



2023 ANNUAL REPORT



FOUNDATION
for a Healthy North Dakota

OUR VALUES

We know that healthy communities, families, and individuals are vital to the success of our state now and in the future. We believe members of our communities want the best health outcomes for themselves, each other, and all North Dakotans. By promoting informed health decisions, trusting one another and our own communities, we can realize a healthier North Dakota.



WHAT WE DO

The Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota was founded in 2022 under a directive to build a statewide coalition of people and organizations committed to creating better health outcomes for all North Dakotans. We believe the future of our state depends on re-establishing trust in our communities around community wellness, and we are committed to providing North Dakotans with reliable, trustworthy health information and advocating for legislative policies that are rooted in public health best practices. Through this growing coalition, we strategize on how best to communicate with local community members and empower them to promote wellness within their own circles.



What an incredible first year it's been for our team, our partners, and the state we call home. Since our launch fifteen months ago, FHND has charged full steam ahead, committed to our mission of realizing a North Dakota unified around community wellness.

We began with a challenge and a question:

In a time when North Dakotans seem more divided than ever politically — where misinformation abounds in the online media era — how do we join together to create better health outcomes for our communities?

I'm thrilled to report that in just one year, we've come a long way in building bridges across community divides, positioning groups not against each other but alongside one another, united to building a brighter future for all North Dakotans.

We did this by forging partnerships with diverse regional organizations and professionals who share our goals despite ideological differences. We did this by holding listening sessions with community members across North Dakota — people whose viewpoints didn't always align with our own but who wanted to help heal the divides in this state.

In most cases, our commonalities prevailed over our differences.

In the year ahead, I look forward to working with our board of directors to further this vision. Our board members are incredible in their caliber and passion for our mission. I'm also excited about our team, which is poised for growth, with the right staff members in the right positions eager to grow our impact by nurturing our partnerships.

Most importantly, I look forward to building on the many strengths we share as a larger community that cares for one another. I am excited to work together amplifying all the ways North Dakotans agree when it comes to community wellness ... all of the ways we can continue moving forward together ... and all of the ways we can work ***with*** each other instead of in opposition.

Let's work together to strengthen connection and community. When we do, we'll realize a healthier North Dakota.

Wishing you good health,

Sandra Tibke
Executive Director
Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota

OUR TEAM*



SANDRA TIBKE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sandy has spent nearly 20 years serving the people of North Dakota. Before joining FHND, she led the city of Mandan through an oil spill, flood recovery, and downtown revitalization as its city commissioner, and as executive director of Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota she helped grow the organization's revenue and visibility and advance legislation.



SHELLY DAVIS
COALITION HEALTH DIRECTOR

Shelly brings more than 10 years of public health and health administrative experience to FHND and also serves as a research coordinator for the National Resource Center on Native American Aging. She was recently named to Native Governance Center's newest Indigenous-led cohort of community leaders.



MARY LIZAKOWSKI
COALITION HEALTH DIRECTOR

Mary possesses extensive experience in the field of vaccine development and academic and clinical research, spanning over a decade. Her focus at FHND is on stakeholder coordination, statewide coalition development, and leading training and education opportunities. She also serves as the secretary and policy and advocacy co-chair for the North Dakota Public Health Association.



ELIZABETH PIHLAJA
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth has spent more than a decade in the public health field. She previously worked as a senior dissemination specialist for national nonprofit Zero to Three and was the maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting (MIECHV) program administrator for the state of North Dakota.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH



WEBINARS

Our ongoing monthly webinar series includes experts in their field presenting on a particular health topic, plus an additional storyteller when possible to bring a human element to the subject matter. This series kicked off in November 2022 and has covered an array of important topics.

12
webinars

565
participants

51+
average # of
participants

48
median # of
participants

Meningitis Webinar

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2ND
12 NOON

You've heard of meningitis. But do you know how to protect yourself against it?



REGISTER NOW

PREVENTING SHINGLES

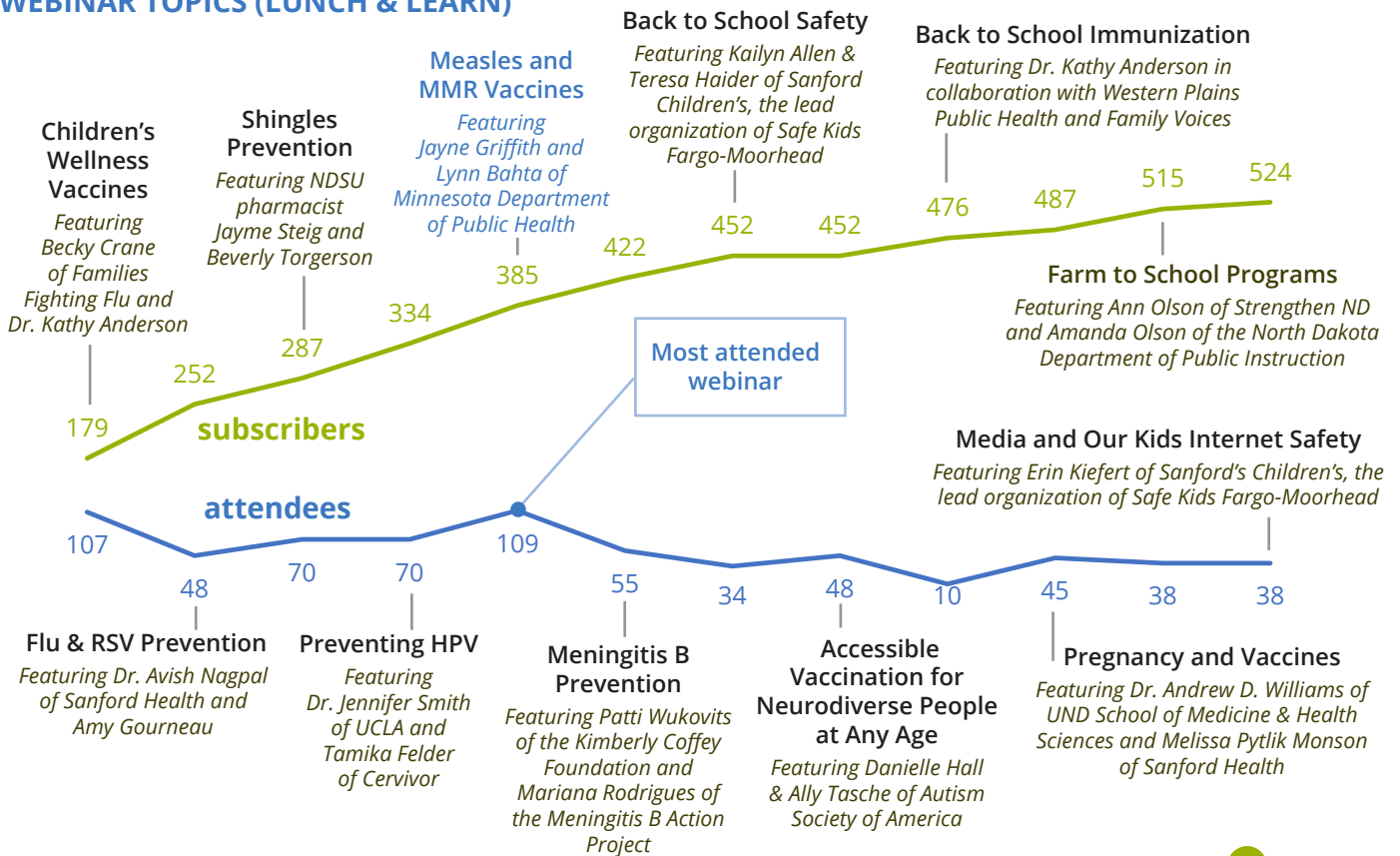
MARCH 15TH
12 NOON CT
ZOOM
WEBINAR



BEVERLY TORGERSON

FOUNDATION
for a Healthy North Dakota

WEBINAR TOPICS (LUNCH & LEARN)



SUBSCRIBER/COALITION GROWTH

2022
(before starting webinars)

45

DEC 2023

524



Avg growth of nearly

40

people after each webinar



**PRIME
EDUCATION**

FHND worked in collaboration with community partners and [PRIME Education](#) to host community and provider immunization events.



Feb 2023

Meningococcal vaccine community event with [Sacred Pipe](#)

Apr 2023

Meningococcal provider webinar

Aug & Oct 2023

HPV vaccine community events with [Indigenous Association](#)

Sept 2023

HPV vaccine provider event



**IN-PERSON
OUTREACH**

In 2023, our staff attended events around the state and country to learn more about the communities we serve and advocate for better health outcomes for all North Dakotans.



American Heart Association Voices for Healthy Kids Summit in Alabama



Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas annual conference in Fargo



North Dakota Health and Human Services "Gateway to Health" event in Bismarck



North Dakota Nurses Association conference in Bismarck



Fargo/West Fargo Public Schools Native American Education Back to School Night in Fargo



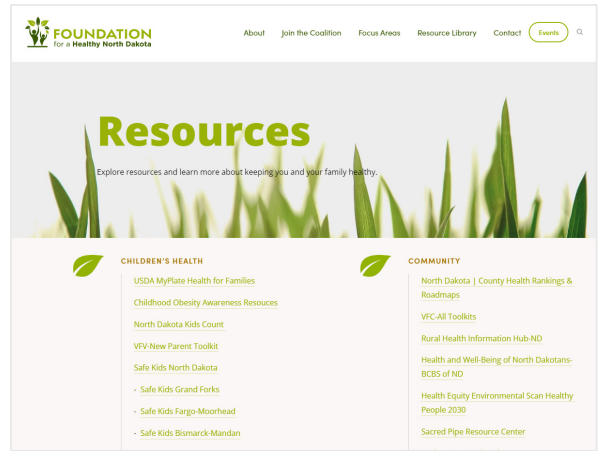
Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota "Stepping Up for Children" event in Fargo



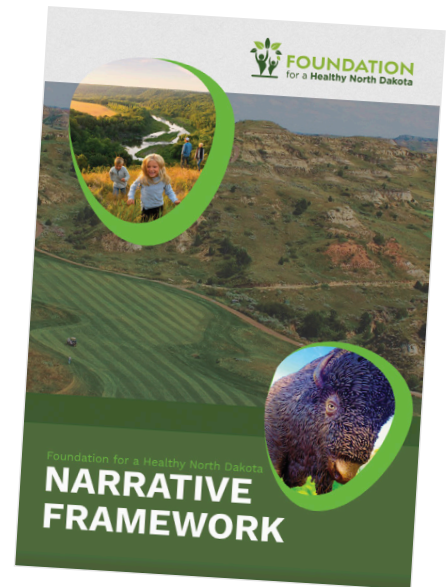
Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Child Health Symposium presentation in Fargo

REPORTS AND RESOURCES

Earlier this year, we added a robust page of resources to our organization’s website that highlights the work of our trusted peers in the health field.



In collaboration with [gish&co.](#), in August 2023 we developed our first State of the State report. It focused on the state of immunizations and wellness vaccine protection in North Dakota, with the goal of advancing toward a healthier state population that can enjoy full community, economic, and civic participation.



As students moved into the dorms this late summer and early fall, we developed and disseminated flyers to North Dakota university health services departments with Meningitis B and HPV prevention information.

Also this past year, we worked with [Odd Duck](#) to conduct a series of listening sessions with community members across North Dakota and developed a narrative framework report with them based on our findings.



In collaboration with Autism Society of America and their Vaccine Education Initiative, we disseminated and continue to distribute vaccine education toolkits, complete with documentation that provides support for individuals who may need additional information during vaccination.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

In October 2023, FHND Executive Director Sandra Tibke presented alongside Josh Gryniewicz of Odd Duck at the Alliance for Early Success annual conference on mis- and disinformation. They also facilitated a workshop following their plenary session. The workshop was so popular it had to be moved to a larger room to accommodate all participants!



COMMUNITY WORK

FHND hosted listening sessions with six different communities in 2023, including in Grand Forks, Minot, and Medora, plus three sessions in Bismarck/Mandan — one with Sacred Pipe to speak with the urban Indigenous community, one with folks from the Standing Rock Nation, and one with Ministry on the Margins to speak with the area’s un-housed community. We have maintained connections following these initial sessions to help with planning coalition work, aid with partner and asset mapping, and more.



POLICY/LEGISLATIVE REVIEW*

The 2023 legislative session saw progress made regarding children’s health and the interests of families, specifically in the areas of school meals, childcare, the child welfare system, mental health, and access to services. FHND provided testimony on several bills during the 2023 legislative session, including:

School Meal Expansion and Prevention of School Meal Shaming

SB2284 included an allocation of \$6 million to provide free school meals to students whose household income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level for the next two school years. It’s estimated that the expanded eligibility made possible by this one-time funding will help 10,000 more students in North Dakota to receive free school meals.

HB1494 aimed to prevent school meal shaming by creating more protections for students who participate in the free or reduced-price school meals and students with unpaid school meal balances. As a result, meals will continue to be provided to students with an unpaid balance. Furthermore, schools cannot identify or stigmatize recipients of free or reduced-price meals, nor can participation in a school event be prohibited due to an unpaid balance.

State ICWA Adopted

HB1536 codified the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) into state law. American Indian children are overrepresented in the North Dakota foster care system; this overrepresentation is a product of past policies that forcibly removed American Indian children from their families as well as ongoing discrimination that resulted in inconsistent application of ICWA. The purpose of ICWA is: “... to protect the best interest of Indian Children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children and placement of such children in homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture ...”

*SOURCE: Kids Count North Dakota, “2023 Legislative Session: Children’s Well-Being Bills,” August 2023



Major Investments in the Childcare System

HB1540 included a one-time investment of \$66 million over the next few years for childcare assistance and early childhood services. It also sets eligibility guidelines for the childcare assistance program. Income eligibility for the childcare assistance program is currently set at 85% of the state median. Eligibility will drop to 75% of the state median income no later than July 1, 2025 but possibly sooner based on funding. This bill also specifies that copayments are waived for families making less than 30% of the state median income.

SB2012 had many components, including doing away with the expiration date (set for 2025) for the Best in Class grants that fund early childhood programs for 4-year-old children. In addition, \$14.4 million was allocated for evidence-based programs for 4-year-old children, including \$12 million to expand the Best in Class grants and \$2.4 million to continue the Waterford Upstart Early Learning program. This bill also included a proposal for a legislative management study on early childhood programs and services.

SB2104 included a revision to the Best in Class program's definition to be inclusive of children the year before kindergarten and included Head Start programs as eligible for support. The bill also indicated that all children under age 12 must be counted for regulation determination and added staff training and professional development incentives as a workforce development program.

SB2238 earmarked a total of \$300,000 for two staff positions and supplies needed to process background checks and proposed a legislative management study on background checks. A long wait for the results of a background check for a new hire is a challenge for many childcare providers as they fulfill this major requirement prior to the start of employment for their new hires.

Medicaid Coverage Expansion and Access to Services

SB2181 increased income eligibility from 162% to 175% of the federal poverty level for pregnant participants. It also expanded postpartum coverage to 12 months post-birth, rather than just 60 days. This expanded coverage is estimated to reach hundreds of additional pregnant women in North Dakota.

SB2012 tasked the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services with developing a website for parents to utilize as a resource that includes info on social services, financial assistance, and maternal and childbirth services. This website is intended to serve as a central hub that will hopefully streamline the process for parents accessing parenting information as well as information on public benefits and how to apply.

Positive Outcomes Around Immunization Legislation

Several bills were introduced to the North Dakota legislature in 2023 with potentially long-ranging consequences for community health and wellness. Some of the legislation sought to eliminate vaccination requirements in health care settings and more places where diseases can easily spread, and one bill aimed to limit parental freedom to vaccinate one's own child or children through the criminalization of vaccine requirements. Most of this legislation did not pass, and those that did — HB1502 and SB2274 — involve amendments that will prevent community harm.



FHND BUDGET

(December 1, 2021 - June 30, 2025)

FY2022 and FY2023

\$614,015

FY2024

\$967,443

FY2025

\$767,973

FUNDING PARTNERS/GRANTS

FHND is supported by the following:

NORTH
Dakota | Health & Human Services
Be Legendary.



"The Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota is transforming the conversation around what's best for children and families in the state and sharing that expertise with their colleagues around the country. It takes skill to translate a community's needs into messaging that policymakers can act upon, but that's what they do: They listen carefully to local residents and then convey their learnings to the people with the power to act on the community's behalf.

Helene Stebbins
Executive director of Alliance for Early Success



American Heart Association.

American Heart Association.



"Voices for Healthy Kids is excited to award Foundation for a Healthy North Dakota with the Innovation, Equity, and Exploration Workgroup grant to explore policy recommendations for Medicaid reimbursement options for doula care. Selected for how they center tribal and rural communities and doula voices, we look forward to learning from their workgroup and share best practices and lessons learned for nationwide benefit."

Yui Iwase
Associate Grants Administrator at
Voices for Healthy Kids





NEXT STEPS

In 2024, FHND aims to continue our strategic planning work and finalize policy recommendations regarding Medicaid reimbursement of doula services through the workgroup funded by the IEE grant. We will also be hosting a community health event in West Fargo and are partnering with the Autism Society of America on a funded expansion of their Vaccine Education Initiative in North Dakota. We will continue with technical assistance and follow-up with communities that held listening sessions, and we will continue to host webinars and community events to increase education and awareness of community health issues, including immunization, hunger and nutrition, and children's health.



220 E Rosser Ave, Apt #2762
Bismarck, ND 58501

www.foundationnd.org