

## **Partnership for Success Grant Empowers North Dakota Communities to Expand Underage Drinking Prevention Efforts**

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota Health and Human Services (HHS) has been awarded the Partnership for Success grant, providing \$1.25 million annually for up to five years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The grant is grounded in the Strategic Prevention Framework designed to engage communities in public health principles through data-driven, evidence-based programs. The grant aims to strengthen the capacity of local substance use prevention providers to implement underage drinking prevention efforts in underserved communities across North Dakota.

While underage drinking rates have decreased in recent years, nearly 20% of North Dakota high school students report consuming alcohol in the past 30 days (North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2023). Furthermore, 93% of North Dakotans believe youth alcohol use is a problem in their communities (North Dakota Community Readiness Survey, 2022). Alcohol consumption during adolescence can have lasting effects on brain development, impacting problem-solving skills, academic performance, and mental health. Early alcohol use increases the risk of long-term developmental issues.

"Prevention is a vital part of the behavioral health continuum of care," said Laura Anderson, policy Director of the HHS Behavioral Health Division. "We are excited for the new opportunities this grant will bring to support substance use prevention in collaboration with local communities."

The Behavioral Health Division has awarded the funding to five local public health units to focus on underage drinking prevention for at-risk populations, including college students, active-duty military members and their families, and children of parents with substance use or mental health challenges.

The total awards, ranging from \$650,000 to \$1.15 million per unit, will be distributed over the duration of the project, which runs through September 30, 2028. The awarded LPHUs include:

- First District Health Unit, Minot
- Grand Forks Public Health Unit
- Lake Region District Health Unit, Devils Lake
- Richland County Health Department, Wahpeton
- Upper Missouri District Health Unit, Williston

"The Upper Missouri District Health Unit, in partnership with the McKenzie County Community Coalition, is ecstatic to receive this Partnership for Success funding," said Miranda Samuelson, prevention specialist and mental health coordinator for the unit. "This grant allows us to address underage drinking prevention gaps and makes us more competitive for future funding opportunities."

HHS continues to support 23 communities—including four tribes and 19 LPHUs—through the federal Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant to implement broader substance use prevention initiatives.

To learn more about North Dakota prevention efforts, visit <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/behavioral-health/prevention>.