

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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New Web site helps locate services for the elderly and people with disabilities

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services has launched a new Web site, <http://www.carechoice.nd.gov>, to help people locate services for older adults and adults with disabilities. Called the *Aging and Disability Resource-LINK*, it replaces the state's Senior Info-Line Web site and includes additional information such as food pantries, community services, and transportation resources. The Web site's database is updated regularly. Individuals can search by service type or provider name and can also search for services within a county or a specified driving distance of a zip code.

"People are usually not familiar with existing services and community resources that can help them stay in their homes, and that leaves a knowledge gap when a health crisis or significant change in ability occurs," said Aging Services Division Director Linda Wright. "This free and confidential service features a database of services that can help people maintain their independence or meet their changing needs."

Individuals who do not have Internet access or who prefer to receive information by phone can access the *Aging and Disability Resource-LINK* by calling the nationwide toll free number at 1-800-451-8693.

A certified resource and referral specialist employed by the department answers calls Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Central Time. During evening or weekends, callers can leave a message. Calls will be returned on the next business day. Individuals can also contact the resource link by e-mail at carechoice@nd.gov.

Royce Schultze, Executive Director of the Dakota Center for Independent Living, Inc. in Bismarck, N.D., said, "Our agency staff would use this to assist consumers. It is user-friendly for people with disabilities and is much easier to use than paper brochures. It is a great tool in serving people with disabilities."

The department does not endorse listed services, but provides the information as a public service. Entities wishing to submit information about services for consideration can e-mail carechoice@nd.gov.

According to Wright, long-distance caregivers and professionals who work with seniors and people with disabilities often use the information and referral service. In 2007, the human services department received about 8,500 requests through its information and referral Web site and phone line.

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