“By appointment only.” Those three words help charitable nonprofit NDAD to provide clean durable medical equipment loans free of charge during the uncertainties of a pandemic while enhancing conditions for you to safely borrow and later return that equipment.

Our Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP) removes any worries you may have about personal contact.

Even though NDAD offices are closed to the public, a phone call or email to your nearest NDAD client services representative office in North Dakota (ndad.org/contact) puts you in touch with a staff member to determine your equipment needs and begin the appointment process.

Read on about how NDAD has maintained multiple client services for people with disabilities and health concerns despite the pandemic.
NDAD at your service
Charity maintains client operations during pandemic

NDAD has never faced challenges to its charitable operations in its 45 years of operation like those presented by COVID-19.

Yet clients with disabilities and health concerns whose health and independence rely greatly on ongoing NDAD assistance most likely have seen no difference in service - even with offices that remain closed to the public for the safety of both our clients and staff, and to help reduce spread of the virus.

NDAD’s client services staff has continued to provide vital services with no financial cuts to programming. Chief Program Officer Leslie Stastny said.

Nonstop help ‘great relief’ to clients
NDAD helped pay for travel for clients who, despite the pandemic, needed to make out-of-town medical trips. Our organization assisted with personal attendant care and durable medical equipment.

NDAD purchased necessary prescription medications and supplies for more clients. One of them, Grand Forks’ Sandra Norgard, 75, is a type II diabetic and colon cancer survivor with kidney disease who has been isolated at home. She was relieved knowing the insulin and pen needle supplies she receives for her Type II diabetes would not end.

“A great relief!” Sandra exclaimed. “I just don’t know what I would do without it. I’m so thankful for NDAD. I don’t know if I could continue with so many other expenses. … Without the insulin, that would have been horrible.”

Communications make it work
Client services staff remained available via phone and email for information and referrals, too, and to both accept and review new applications for assistance. NDAD’s social media and also our website, NDAD.org, have remained active throughout the pandemic to assist the public with program information, and news and events of interest.

After a temporary suspension in mid-March, our charity’s most-used service - the NDAD INSIDER - SUMMER 2020 - JULY 2
Published four times annually
Chief Executive Officer - Don Santer
Chief Financial Officer - Traci LaDouceur
Chief Program Officer - Leslie Stastny

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Pandemic response
grants help Minot, Fargo, Grand Forks area NDAD clients

NDAD has received three emergency relief grants this spring to help people with health challenges and disabilities in portions of our charitable nonprofit’s service area affected by COVID-19.

FM Area Foundation’s Community Response Fund of Cass and Clay Counties provided a grant to help NDAD purchase prescription medications and supplies for clients with disabilities and health challenges in those counties.

Souris Valley United Way awarded NDAD a grant to provide transportation to medical appointments and much-needed medications for clients with disabilities and health issues in Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, McLean, Mountrail, Renville and Ward counties.

Community Foundation of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Region awarded a Nonprofit Relief Fund grant to NDAD to help with prescription medication and medical supplies in Grand Forks and Walsh County and Minnesota’s Polk County.
End-stage renal disease has led to dialysis - three times a week, four hours each session - in recent years for Lance Gunsch.

“Not much you can do. You’ve got to go,” said the Bismarck man, who turns 61 on July 11. Someday, he hopes to be eligible for a kidney transplant.

Meanwhile, the former motorcycle mechanic and custom gun restoration craftsman credits NDAD for helping to keep him around. For more than a year, our charitable nonprofit has helped purchase vital medication for Lance.

“I appreciate you guys,” Lance said of NDAD. “I can pretty much say that without you guys, I probably would have been dead already. There’s just no way I can afford these types of medications. I’ve had (health) insurance my whole life, but it only covers so much.”

Lance has been on Social Security Disability since 2009. “You go from making really good money to go into survival mode. All the bills you have – they don’t quit... I had some savings, but that kind of got burned up trying to pay for all these meds.”

Gunsch learned of NDAD from a hospital social worker who then helped him apply. Working through NDAD’s client services representative in Minot, Marsha Dupré, NDAD fulfilled Lance’s need after free medications programs from several large pharmaceutical companies ended, he said.

“I feel very lucky you guys did pick me up because I really didn’t know what I was going to do,” Lance said. “Believe me, being sick isn’t cheap.”

Despite the need for dialysis and other life-sustaining medications, Gunsch says significant weight loss, healthy eating and quitting smoking has helped him feel better “than I’ve been for about 20 years.” While he’s also being treated for high blood pressure and diabetes, Lance and his doctors like “my forward momentum,” he said.

His kidney issues began in 1988, when a vehicle turned in front of his motorcycle during a group ride with 26 other bikers north of Jamestown, where he once lived.

“It was virtually like stepping out of a car at 65 mph,” he recalled. “I did 30 feet before me and the bike hit the ground, then another 75 feet before we separated. I ended up on the highway on my back, and my bike in the ditch at a barbed-wire fence.”

The accident damaged his kidneys and tore up a wrist, elbow, calf muscle and both knees, and he suffered nerve damage in his neck.

That still wasn’t enough to spare Lance a moniker given by several pals who visited him at the hospital. “What’s the last thing you heard when you hit that car? ‘Crunch!’” one of them told Lance, who’s known for his sense of humor. His visitors turned it into Lance’s nickname.

“Crunch” Gunsch’s kidney health did not stick around, though, failing him in the years that followed while also contributing toward his other health woes.

All the more reason, Lance says, to appreciate the valuable prescription medicine assistance he receives from NDAD.
Kenneth McGath

NDAD's help with trach supplies gives Devils Lake man great comfort

Ken McGath doesn’t need any prompting to recall how much pain he felt before NDAD began helping him - and how much that help has meant to him.

“They were lifesavers as far as I’m concerned,” the 58-year-old Devils Lake father of three and former construction worker said.

“If it weren’t for NDAD, I and probably a lot of other people would be in a lot worse shape.”

Since 2013, when he received an artificial larynx following cancer surgery and treatment, McGath has received tracheostomy pads from NDAD to keep his tube opening clean and free from debris, and to protect his skin.

“It eases the pain,” he explained about the pads. “I have to keep it moist so it doesn’t dry up. Keeps my skin from peeling and all that good stuff,” which is important since radiation treatments had been hard on his skin.

McGath hasn’t worked in construction since his larynx cancer was diagnosed and he received surgery and radiation treatment in 2013. His insurance covers his needed tracheostomy kits, including sponges and collars. But as a dad on a fixed income with two children living at home, he needed help affording the pads.

A healthcare worker at the Cancer Center of North Dakota in Grand Forks told him NDAD may be able to help.

NDAD has been “fantastic,” he said. “I don’t even call them up. They just automatically send me the new ones every three months.”

If not for NDAD’s help getting pads, Ken said, “I’d be in a heck of a lot of more pain all the time,” he said. “I’ve had no problem with (NDAD). They’ve always been there for me.”