

Addressing Opioid Misuse and Disorders: The Impact of State Targeted Response and State Opioid Response Grants

Background on State Targeted Response and State Opioid Response Grants

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) administers the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis (STR) and State Opioid Response (SOR) grant programs. The STR program was designed to address the opioid crisis by increasing access to treatment, reducing unmet treatment need, and reducing opioid overdose–related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment, and recovery support activities for opioid use disorder (OUD). Following STR, the SOR program similarly aims to address the opioid crisis by increasing access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) using the three Food and Drug Administration (FDA)–approved medications for treatment of OUD and through the provision of prevention, treatment, and recovery activities for OUD. In addition, the SAMHSA SOR program supports evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services to address stimulant misuse and use disorders, including for cocaine and methamphetamine.

In FY 2017 and FY 2018, grantees received a total of \$1 billion through STR. From FY 2018 through FY 2020, states, territories, and jurisdictions received a total of \$4 billion in SOR grants.

Single State Agency (SSA): Vermont Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs (ADAP)

In FY 2017 and FY 2018, the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs (ADAP) received a total \$4 million in STR funding. From FY 2018 through FY 2020, the state received a total of \$14 million in SOR funding.

Overview of Vermont’s efforts to address opioid misuse and disorders

Vermont’s STR and SOR grant activities aim to increase access to MAT, increase workforce capacity to treat substance use disorders (SUDs), increase regional capacity to implement community-specific opioid strategies, and decrease opioid overdose–related deaths. The activities will focus on the following three populations to improve treatment access and engagement: (1) individuals who are in need of but not actively seeking OUD treatment, (2) individuals awaiting administration of MAT, and (3) individuals who may be at heightened risk for opioid overdose. Vermont will achieve these goals by implementing activities that support and enhance direct service and capitalize on Vermont’s existing prevention, treatment, and recovery systems to address opioid misuse and serve all 623,657 Vermonters.

Innovative service delivery models

- Drug disposal kiosks, mail-back envelopes, and the Drug Disposal Law Enforcement Pilot Project
- Community prevention capacity building
- SUD centralized intake and resource center (CIRC)
- Rapid access to MAT
- Quality improvement program for SUD treatment providers
- Recovery services in Vermont hospital emergency rooms
- Medical-legal partnership (MLP) in opioid hubs and recovery centers
- Vermont Department of Corrections MAT program (VCMAT)

Building workforce capacity

Prevention Works

ADAP uses STR/SOR funding to support a statewide prevention network to create leaders and support the prevention workforce to sustain regional and community-level prevention of opioid misuse and dependence. The program also supports prevention of misuse of other substances that are known risk factors for development of OUD.

Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training

ADAP provides a free-of-charge foundational course of study in substance use prevention that blends a 4-day, in-person component with an interactive online unit.

Recovery Coach Education and Certification

ADAP provides funding for individuals to complete the 40-hour educational component of the Vermont Recovery Coach Academy's certification requirement. Both face-to-face and virtual course options are available to expand accessibility of program participation and build workforce capacity into more rural areas.

Collaborating with public and private entities

Throughout Vermont local communities have organized coalitions to address the opioid crisis. ADAP works with all the coalitions and has worked closely with law enforcement on the drug disposal program with much success.

Preventing opioid misuse before it starts

Vermont has invested the STR/SOR funds into several prevention activities. These include:

Drug Disposal Kiosks and Mail-Back Envelopes: ADAP purchases drug disposal kiosks and mail-back envelopes to facilitate safe disposal of unused medications.

Drug Disposal Law Enforcement Pilot Project: This project involves mobilization of the community and law enforcement working together to collect unused medications.

Locking Medication Bags: ADAP purchases and distributes locking prescription medication bags as an approach to mitigate the risk of diversion of prescribed MAT medications and ensure the appropriate use/dose of medication by patients. The bags will be prioritized for distribution to MAT-prescribed women who recently gave birth at a Vermont hospital and women who are parenting children. MAT

providers distribute the bags to their current and ongoing patient population and educate their patient population on the purpose, importance, and use of the bags.

Vermont Parent Child Centers: ADAP is funding training of Parent Child Center staff in the use of evidence-based screening tools such as UNCOPE and CRAFFT. Individuals who screen positive will be referred for services. Evidence-based family education substance use prevention parenting programs such as Nurturing Skills for Families will be implemented in all 15 Parent Child Centers.

Community Prevention Capacity-Building Grants: Prevention mini-grants will be coordinated with and through the lead grantee or subgrantee of Vermont’s Regional Prevention Partnerships. The counties targeted have a total of 459,814 Vermonters.

Prevention Hubs and Capacity Grants: ADAP established two regional prevention hubs in Vermont. These programs will develop and maintain regional readiness and capacity for primary and secondary substance misuse prevention.

Rocking Horse Program: The Rocking Horse program focuses on parenting women who are impacted by substance use in their lives. The State is using STR/SOR funds for evaluation and expansion of the program; material revision and curriculum update; and training for Rocking Horse program facilitators.

College Initiative: The State is working with colleges on policy changes, restorative justice opportunities, and strategy development for college students.

Vermont Adult Technical Education: ADAP funds community education developed by the Vermont Adult Career and Technical Education Association. The curriculum provides information on opioids, addiction education, and community strategies to prevent and assist those experiencing opioid addiction.

Education and public awareness

Combatting Stigma Campaign

The Combatting Stigma campaign is a public messaging campaign to increase understanding of addiction as a health issue, increase understanding of MAT as a tool in the treatment of OUD, and promote action steps for getting to treatment.

Kingdom County Productions “Listen Up”

This project involved the development of a youth-focused musical production, “Listen Up,” and discussion guide for distribution among Vermont schools statewide.

Overdose Prevention Campaign

The overdose prevention campaign KnowOD involves the development and distribution of a statewide and targeted media campaign that includes risk education, overdose reversal (naloxone), understanding of the Good Samaritan law, and information on how to access treatment and recovery services.

Overdose reversal efforts: saving lives

Harm Reduction To-Go Packs

Overdose prevention education materials, information on treatment and recovery resources, and naloxone to-go packs will be distributed to the recovery support staff in the emergency room programs, syringe service exchange programs, pregnant women, and individuals leaving corrections.

Increasing access to treatment

SUD Centralized Intake and Resource Center

Funds will support the design, development, marketing, and implementation of an SUD treatment CIRC encompassing a call center, web-based appointment board, information website, waitlist management, and interim services management. The SUD Treatment CIRC is intended to support consumers and providers in accessing or referring to timely care for SUD and improve integration of services, coordination of care, and retention of individuals in treatment.

Rapid Access to MAT

ADAP is implementing a system-wide change to ensure individuals seeking treatment for OUD will receive MAT as appropriate within 72 hours or less from time of first contact.

Service Delivery Enhancement Specialist to Support Rapid Access to MAT (RAM)

ADAP is supporting expansion of Rapid Access: MAT (RAM) to three additional regions by working with stakeholders to evaluate and improve provider and system processes to meet the RAM 3-day-to-MAT standard, address barriers to access, integrate RAM and recovery support services in the emergency room initiatives, and develop and implement community-based outreach and engagement strategies that promote awareness of RAM.

Telehealth Equipment, Software, and Technical Assistance

ADAP has purchased telehealth equipment and deployed practice change/technical assistance for up to 60 providers within Vermont's treatment and recovery system to ensure both continuity of care and the development of consultation across providers.

Quality Improvement Program for SUD Treatment Providers

This program aims to assist outpatient and intensive outpatient ADAP Preferred Providers with capacity building to improve access to care, organizational stability, and quality of care for individuals with OUD through the implementation of innovative practices, practice improvement approaches, training, technical assistance, change management, and quality improvement strategies. This activity is designed to develop the internal capacity of each participating Preferred Provider to increase the implementation and understanding of evidence-based SUD treatment practices, including MAT for OUD; provide person-centered treatment planning based on clinical assessment; improve treatment engagement; and improve system-wide transitions in levels of care.

Residential Long-Term Bed Program Development

ADAP is using STR/SOR funds to develop and implement evidence-based residential programming to support individuals with OUD to achieve and maintain recovery. The program will provide an additional eight treatment slots to serve individuals in need of low-intensity residential care. Treatment will include structured support, access to MAT and related clinical services, and recovery support services.

Opioid Hub Program Development

ADAP has expanded Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) services to the greater Bennington County area, which is currently without a regional OTP.

Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry System

ADAP used funds to purchase, install, and train necessary staff on an integrated liquid handling equipment for gas chromatography/mass spectrometry. The Vermont Department of Health Laboratory requires specialized equipment to increase access to cost-effective, high-quality urine drug toxicology testing for individuals with OUD.

Family Engagement Services

This program involves adolescent and transitional-aged youth and family/caregiver outreach, engagement, and SUD education services. These services will be provided through the existing network of adolescent and young adult specialty providers. These activities will serve to identify risky behaviors that can lead to the development of OUD and provide education and parenting support to prevent opioid misuse and OUD.

Supporting long-term recovery

Vermont Recovery Network - Recovery Services in Vermont Hospital Emergency Rooms

This project places a peer recovery support model in hospital emergency rooms across the state. The model includes two FTE (full-time equivalent) peer recovery support staff in each emergency department, as well as a program coordinator to provide supervision and program management of the recovery support staff. This peer recovery support model connects individuals in hospital emergency rooms experiencing an opioid overdose with recovery services and connections to treatment delivered by certified peer recovery coaches. Prior to being released from the hospital emergency room, a peer recovery coach will work with the individual to offer recovery supports and resources to help maintain their recovery.

Vermont Recovery Network - Recovery Coaches/Pathways Guides

ADAP uses STR/SOR funds to support six recovery coaches/Pathways guides. Recovery coaches will form partnerships with individuals to create a vision for their recovery; identify and remove barriers to recovery; navigate through the human services system; access community resources; and connect with recovery services, including treatment facilities, recovery centers, and mutual support groups. Pathways guides work out of local recovery centers and opioid treatment hubs (clinics) to engage people who want to receive MAT for OUD. Pathways guides also introduce participants to the existing peer recovery support services available in their community.

Vermont Recovery Network - Telephone Recovery Supports

ADAP uses STR/SOR funding for telephone-based peer recovery support services for individuals transitioning out of residential SUD treatment. Trainings increase and sustain the Vermont Recovery Network's peer volunteers. The project includes continuation funding for two support staff, evaluation capacity, a software license for the program, and supervision of the volunteers.

Employment Services Pilot Program

ADAP will use funds to develop a supported employment program in three regions of the state. Implementation will occur in the local recovery centers and Opioid Treatment Hubs (clinics). Employment specialists will provide recovering individuals with the necessary skills training and work with employers in the community to establish relationships and develop agreements for employing

individuals enrolled in the program. The employment specialists will also provide employers with support and training on employing individuals in recovery, as well as employer incentives.

Medical-Legal Partnership in Opioid Hubs and Recovery Centers

MLP attorneys work directly in clinics and/or recovery centers affording availability to patients and clinic staff. The attorneys also spend time working off-site to follow through on cases. Primary areas of focus are to assist program participants in reducing or eliminating legal barriers to securing stable housing, employment, public benefits, and transportation. The MLP is a flexible, collaborative arrangement that embeds attorneys in established locations where people with OUD receive recovery and MAT services to address their unmet civil, legal, and related social needs that directly impact health outcomes.

Transitional Housing Beds

Beds for adult women are available in an existing Phoenix House RISE (Recovery in an Independent, Sober Environment) transitional housing program. Transitional housing services are available to Vermonters who need structure and support to successfully achieve and maintain long-term recovery. While in outpatient treatment or after completing a residential treatment program, women in recovery from SUD may reside in beds for 3 to 24 months at RISE.

Recovery Residence Certification Program

ADAP uses STR/SOR funds to support the development and implementation of a standardized Recovery Residence certification process in Vermont led by the regional affiliate, Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR), of the nonprofit National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR). Recovery Residences support individuals on their path to long-term recovery by providing safe, stable, and sober living environments with peer supports and services integrated into the home.

Recovery Services Data Platform

ADAP used STR/SOR funds to purchase membership software and deploy practice change/technical assistance at recovery centers to more accurately record and evaluate use of services, such as attendance at support groups, to effectively engage and support individuals, initially and ongoing, in programs and services that enhance the short-term and long-term treatment and recovery experience, ultimately leading to greater initiation and retention in treatment and recovery.

Recovery Housing Vouchers

ADAP uses STR/SOR funds to support recovery housing vouchers for 100 individuals with an OUD diagnosis.

Recovery Housing Infrastructure Development

The Vermont Foundation of Recovery's mission is to create a network of Recovery Homes for individuals with SUDs, including OUD, to support transitions from addiction to recovery and independent living. Funding supports infrastructure needs to ensure the organization's ability to continue to expand services across the state.

Serving special populations

Prevention Services for Special Populations

Cultural Brokers: This program provides integrated prevention, education, and early intervention services to Vermont's New Americans with and at risk for developing OUD. Six Cultural Brokers represent the immigrant and refugee communities they serve (e.g., Somali, Bantu, Congolese, Bhutanese, Nepali) and provide effective liaisons with schools, clinics, community agencies, medical providers, mental health agencies, juvenile justice, and law enforcement. Cultural Brokers build trusting relationships with Vermont's New Americans in identifying and addressing substance misuse. They also provide educational opportunities and information on available SUD community resources.

Outreach and Engagement for Transitional-Aged Youth: ADAP provides SUD education, community outreach, and community integration to youth housed in partner housing programs to prevent OUD.

Treatment Services for Special Populations

VCMAT: Vermont is expanding correctional-based MAT health care for incarcerated individuals in the state. The primary goals of VCMAT are to (a) ensure continuity of care for individuals transitioning between community and correctional care, (b) reduce recidivism through MAT-based OUD treatment, and (c) reduce post-release overdose deaths, which are estimated to be up to 129 times greater than the general population in early stages of release from incarceration.

Recovery Services for Special Populations

Recovery Coach Pregnant and Parenting Women's Specialist: This program involves peer support specialists working in the recovery centers who focus on pregnant and parenting women. Space is available for women to bring their infants. Women are connected to health care, social supports, housing, and other services.

Demonstrating outcomes for a healthier future

- 151 women served by the Rocking Horse program
- 25 drug disposal kiosks established for safe disposal of unused prescription medication
- 21,255 pounds of medication collected through the Drug Disposal Law Enforcement Pilot Project
- 1,087 individuals served through Parent Child Centers
- 55 participants attended the Vermont Technical Education community education sessions
- 22 individuals attended a Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training
- 12 hospital emergency rooms providing MAT initiation and three communities in planning stages of RAM implementation
- 1,375 individuals incarcerated in Vermont received MAT services
- 5,820 naloxone kits have been distributed
- 1,698 individuals served through recovery services in emergency rooms
- 27 women served by Recovery Coach Pregnant and Parenting Women's Specialists
- 38 individuals served through telephone recovery supports
- 280 individuals served through the Employment Services Pilot Program
- 28 individuals served by the MLP program

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