

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | June 16, 2020

ND State Hospital modifies visitation policy to allow in-person visits

BISMARCK, N.D. – Today, the North Dakota State Hospital announced it has modified its campus visitation policy to allow family members and friends to visit loved ones who are receiving behavioral health services.

Under the modified policy, family members and friends can visit patients during regular business hours, by appointment only, in designated rooms. All visitors must wear masks at all times and maintain safe social distancing while on campus. Patients in the hospital's quarantine unit will need to wait 14-days before they are eligible for visitation.

"Even though we are now allowing on-campus visits, we are not letting our guard down against the spread of COVID-19," said Dr. Rosalie Etherington, the hospital's superintendent. "We remain focused on following the health and safety precautions we implemented from day one. Our top priority is protecting the health and well-being of our patients and staff."

Etherington said activities are slowly transitioning to a new normal on the State Hospital campus.

"Our contractor has resumed the work participation program for our transitional living residents, and the on-site treatment mall is now open and offering activities and services for patients," she said.

During the past month, the State Hospital conducted two COVID-19 testing events of patients and staff. Nearly 1,000 tests were administered by the hospital's 20-person testing team of nurses, infection control specialists, administrators and other key team members. Also, all new admissions continue to be screened and tested for COVID-19.

On March 13, the hospital announced visitor restrictions to limit transmission of the coronavirus. Patients have been able to communicate with family and friends by phone, computers or other electronic devices.

For more information on the North Dakota Department of Human Services response to COVID-19, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid19/index.html. For details about the state's COVID-19 response, visit www.ndresponse.gov.

#

MEDIA CONTACTS :

LuWanna Lawrence – ND Department of Human Services | 701-328-1892
llawrence@nd.gov

Heather Steffl – ND Department of Human Services | 701-328-4933
hsteffl@nd.gov