

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 21, 2017**

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North Dakota communities invited to apply for funding to reduce opioid abuse and overdose deaths

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division is encouraging communities in the state to apply for funding to address the opioid crisis by identifying gaps and strengthening existing community prevention and treatment efforts and infrastructure.

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 state will provide \$180,000 to each successful community applicant and plans to fund up to six communities. The division will select communities that can demonstrate they have a need, and which also have the local capacity to implement evidence-based prevention, treatment and recovery services.

The funding opportunity is part of the \$2 million State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant (Opioid STR) North Dakota received in May 2017 from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Grant goals include reducing opioid overdose-related deaths through primary and secondary prevention strategies, and increasing access to evidence-based treatment and recovery services for individuals with an opioid use disorder.

A majority of the grant funding must be used to support opioid treatment and recovery services.

“Anyone can become addicted. Opioid abuse and overdose impact individuals, families, businesses and communities across our state,” said Director of the Behavioral Health Division Pamela Sagness. “This grant opportunity provides important resources for communities to take action.”

She said the community grants will support a locally-driven, coordinated response to the opioid crisis and may be used for increasing the availability and use of naloxone to prevent overdose deaths, increasing access to medication-assisted treatment and evidence-based recovery support services, and reducing stigma surrounding opioid use disorder. Interested communities can find other approved strategies in Attachment A of the department's request for proposal.

Participating communities will implement planned grant-funded efforts between August 2017 and April 2018.

Communities must apply by July 21, 2017, and details are available online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/publicnotice/index.html.

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Opioid STR Grant activities will supplement existing partnerships and efforts, including the Stop Overdose campaign, a collaborative effort involving the department and the Reducing Pharmaceutical Narcotics Task Force. Stop Overdose focuses on saving lives by sharing information and providing resources for prescribers, pharmacists, behavioral health professionals, first responders, individuals with opioid use disorder and their families and friends.

Sagness said the division intends to continue to offer other types of support to North Dakota communities struggling to address opioid abuse and overdoses.

Resources addressing the state's opioid epidemic are available online at <https://behavioralhealth.dhs.nd.gov/addiction/opioid> 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.

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