

## Nebraska 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): Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health

From FY19 through FY23, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Division of Behavioral Health received \$21.4 million in SOR funding. For FY23–FY24, it received \$4.6 million.

Nebraska aims to reduce the incidence of prescription and illicit opioid misuse and addiction through ongoing collaboration between practitioners, experts, and leaders across the continuum of care. The state has focused on prevention strategies, including:

- Expanding public awareness of opportunities for prescription drug take-back programs
- Promoting awareness of opioid use, overdose, and naloxone through statewide campaigns and school presentations
- Educating prescribers and dispensers on comprehensive pain management guidelines



- Providing training for health profession students and providers on evidence-based treatment of pain and opioid use disorder (OUD)
- Reducing barriers for treating OUD in primary care settings
- Expanding naloxone availability and training for law enforcement, first responders, and community members

## Preventing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse Before It Starts

Nebraska's Behavioral Health System has six regional health authorities (RBHAs) responsible for local network prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives. The state uses several coalitions in the RBHAs to deploy prevention strategies, including evidence-based prevention practices, primary prevention initiatives, naloxone distribution, and overdose education.

### Education and Public Awareness

All RBHAs participate in awareness campaigns, including the statewide [Stop Overdose Nebraska Campaign](#), through multiple media formats. RBHAs and local coalitions also create and promote educational materials around opioid use and misuse.

Nebraska partners with RBHAs to distribute drug deactivation pouches for drug disposal. This includes prescription drug lockboxes and Deterra. RBHAs partner with the Drug Enforcement Agency to host local drug take-back days. The Nebraska Division of Behavioral Health also partners with the Nebraska Pharmacists Association (NPA) for drug take-back initiatives. Through the Nebraska MEDS program, any enrolled pharmacy will take back expired or unused prescriptions every day.

Over 9,000 pounds of medication have been collected at community drug take-back events.

## Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives

Nebraska has used SOR to support its overdose reversal medication distribution and education initiatives.

### Naloxone Distribution

Nebraska purchased and distributed more than 6,500 naloxone kits in FY23. Through a partnership with NPA, Nebraska distributes naloxone to at-risk individuals. This program has expanded to more than 120 pharmacies actively distributing Narcan. Nebraska also works with licensed first responders to get them naloxone at no cost. As of FY23, roughly 200 first responders have enrolled in the No Cost Naloxone program.



## Increasing Access to Treatment

Nebraska has used SOR to increase access to treatment services, including Project ECHO and other medical professional trainings.

### Project ECHO

Project ECHO virtual case consultations provide a platform that connects a hub team of experts in pain management and substance misuse with healthcare providers and other stakeholders across the state. Each ECHO session consists of a 15- to 20-minute didactic presentation followed by a de-identified case presentation from a participant who then receives consultation from the hub team of experts and other providers on the calls. The participant then receives follow-ups on future calls to see if additional consultation is needed. These virtual consultations help address substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health workforce shortages that many rural counties in the state see by connecting experts to other practitioners across the state engaged in direct patient care.

### MATE Act Trainings

Nebraska aims to increase access to treatment services for people with OUD. The Nebraska Division of Behavioral Health partners with the Nebraska Medical Association to implement MATE Act trainings, which include SUD curriculum. The trainings provide medical professionals with baseline knowledge in evidence-based SUD prevention and treatments, therefore increasing the chances of prevention, identification, treatment, and management of patients with SUD.

## Supporting Long-Term Recovery

To help individuals reach and maintain long-term recovery, Nebraska has implemented support services like recovery housing, peer support services, and trainings.

### Recovery Housing

Nebraska partners with multiple organizations to support recovery for individuals with OUD. The state collaborates with Oxford House and funds employment for three outreach workers to connect people with OUD to recovery housing and education. The Oxford House offers housing resources to individuals looking to recover from drug and alcohol addiction. The organization operates more than 70 peer-support, drug-free houses.

### Provider Training

The Nebraska Division of Behavioral Health partners with the Addictions Academy for a quarterly OUD training geared toward counselors, therapists, peer support specialists, prevention specialists, community health educators, and other behavioral health workforce leaders. This training helps reduce stigma and increase competencies for those who may work with individuals with OUD who are taking MOUD.



## Reaching & Serving Populations of Focus

Nebraska is fortunate to have a relatively low rate of fatal opioid overdoses compared with other states. This allows Nebraska to broadly target its services to encompass all disabilities, age groups, income levels, households, and racial and ethnic groups for OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery. The state focuses heavily on prevention activities and workforce development to safeguard against any spike in opioid overdoses, both fatal and nonfatal.



**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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