

## Minnesota SOR Initiatives

### Addressing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse & Use Disorders: The Impact of State Opioid Response (SOR) Grants

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) administers the SOR grant program. SOR addresses the opioid overdose crisis by providing resources to states and territories to increase access to Federal Drug Administration-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and to reduce unmet treatment needs and opioid-related overdose deaths with prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery supports. In 2020, SOR expanded to support evidence-based services for stimulant misuse and use disorders (StUD), including cocaine and methamphetamine.

This brief was developed by the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) in collaboration with the Opioid Response Network (ORN) as part of a series of state reports intended to showcase initiatives across the continuum of care that states have implemented with SOR funds. The ORN is a SAMHSA-funded technical assistance and training center that works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to support efforts to address the opioid and stimulant crisis.



### Single State Agency (SSA): Minnesota Department of Human Services (MDHS)

MDHS received \$95,929,334 in SOR funding from FY18 through FY23. For FY23–FY24, it received \$28,929,334.

The funding is being used to provide life-saving treatments to Minnesotans struggling with opioids, reduce deaths from opioid overdose, and prevent opioid use disorder (OUD) in Minnesota's most vulnerable communities.

Minnesota is using SOR to address the opioid crisis by increasing access to MOUD, developing culturally relevant treatment to disparate populations, and supporting other evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. The state is using the funding to provide naloxone, support prevention, clinician training, public awareness, and culturally responsive American Indian, African American, African-born, Latino, and Asian American OUD treatment programming.



### Preventing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse Before It Starts

Minnesota is implementing a multifaceted approach to prevent OUD and StUD before it starts, focusing on reaching the state's most vulnerable populations. Through culturally responsive messaging, targeted outreach,



and school-based prevention programs, Minnesota aims to raise awareness about the dangers of substance use disorders (SUDs) and provide critical information and resources to communities disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic.

### **Know the Dangers**

Minnesota employs culturally responsive messaging for SOR public awareness outreach, education, and prevention through [knowthedangers.com](https://www.knowthedangers.com). The website serves as an information hub and is continuously updated with options for treatment and counseling. Emphasis on outreach and awareness is placed on hard-to-reach communities, including African Americans and American Indians. A mixed-media campaign began in June 2023, significantly increasing traffic to the website. Billboard and TV ads have been strategically placed. New content and ads released in September and October 2023 focus on the LGBTQ population, youth, American Indians, and African Americans.

### **Change the Outcome**

Change the Outcome provides school-based prevention with panels of peers and professionals in middle and high schools. The programming raises awareness and understanding of SUDs, fentanyl, xylazine, pressed pills, and the opioid epidemic, while counteracting stigma. It uses a model of teens meeting with teens to provide vital information.

### **Anoka Students (ASK) Health Navigator Program**

Neighborhood Healthsource administers the ASK Health Navigator program for school districts in Anoka County. A trained community health worker delivers evidence-based opioid education, navigation support to connect students and their families with health insurance, primary care, and behavioral health services, and provides harm reduction materials. The goal is a school community where children and adults understand the dangers of opioid use and can effectively connect students and families to treatment.

### **Sejong Academy**

Sejong Academy is a Korean immersion charter school in Saint Paul with a majority of Korean refugee students. It is providing school-based drug prevention, leveraging community and cultural knowledge of its students and families to address drug issues that have emerged since COVID.

### **Valley Pain and Wellness Center**

Valley Pain and Wellness Center is providing consultation to opioid prescribers across Minnesota, especially prescribers treating patients with high-intensity pain. The overarching goal is to ensure patients experiencing high-intensity pain are adequately cared for while also preventing OUD as a result of the pain management.

## **Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives**

Minnesota has implemented a range of initiatives to prevent opioid and stimulant overdose deaths, focusing on expanding access to naloxone and providing education on its use. Through partnerships with community organizations, state agencies, and healthcare providers, Minnesota has significantly increased the distribution of naloxone kits and has provided training on naloxone administration to a wide variety of groups. Targeted efforts have been made to reach populations most at risk of overdose, including individuals living with HIV, people experiencing homelessness, and communities of color. These comprehensive efforts aim to equip Minnesotans with the knowledge and tools needed to reverse overdoses and save lives.



### **NorthPoint**

NorthPoint increased access to naloxone kits and education by hiring two culturally responsive Narcan educators. It is on track to serve 3,000 individuals annually, provide more than 12,000 doses of naloxone directly to African American and Native individuals and community organizations, and complete 10 naloxone trainings annually.

### **KaJoog**

KaJoog provides naloxone education and distribution to Somali American youth and their parents, initially in the Twin Cities and later in Greater Minnesota. It trains Somali leaders, professionals, and individuals impacted by OUDs to distribute and administer naloxone. It implemented Project CARE with the Afro American Development Association to reach the Somali community in western Minnesota and with Milestone Community Development to reach those in Rochester and Mankato.

### **Lutheran Social Services**

Lutheran Social Services distributes naloxone across the Twin Cities seven-county metro area to youth aged 13 to 24 who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. It delivers opioid overdose prevention and response training to youth and distributes Narcan nasal spray, safer-use kits, and a harm reduction brochure as part of the training. It is seeing increased training requests from youth organizations whose staff do not feel equipped to respond to drug use in their programs.

### **City of Minneapolis**

The City of Minneapolis is distributing and training on naloxone to Native American, African American, and Somali populations by partnering with the Native American Community Clinic (NACC), Southside Harm Reduction Services, Metro Youth Diversion, and Hue-Man. Hue-Man has trained more than 400 people in four to six weeks, providing naloxone distribution and education on xylazine. NACC provided training at conferences for healthcare providers of indigenous people.

### **Rural AIDS Action Network (RAAN)**

RAAN provides naloxone distribution and training in greater Minnesota, serving those living with HIV and at risk for overdose, including women, transgender, Latinx, African-born, Native American, Asian, African American, and Caucasian individuals. In one quarter, it purchased and distributed 433 Narcan kits, and participants reported 255 opioid overdose reversals. It trained and distributed 100 naloxone kits at a Leech Lake community event and to the Leech Lake Tribal police department.

### **Minnesota Department of Health**

The Minnesota Department of Health educates EMS responders on how to use intranasal naloxone kits and provides the kits. A web portal was developed to help fulfill statutory mandates requiring schools, sober homes, group/onsite living communities, and other groups to carry naloxone. The portal is effective in managing naloxone requests and distribution. Additionally, Red Door, which provides naloxone to syringe services programs, is also an effective distribution method. Red Door is the largest HIV and STD clinic in Minnesota and a landmark for healthcare services in Hennepin County. Receptionists can provide naloxone. Anyone can get naloxone without a prescription at Red Door for themselves, friends, or family members.

### **Steve Rummeler HOPE Network**

The Rummeler HOPE Network provides naloxone distribution and training statewide. In 2023, it facilitated 255 community naloxone trainings (60% by its own staff, 40% by its community trainer group) and distributed 19,000 intramuscular and 1,939 nasal naloxone kits in Minnesota across 81 counties. It is seeing increased

requests from treatment centers and schools. In one month, its staff and volunteers hosted 42 naloxone trainings for more than 1,200 attendees, distributing 3,700 intramuscular naloxone kits and 8,000 fentanyl test strips. It surpassed all of its historical annual records for naloxone training and distribution.

## Implementing Harm Reduction Strategies

Minnesota is implementing a multifaceted approach to reduce the risk of opioid and stimulant overdose and improve access to health care for vulnerable populations.

### Red Door Clinic

Red Door is implementing a comprehensive harm reduction strategy that includes naloxone training and distribution, referrals to treatment services, and capacity development for sustainable indigenous-centered overdose prevention services at Little Earth. Little Earth is 9.4-acre, 212-unit Department of Housing and Urban Development subsidized housing complex in the urban industrial core of Minneapolis. Little Earth remains the only American Indian/Native preference project-based Section 8 rental assistance community in the United States. It provides overdose safety plans and support for American Indian clients and other low-income populations in Minneapolis. In 2023, Red Door reported reversing 828 overdoses using 1,629 doses of naloxone, with half of the reversals involving indigenous individuals. To further expand harm reduction efforts, Red Door is beginning to offer MOUD in its clinic, accepting clients starting August 2023.

## Increasing Access to Treatment

Minnesota is working to increase treatment access for OUD and StUD through a variety of services and initiatives. These efforts focus on expanding MOUD availability in different settings, including office-based opioid treatment (OBOT) programs, residential facilities, and culturally specific organizations. The state aims to achieve this by integrating substance use and mental health services into primary care, increasing the number of MOUD prescribers, and facilitating care coordination. This approach seeks to reduce barriers to treatment access, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

### Fast-Tracker

Expands access to OBOT and SUD treatment in rural Minnesota communities by integrating substance use and mental health services in primary care, increasing the number of MOUD prescribers, coordinating referrals through integrated care facilitation, and developing pathways for transitions between clinics and community organizations. The contract has been executed, and MOUD has expanded to three new sites with staff onboarded and trained.

### St. Joseph Medical Center

Using SOR funding, the number of subrecipient public local mental health agencies offering MOUD has more than doubled, from 18 to 40 across the state. In 2023, 6,295 individuals received individual treatment services, 3,143 received group services, 1,400 received intensive outpatient programming, 2,374 participated in contingency management, 49 received residential treatment,



and 5,334 received wraparound services. SOR funds have also bolstered the number of MOUD prescribers to 130 at subrecipient agencies.

### Lakeview Behavioral Health

Using SOR funding, Lakeview Behavioral Health has enhanced and expanded its existing office-based MOUD program to improve outcomes for individuals with OUD and StUD in rural northeastern Minnesota. Funding supports outreach, multidisciplinary MOUD coordination, integration with mental health and addiction treatment, and assistance accessing social services and supports.

## Supporting Long-Term Recovery

Minnesota is implementing a range of recovery support services and initiatives to assist individuals in maintaining active recovery from SUDs. These efforts focus on increasing access to peer support, expanding recovery housing options, and providing education and employment support services. By creating peer recovery specialist positions and offering training opportunities, Minnesota is working to build a strong peer support network that can offer guidance, mentorship, and hope to individuals in recovery.

Collaborations with community organizations and law enforcement also help connect individuals to recovery resources and support their long-term success. Additionally, the development of recovery residences and sober housing programs provides safe and supportive living environments for individuals in recovery, while initiatives that focus on vocational training and education support services aim to enhance their overall quality of life and promote sustained recovery.



### Recovery Community Network

Using SOR funds, a peer recovery specialist position was created to assist veteran and service-member communities by providing peer-to-peer services that help with the transition back from military deployment. Veterans were recruited for peer recovery training beginning in October 2023.

### Doc's Recovery House

Doc's Recovery House provides peer recovery services and supportive housing to individuals pursuing recovery from SUD across southeast Minnesota. Doc's Recovery House offers a quarterly Recovery Coaching Academy for individuals interested in learning more about becoming a peer recovery specialist, or those who are allies of recovery and interested in the training. The program focuses on training and supervising peer recovery specialists. Additionally, Doc's Recovery House is expanding the Police-Assisted Recovery Program by introducing an Overdose Response Team, which offers peer support and triage services to individuals before treatment. The organization is also developing payer relationships to sustain peer support services. Doc's Recovery House continues to train numerous peer recovery support specialists, many of whom initially came from its sober housing and now work for the organization. The peer support community of practice receives positive feedback and has a high attendance rate. Furthermore, Doc's Recovery House has built a strong



relationship with the local police department, receiving referrals for peer support and pre-treatment placement.

### **Minnesota Department of Services Housing Unit**

The Housing Division SOR grants provide case management and limited direct assistance to homeless individuals in an effort to help them secure and retain permanent housing. Grantees were selected through a request for proposals process for SOR 2020, and those who met performance criteria were refunded with SOR 2022 funds. All SOR 2022 contracts have been executed, and services are currently being provided to recipients. These services are based on the Housing First model, with SOR funds serving as the payer of last resort.

## **Reaching & Serving Populations of Focus**

Minnesota is targeting populations disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic, tailoring initiatives to their unique needs. Programs like those offered by the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center and the Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota focus on culturally specific outreach for minority and Tribal communities. Specialized services, such as the onsite MOUD program at Wayside Recovery Center for pregnant and postpartum women, address complex needs. Efforts extend to individuals experiencing homelessness, with mobile MOUD services by Hennepin County Public Health, and veterans supported through peer recovery specialists from the Recovery Community Network. By addressing specific barriers and experiences, Minnesota aims to reduce disparities in care access and improve outcomes for people most affected by SUD.

### **Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center**

The Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center provides culturally specific outreach and services access to American Indians through an onsite Wawokiye Respite Center and Outreach Services grounded in indigenous healing philosophies. It supports urban Native women and Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ relatives struggling with SUD or OUD, mental health issues/trauma, homelessness, or commercial exploitation/sex trafficking. Staff members attended various trauma-informed training sessions.

### **Crown Medical**

Crown Medical expanded MOUD, counseling, and outreach to minority, women, and immigrant populations. It provides personalized needs assessment, peer recovery coaching, support services navigation, and culturally and linguistically appropriate education, treatment, and prevention. It collaborates with agencies for referrals.

### **White Earth Nation**

In the effort to eliminate racial/ethnic disparities in treatment, White Earth is providing culturally specific services to support youth. These services will help youth understand the risks of substance misuse, specifically OUD, and identify two or more key strategies for reducing their personal risks of use.

### **Wayside Recovery Center**

Wayside Recovery Center provides onsite MOUD to African American women, particularly pregnant and postpartum women and their infants, at residential facilities. The center expands its services to ensure continuity of care within a multidisciplinary team. Additionally, it trains physicians and clinicians on medications for pregnant and postpartum women with OUD and considerations for neonatal abstinence syndrome. Its peer support program has successfully engaged alumni to become peer support specialists.

### **Minnesota Indian Primary Residential Treatment Center (MIPRTC)**



MIPRTC aims to expand and enhance MOUD access among the Indigenous population in Minnesota. The center's primary goals are to reduce drug-related mortality, increase knowledge retention in addiction treatment, improve health and well-being, reduce drug-related crime, and decrease transmission of infectious complications for people who inject drugs. MIPRTC provides psychological screenings, co-occurring and educational groups on MOUD, and social networking and outreach. On average, MIPRTC serves 100 unduplicated American Indian women per month.

### HealthFinders Collaborative

The collaborative provides SUD outreach services tailored to Rice County's Somali and Latino communities. It aims to cultivate local bilingual SUD providers, offering education, awareness, support, and sustained culturally and linguistically appropriate SUD services. The program has successfully connected with Hispanic and Somali youth, having hired young Somali and Hispanic staff members. It offers activities to create a safe community for youth and others affected by OUD. Additionally, the program refers outreach clients to treatment and recovery services. It was recently licensed as a treatment center and will begin accepting outpatient clients soon.

### Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota

Provides culturally specific outreach and access services to Asian and Pacific Islander communities in the seven-county metro area, using a collaborative model with four other community-based culturally specific providers serving Lao, Bhutanese, Vietnamese, Karen, Karenni, Hmong, and Cambodian communities. The organization is expanding outreach to more rural areas of Minnesota and distributing high-need naloxone kits from the Rummler HOPE Network.

### Hennepin Healthcare

Hennepin Healthcare is offering MOUD for American Indian patients who are incarcerated at the Hennepin County Jail. It will do this by expanding access to MOUD treatment options and beginning to provide evidence-based, culturally relevant support services for incarcerated American Indian individuals.



**About the Opioid Response Network (ORN):** ORN is a group of diverse individuals and organizations working collaboratively to address the opioid and stimulant crisis. Funded by SAMHSA's SOR/Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Technical Assistance (TA) grant, ORN works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to provide education and training. **Visit the ORN website [here](#) or request training or TA [here](#).**

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