

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | May 17, 2019

Human Services awards State Opioid Response grant funding to communities to continue addressing the opioid crisis

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division is providing funding to communities to implement evidence-based strategies aimed at preventing opioid overdoses and increasing access to effective treatment and recovery services. The agency is distributing more than \$750,000 to support prevention, treatment and recovery support efforts in 16 local public health areas across the state.

The federal grant funding will be used to decrease access to unwanted prescription opioids and to increase access to the overdose antidote naloxone, and effective medication-assisted treatment and recovery support services.

The division invited all local public health units to apply for funding and received 16 applications. Public health units awarded funding include: Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, Cavalier County Health District, Central Valley Health Unit, Fargo-Cass Public Health, First District Health Unit serving north central North Dakota, Foster County Health Department, Grand Forks Public Health Department, Nelson-Griggs District Health Unit, Ransom County Public Health Department, Richland County Health Department, Rolette County Public Health District, Sargent County District Health Unit, Southwestern District Health Unit, Towner County Public Health District, Walsh County Health Department and City-County Health Department based in Valley City. A grantee map is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/news/2019/sor-grant-map.pdf.

"This support of community-specific strategies is important for creating and sustaining positive change," said Laura Anderson, assistant director of the Behavioral Health Division.

She said, the community grants support a coordinated response to the opioid crisis and are part of the State Opioid Response Grant from the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which is providing key funding to help North Dakota sustain and expand efforts preventing overdose deaths through prevention, treatment and recovery activities.

The two-year grant is providing about \$4 million per year for two years ending September 2020, which the division will use to reduce unmet treatment needs and increase access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. This grant follows a State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis grant, which the state implemented from April 2017 to April 2019.

Previous community and statewide efforts produced these outcomes, which the department hopes to continue to build upon.

- The number of providers able to prescribe buprenorphine (a type of medication-assisted treatment) has increased from 18 in April 2017 to 60 in January 2019.

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- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drug overdose deaths in North Dakota fell by 13.2 percent to 68 deaths in 2017.
- North Dakota communities have provided over 500 trainings on effective overdose prevention to over 7,000 nurses, first responders, correction system professionals, behavioral health providers, educators and others including the general public.
- Over 5,700 naloxone kits have been distributed through statewide and community partnerships.

The Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division is responsible for reviewing and identifying service needs and activities in the state's behavioral health system to ensure health and safety, access to services and quality services. It also establishes quality assurance standards for the licensure of substance use disorder program services and facilities and provides policy leadership in partnership with public and private entities. For more information, visit www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov.

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