level, where many providers face workforce and resource constraints.

National research shows nearly half of people who die by suicide had contact with a health care provider in the month before their death. In many rural North Dakota communities, a primary care clinic or local emergency room may be the first, and sometimes only, place someone experiencing a mental health crisis seeks help. State leaders say strengthening suicide prevention practices within health care settings can help ensure people are identified and connected to support earlier.

Preliminary state data shows 164 North Dakotans died by suicide in 2025, an average of more than three lives lost each week.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 5.4% of North Dakota adults age 18 and older (approximately 31,000 adults, or one in 20 statewide) reported serious thoughts of suicide during 2023-24, similar to the national average of 5.5% of US adults.

Data from the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) further details the impact on the state's student population:

- 17.5% of North Dakota high school students reported seriously considering suicide in the previous year (approximately 5,500 students, or one in six students).
- 7.4% of North Dakota high school students reported attempting suicide in the previous year (approximately 2,300 students, or one in 13 students).
- The national average for high school suicide attempts stands at 9.5%.

While North Dakota's reported suicide attempt rate

among high school students is lower than the national average, the data represents thousands of students across the state struggling with suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

"We know that youth who have a trusted adult in their lives are less likely to ideate or attempt suicide," Traynor said. "We need all North Dakotans to heed the call to be a trusted adult for our youth."

"This initiative focuses on learning from real-life cases to strengthen our systems, ensuring that the same vulnerabilities are not repeated," said HHS Suicide Prevention Administrator Melissa Markegard. "Through widespread implementation of these strategies, we can identify those in need of support earlier and prevent future tragedies."

The effort also aligns with the national Zero Suicide framework, which emphasizes system-wide responsibility for identifying and responding to suicide risk in health care settings.

If you or someone you know needs help

Research consistently shows that strong, supportive relationships are among one of the most important protective factors for youth and adults. It is especially important to feel connected to family, friends and caring adults in their communities who listen, show up and offer support. North Dakotans can play an important role by checking in with both the young people and adults in their lives, listening without judgment and helping connect them to support when needed.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or suicidal thoughts, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org to connect with the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, available 24/7. Support is free and confidential.

The Rural Health Transformation Program is supported by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the US Department of Health and Human Services (US HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$198,936,969.55 with 100% funded by CMS/US HHS.

Did You Know?

The majority of grass species have chlorophyll to thank for their appealing green color. Chlorophyll is a bright pigment that absorbs both blue and red light especially well. But chlorophyll largely reflects green light, which is why the yards and fields we spend so much time in are green. And chlorophyll does more than influence the color of grass. Chlorophyll also plays an important role in the process of photosynthesis, during which green plants use sunlight to synthesize foods from carbon dioxide and water. According to LiveScience.com, chlorophyll molecules absorb light and then transfer that energy to special molecules that, when stimulated, fire off electrons that produce chemical changes in the plant. That chemical energy is ultimately turned into sugar, highlighting the essential role that chlorophyll plays in lawns' survival.

-metrocreativeconnection

Prairie Palooza to celebrate state's prairie, rangeland

The United Nations has designated 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. Rangelands comprise 54% of land globally and 30% of North Dakota. North Dakota rangelands are primarily grasslands or prairies that support the livestock industry while providing critical habitat for wildlife.

In celebration of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, NDSU Extension

and the Society for Range Management will host Prairie Palooza on June 16 at NDSU's Central Grassland Research Extension Center near Streeter.

At the family-friendly event, participants can learn about the importance of prairie ecosystems, prairie plants, soils, birds and pollinators. There will be youth activities, including a scavenger hunt. The event will feature a session on traditional



plant knowledge and Native American culture led by Linda and Luke Black Elk.

"Everyone is invited to join us to learn about and enjoy the rangeland ecosystems of North Dakota," says Kevin Sedivec, NDSU Extension rangeland management specialist and interim director of the Central Grassland Research Extension Center.

The event will start at 1 p.m. CT with an optional birding tour. The main event will be held from 3 to 7 p.m. and will include dinner.

Attendance is free; however, registration is requested to aid in event planning.

For more details or to register, visit ndsua.gov/PrairiePalooza26 or contact Benjamin Menapace at 810-618-1550 or benjamin.menapace@ndsua.edu.

Farmers markets grants available through NDDA

Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring has announced that grants are available to North Dakota farmers markets to purchase marketing supplies to increase visibility, awareness and attendance at the markets, and to increase sales of specialty crops.

The grants are open to any new or existing farmers market in North Dakota with a current profile on the Local Foods Map Directory (www.ndda.nd.gov/divisions/business-marketing-information/local-foods/local-foods-directory-map).

"I encourage new or existing farmers markets in North Dakota to apply," Goehring said. "Funds can be used to purchase branded tents/canopies, branded tablecloths, flags, banners, displays, signage and posters/flyers."

There is \$25,000 available for the grants, and farmers markets may apply for a maximum of \$2,500. The grants are available on a competitive basis and will be scored on need, impact and work plan to address the stated project objectives. Approximately 60% of the grants will go to communities with populations under 10,000 and approximately 40% will go to communities with populations over 10,000. Materials purchased must promote the entire market and specialty crops in general and cannot go toward an individual producer.

Application forms for the grants are available on the NDDA website. Applications are due by Friday, June 12, 2026 at 4 p.m. Selected applications will

be notified by June 19, 2026. Project periods will start July 1, 2026 and farmers markets will have until Dec. 31, 2026 to make purchases for reimbursement.

Questions about the application and requests for assistance in setting up a Local Foods Map Directory profile should be directed to Jenna Nieters, local foods marketing specialist at jnieters@nd.gov or 701-328-2659.

The Farmers Market Specialty Crop Marketing Grant is funded through the Fiscal Year 2025 US Department of Agriculture's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

Seeking Mowing Bids

City of Warwick will be accepting bids for summer mowing of the city park as well as the lots across from the park, pump house location. Periodic berm mowing may be added as needed.

Bids due by May 31, 2026

Please submit bids to:
cityofwarwick1907@gmail.com or
mail your bid to City of Warwick, P.O.
Box 826, Devils Lake, ND 58301.



Questions should be addressed to the auditor at the above email address.

DL outlet operations begin

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) began Devils Lake outlet operations for the 2026 discharge season on May 11 at approximately 8:30 a.m.

The West End Outlet is currently discharging at a rate of 100 cfs (cubic feet per second). Discharges are currently limited to this rate due to operational issues identified during start-up on the two 75 cfs pumps at the Round Lake Pump Station. DWR staff is working to resolve the identified issues.

The East End Outlet was

expected to begin operations on May 14. Discharge rates are subject to adjustments based on downstream water quality and quantity conditions. DWR staff will continue to closely monitor downstream conditions to ensure the efficient and responsible management of water resources in the region. DWR remains committed to effectively managing the Devils Lake Outlets, discharging as much water as possible within operational constraints.

For more information, visit www.dwr.nd.gov.

ANALYSIS OF THE STATEWIDE MEASURES APPEARING ON THE ELECTION BALLOT JUNE 9, 2026

The following analysis is for the measure appearing on the statewide Primary Election ballot on **June 9, 2026**. This publication is required by section 16.1-01-07 of the North Dakota Century Code to enable voters to become familiar with the effect of proposed measures. The full text of each measure is available on the Office of the Secretary of State's website at vote.nd.gov or by requesting a copy from the Elections Division at **701-328-4146**, or from the office of any County Auditor.

In addition, as required by section 16.1-01-17 of the North Dakota Century Code, a copy of the Legislative Council's report on the estimated fiscal impact of initiated Measure No. 1 is available on the Office of the Secretary of State's website at vote.nd.gov, by phone at **701-328-4146**, by email at soselect@nd.gov, or by letter to **Secretary of State, 600 E Boulevard Avenue Dept 108, Bismarck ND 58505-0500**.

Analysis of Initiated Constitutional Measure No. 1 (Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4007, 2025 Session Laws, Ch. 615)

Initiated Constitutional Measure No. 1 was placed on the ballot by action of the 2025 North Dakota Legislative Assembly with passage of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4007 (2025 Session Laws, Chapter 610). If approved, this constitutional measure would amend and reenact section 9 of article III and section 16 of article IV of the Constitution of North Dakota, relating to requiring each resolution adopted by the legislative assembly proposing a constitutional amendment and each initiative petition and measure proposing a constitutional amendment be comprised of a single subject. The proposed amendment would require constitutional amendments to be limited to one subject. The Secretary of State shall not approve an initiative petition for circulation if the Secretary determines that the proposed amendment comprises more than one subject. Additionally, the legislative assembly is required to limit proposed amendments to the constitution to one subject.

The estimated fiscal impact of this measure is none.

Voting "YES" means you approve the measure summarized above.
Voting "NO" means you reject the measure summarized above.



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Project FXTA-0003(051)

Lake Ibsen Township, Benson County, North Dakota

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the **Lake Ibsen Township Board of the County of Benson, North Dakota, will received sealed bids for Lake Ibsen Township Project: FXTA-0003(051) – Various Township roads in Lake Ibsen Township approximately 4 miles SE of Leeds** at the office of the County Auditor of said County until **8:00 A.M., CDT on June 16, 2026**, at which time said proposals will be opened and read aloud.

Complete digital project bidding documents are available at www.woldengr.com or www.questcdn.com. You may download the digital plan documents for \$30.00 by inputting Quest project #**10202986** on the website's Project Search Page. Please contact QuestCDN.com at 952-233-1632 or info@questcdn.com for assistance in free membership registration, downloading, and working with this digital project information. An optional paper set of project documents is also available for Non-Refundable price of \$100.00 per set. Please make your check payable to Wold Engineering, P.C., 915 East 11th St., PO Box 237, Bottineau, North Dakota, 58318. Please contact Wold Engineering, P.C. at 701-228-2292 if you have any questions.

The improvements consist of the following approximate quantities of materials:

Reshaping Roadway	1.442 Mile
Aggregate Base Course CL 5	3,013 Ton
Cement Stabilized Base Course – 9 IN	20,127 SY
Portland Cement	449 Ton
Incidentals	

Each bid is to be submitted on the basis of cash payment for the work and is to be enclosed in a sealed envelope addressed to the Township Chairman at the office of the county auditor. Each bid is to be accompanied by a Bidder's Bond in the amount of five (5) percent of the bid, as specified by the North Dakota Century Code Par. 11-11-28, to be forfeited to Lake Ibsen Township should the Bidder fail to effect a contract within ten (10) days after notice of an award. Bidder will execute and effect a contract in the amount of the bid and a Contractor's Bond as required by law and regulation and determination of Lake Ibsen Township.

The work on said project shall be started on a date set by the Lake Ibsen Township, and shall be completed by **October 17, 2026**, from such date liquidated damages shall be paid.

The right is reserved to reject all bids, and to waive any informality in any bid, and to hold the bids for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days from the date of opening bids.

DATE: **May 5, 2026**

SIGNED: **Bryan Leapaldt**
Township Chairman
5812 57 St NE
Leeds, ND 58346