

# South Dakota Examining Its Behavioral Health System

## The Study

South Dakota's Department of Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health will oversee the study conducted by the national nonprofit Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) with its partner Burns & Associates (B&A).

To gain a complete picture of South Dakota's behavioral health system, the study team will look at both publicly and privately funded services. They will review previous work on the state's system, reaching out to interview people with experience of the system at all levels—including state staff, directors and staff of provider organizations, local advocacy groups, and people who've used the services themselves. A series of interviews, listening sessions, and focus groups will begin in September 2020.

The study will also identify the number of people with behavioral health conditions in the state, the number using existing services and the locations of those services, populations that may be having a harder time accessing services, and workforce issues or shortages that are affecting service delivery. The study's findings and recommendations will help guide the state's planning efforts to improve outcomes for people in South Dakota.

## The Study Team

HSRI is a national nonprofit organization founded in 1976 and headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Its researchers, data scientists, and policy analysts work with government agencies to improve public health services and systems and to improve the quality of the data that guides policy reform. B&A, founded in 2006, specializes in partnering with state Medicaid programs to



enhance the delivery of healthcare and community-based services. Members of the study team have conducted similar behavioral health system assessments at state and county levels—including in North Dakota, Wisconsin, and other Midwestern states. The team focuses on providing actionable and prioritized recommendations along with strategies and guidance on the practicality of different approaches and actions.

## Taking Action

After the study team produces its final report in November 2020, the team and the state will develop an 'implementation plan'. The plan will lay out the chosen actions to address the system's needs and gaps. It will include short- and long-range strategies for moving the system in the right direction, and it will identify the people and groups responsible for overseeing the plan and overseeing specific actions, the feasibility and costs of the different actions, and the measures the state can use to track its progress.

**If you have questions about this effort**, please contact the Division of Behavioral Health at 605-367-5236.