

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
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## **Gov. Burgum and Human Services officials hope to secure federal resources to fight opioid abuse**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Doug Burgum and Department of Human Services officials announced today that the state will apply for new federal grant funding to fight the opioid abuse crisis in North Dakota.

Drug-related overdoses claimed 61 lives in North Dakota in 2015, up 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.

“Addiction needs to be treated like the chronic disease that it is. Drug abuse – especially opioid abuse – is devastating our communities and North Dakota families,” Gov. Burgum said. “I have directed the Department of Human Services to seek additional federal resources to help strengthen prevention, education, treatment, and recovery support. We need to embrace new, effective solutions, and must continue to work together at the state and local levels and in the public and private sectors to tackle this major challenge.”

Applications for the federal State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants are due Feb. 17. The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is expected to announce grant awards in April. If North Dakota receives grant funding, officials hope to begin implementation in August.

North Dakota officials intend to apply for the full amount authorized for the state: \$2 million per year for up to two years. The grant funding formula factors in unmet treatment needs and drug poisoning deaths.

The department’s Behavioral Health Division is still reviewing grant requirements. States can use the funds to identify gaps in prevention, treatment, and recovery and identify effective comprehensive strategies to address them. Funds also can be used to train health and behavioral health professionals to better prevent and treat addiction and support people in recovery.

Training may focus on the use of naloxone to prevent overdose deaths, pain management, opioid prescribing guidelines, how to use the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, how to recognize possible substance use disorders, available treatment resources, how to make referrals, and other training needs.

Behavioral Health Division Director Pamela Sagness said 80 percent of the grant funding must be used to support opioid treatment services, such as increasing access to evidence-based treatment – including medication-assisted treatment – and recovery services.

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Implementing proven prevention strategies is also crucial to reducing the number of people with opioid use disorder and preventing opioid overdose deaths, Sagness said.

Grant activities would 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 campaign 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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