

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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Five communities awarded grants to strengthen opioid addiction treatment and recovery and to prevent overdose deaths

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services has awarded grants to five communities to strengthen local efforts to treat opioid use disorder, support recovery, and save lives by preventing overdose deaths.

Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot and Valley City will receive funding from the 2017 State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant (Opioid STR). Grant recipients include the City-County Health District in Valley City, N.D.; the city of Fargo and Fargo Cass Public Health; the city of Grand Forks and Grand Forks Public Health; First District Health Unit of Minot; and the Heartview Foundation and Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health.

In June, the department invited communities to submit proposals. To be considered, communities were required to demonstrate need and the local capacity to address the opioid crisis across the continuum from prevention to recovery. Awarded communities will implement strategies to increase access to evidence-based treatment and recovery support services. Communities will also reduce overdose-related deaths through prevention efforts, specifically dissemination of the life-saving drug naloxone.

“We are excited to have this opportunity to support communities in addressing the opioid crisis in a comprehensive, but locally-driven way, that includes prevention, treatment and recovery,” said Laura Anderson, prevention administrator for the department’s Behavioral Health Division.

Anderson said each community will receive \$180,000, and grant-funded efforts are expected to begin this month and run through April 15, 2018.

Overdose deaths in North Dakota increased from 20 deaths in 2013 to 61 deaths in 2015.¹ The Centers for Disease Control reported that during 2015, drug overdoses accounted for 52,404 U.S. deaths, including 33,091 (63.1 percent) that involved an opioid.²

Opioids include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription.

In April 2017, the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration’s Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and Center for Substance Abuse Prevention awarded all states funding for the fiscal year 2017 State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants. The funding was authorized by the 21st Century Cures Act.

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Communities receive funds to fight opioid abuse and overdose deaths – page 2

North Dakota is dedicating a minimum of 80 percent of its \$2 million grant to treatment and recovery services, and using the rest for prevention and data collection, reporting and evaluation.

The state intends to continue to offer other types of support to other North Dakota communities struggling to address opioid abuse and overdoses.

Grant activities will build on existing efforts, supplementing current partnerships and activates, 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://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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¹ CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality

² Rudd RA, Seth P, David F, Scholl L. Increases in Drug and Opioid-Involved Overdose Deaths — United States, 2010–2015. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2016;65:1445–1452. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm65051e1>.