

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
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## **North Dakota awarded federal grant to fight opioid abuse**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The federal Department of Health and Human Services notified Gov. Doug Burgum that it is awarding \$2 million to the North Dakota Department of Human Services to reduce and prevent opioid abuse and overdose deaths. All states received a State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis grant to address what is often described as a public health epidemic.

“The First Lady and I are pleased the state is receiving these important federal resources to help North Dakota build capacity at state and local levels to save lives, help people recover from opioid addiction, and prevent addiction,” Gov. Burgum said.

Drug-related overdoses claimed 61 lives in North Dakota in 2015. That was an increase from 43 deaths in 2014 and 20 deaths in 2013, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which identifies opioids as the main driver of overdose deaths.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services submitted an application for the grant on Feb. 17, and intends to use about 80 percent of the funding for treatment and recovery support, and the remainder will be used for prevention and data collection, reporting, and evaluation, said agency Executive Director Chris Jones.

“This grant supports a comprehensive response, and some services will be implemented as soon as August,” Jones said adding that planning at the state and local level will help ensure that resources are used wisely.

North Dakota’s goals, he said, include increasing access to naloxone to prevent overdose deaths, increasing the number of trained health care professionals who can prescribe buprenorphine, and supporting proven prevention, treatment, and recovery support strategies in local communities.

Jones said, “The public sector cannot solve the opioid crisis alone. This grant will help North Dakota effectively leverage private and public community resources and expertise and develop a learning community.”

Naloxone is administered to people who have overdosed on opioids and are at risk of dying. Buprenorphine is used for medication-assisted treatment, often in combination with counseling and behavioral therapy, to help people reduce or quit using heroin or prescription opioids such as pain relievers.

The federal Department of Health and Human Services is releasing the first year of funding. North Dakota applied for the full amount authorized for the state: \$2 million per year for up to two years.

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## North Dakota awarded \$2 million to fight opioid abuse – page 2

Grant activities will supplement current partnerships and efforts, including the Stop Overdose campaign, a collaborative effort involving the department and the Reducing Pharmaceutical Narcotics Task Force. That statewide initiative focuses on saving lives by sharing information and providing resources for prescribers, pharmacists, behavioral health counselors, first responders, and family and friends of people with opioid use disorder.

Resources addressing the state's opioid epidemic are available online at <https://prevention.nd.gov/stopoverdose> or by contacting the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division at 1237 W. Divide Ave., Suite 1D, Bismarck, N.D., 58501, 701-328-8919, or [ndbhd@nd.gov](mailto:ndbhd@nd.gov).

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