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Human Services awards funding to local communities for substance abuse prevention and reducing opioid overdose deaths

Bismarck, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division has awarded funding from two federal grants to 23 local public health units across the state to continue to implement evidence-based strategies aimed at substance abuse and opioid prevention efforts and effective treatment and recovery services.

Prevention remains a crucial part of supporting North Dakotans' behavioral health needs. Between 2009 and 2019, the percentage of North Dakota high school students reporting past 30-day alcohol use declined from 43.3 percent to 27.6 percent (2019 North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey). However, drug-related deaths claimed 79 lives in North Dakota in 2019. That was an increase from 66 deaths in 2018 and 76 deaths in 2017, according to the North Dakota Department of Health.

"Effective prevention relies on the active involvement of multiple community partners working together to address complex problems," said Behavioral Health Division Assistant Director Laura Anderson.

The Substance Abuse Prevention Community grant, which is funded through the state's federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block grant, supports evidence-based substance abuse prevention programs targeting underage drinking and adult binge drinking. This competitive funding opportunity was open to all local public health units in the state that were not currently receiving federal funding for substance abuse prevention programs.

The department will distribute \$750,000 annually for two years to these local public health units: Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, Cavalier County Health District, Central Valley Health District, City-County Health District, Custer Health, Foster County Public Health, Lake Region District Health Unit, LaMoure County Public Health, Rolette County Public Health District, Southwestern District Health Unit, Upper Missouri District Health Unit and Wells County District Health Unit.

The second federal grant, the State Opioid Response grant, is a two-year grant from the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration. It provides \$4 million per year to North Dakota to support communities across the state to address local needs and gaps throughout the continuum of care specific to the opioid crisis, while also addressing stimulant misuse and use disorders. This funding opportunity was open to all local public health units in the state. It continues the investment made in 2018, when North Dakota was awarded its first State Opioid Response grant.

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“The federal State Opioid Response grant provides opportunities to connect individuals to needed treatment services and also to prevent overdoses by implementing prevention strategies including increasing access to the life-saving medication naloxone,” Anderson said.

The grantees include: Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, Cavalier County Health District, Central Valley Health District, City-County Health District, Custer Health, Dickey County Health District, Emmons County Public Health, Fargo Cass Public Health, First District Health Unit, Foster County Public Health, Grand Forks Public Health, Nelson-Griggs District Health Unit, Ransom County Public Health, Richland County Health Department, Rolette County Public Health District, Sargent County District Health Unit, Southwestern District Health Unit, Towner County Public Health, Walsh County Health District and Wells County District Health Unit.

The department’s Behavioral Health Division currently provided funding to four federally-recognized tribal nations in North Dakota to implement evidence-based substance abuse prevention efforts.

The 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 and access to quality services. It 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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