

## *Pennsylvania 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): Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP)**

DDAP has received \$465,080,537 in SOR funding from FY18 through FY23. For FY23–24, it received \$164,371,222.

SOR has allowed DDAP to continue expanding programming across Pennsylvania to address the rise in opioid and stimulant use, as well as to expand services to individuals in recovery. DDAP's strategic goals include reducing stigma, intensifying primary prevention, strengthening treatment systems, and empowering sustained recovery. These goals continue to guide decisions on how to use SOR to expand MOUD access, provide treatment for the underinsured and uninsured, offer recovery support services, conduct prevention activities, and prioritize the distribution of naloxone across the state. SOR is being used to focus on special populations, including pregnant women, veterans, and justice-involved populations, ensuring they have access to MOUD.



## Preventing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse Before It Starts

Pennsylvania has used SOR to support awareness campaigns about the opioid epidemic, provide resources, implement evidence-based programming across schools, and conduct other prevention efforts for school-based professionals and families.

### Get Help Now Campaign

Pennsylvania uses SOR to support the statewide Get Help Now campaign. The campaign leverages digital and traditional advertising to raise awareness about the ongoing opioid epidemic and offer resources to help.

The Get Help Now campaign had over 58.5 million impressions, 223,000 ad clicks, and 23.4 million audio/video completions from September 30, 2022, through September 29, 2023.

### PA START and PA STOP Campaigns

The PA START and PA STOP campaigns are collaborative efforts between the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and DDAP. PA STOP represents an expansion of the original PA Stop Opiate Abuse Campaign, focusing on providing outreach to employers, parents, caregivers, and faith-based communities. Its goal is to prevent substance use, increase access to treatment for substance use disorders (SUDs) or opioid use disorders (OUD), and support those in recovery from addiction. PA START is dedicated to building healthy and capable children. The PA START Messaging Campaign supports, advocates, and supplements programming targeting caregivers and influencers within a younger demographic. The goal is to intervene before risky behaviors and unhealthy choices have time to develop.

### Opioid Misuse Prevention Project (OMPP)

OMPP is a partnership between DDAP, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and PCCD. It uses evidence-based approaches and programs to address youth engagement in substance use and other problem behaviors. OMPP sites have formed partnerships within the communities they serve, bringing together single county authorities (SCAs), local school districts, nonprofit service delivery agencies, community coalitions, and the community at-large. This collaboration aims to address risk factors that lead youth to trouble and build protective factors to buffer them. Specific components of the project at each site include:

- Providing the evidence-based program LifeSkills Training to middle/junior high school youth
- Implementing the evidence-based Strengthening Families Program (SFP 10-14) for youths' families
- Developing and expanding community partnerships through risk-focused strategic planning
- Creating a public health promotion and education campaign using the PA Start messaging campaign
- Training the community at-large on the public health Social Development Strategy, foundation of the Communities That Care model

### 6-12 Evidence-Based Prevention

PCCD, in partnership with PDE and DDAP, developed the Evidence-Based 6-12 Substance Misuse Prevention Initiative. The goals of this program are to:

- Support school-based professionals and community organizations in building skills among youth to resist alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and misuse
- Prepare communities and schools for implementation of prevention programs for students in grades 6–12, starting in the 2022–2023 school year
- Increase family engagement with the aim of reducing and eliminating negative behaviors



- Improve youth and family decision-making regarding substance use by promoting social-emotional learning
- Decrease substance misuse among youth

## Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives

Pennsylvania uses several mechanisms to reduce overdoses, including overdose reversal agent distribution, education and technical assistance, and distribution of other harm reduction supplies.

### **Pennsylvania Overdose Prevention Program (POPP)**

With DDAP and PCCD partnering to manage POPP, the initiative emphasizes statewide and regional saturation and accessibility, focusing on providing naloxone and harm reduction supplies. Launched on August 31, 2023, POPP serves as a “one-stop shop” for individuals and organizations seeking multiple formulations of naloxone and related harm reduction supplies (e.g., fentanyl and xylazine test strips). Additionally, it functions as a clearinghouse for information, training, and technical assistance to support groups involved in harm reduction work and others on the frontlines of Pennsylvania’s evolving overdose crisis.

### **Co-Pay Assistance Program**

The Co-Pay Assistance Program, a collaboration between DDAP and the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA), expands access to naloxone and reduces barriers throughout the state. Serving as the last-resort payor for naloxone, the Co-Pay Assistance Program has seen significant participation since September 2021, with 49 counties and 292 providers partnering with PDA to offer the pharmacy co-pay program. Over 4,000 individuals have received co-pay assistance for naloxone.

## Implementing Harm Reduction Strategies

Pennsylvania has also used SOR to support allowable harm reduction strategies.

### **Harm Reduction and Integrated Crisis Stabilization Services**

DDAP continues its efforts to distribute funding to SCAs throughout Pennsylvania that have requested support for increasing harm reduction and integrated crisis stabilization services within their communities.

### **HIV/Viral Hepatitis Initiative**

The HIV/Viral Hepatitis Service Integration Project is a collaborative initiative by DDAP and Department of Health (DOH). The project increases awareness of and expands access to HIV and viral hepatitis testing, education, and prevention services in facilities treating individuals with SUD. It aligns with the HIV and Viral Hepatitis National Strategic Plan, which integrates prevention, identification, and treatment for individuals living with or at risk for HIV and/or viral hepatitis in SUD treatment programs. The project’s purpose is to coordinate sustainable approaches to these services through technical support, capacity building, and reimbursement policies. Since the project’s inception, DOH has conducted outreach and coordination with all 47 SCAs in Pennsylvania to facilitate HIV and viral hepatitis service integration.

## Increasing Access to Treatment

Pennsylvania has used SOR to enhance access to treatment and technical assistance for OUD, including MOUD, by reinforcing its systems of care through initiatives like the PacMAT Program and the Pennsylvania MOUD Technical Assistance and Quality Improvement Expansion Project (PA MOUD Expansion Project).

### Serving the Uninsured and Underinsured

SOR has supported allocations for the Pennsylvania's 47 SCAs, securing treatment and support services for individuals who are uninsured and underinsured. SCAs are responsible for the oversight of SUD services delivered at the local level.

### PacMat Program

The PacMAT Program expands access to MOUD through a hub-and-spoke model throughout Pennsylvania. Each "hub" includes an addiction specialist who provides expert guidance and support to primary care physicians, offers direct patient care that includes MOUD, and facilitates connections to other services. Additionally, the hubs provide training and supervision to clinical staff at the "spokes." Each spoke consists of primary care physicians who provide direct patient care, including MOUD and connections to additional services. The goal of the spokes is to offer care to individuals closer to their residence, thereby reducing barriers treatment access.

Since 2018, PacMAT has created 115 spokes across Pennsylvania, serving 26 counties and providing coordinated care services to over 8,000 patients.

### PA MOUD Expansion Project

The PA MOUD Expansion Project is a collaborative effort between DDAP and the University of Pittsburgh's Program Evaluation and Research Unit (Pitt PERU) aimed at enhancing treatment quality and capacity within MOUD clinics. The cornerstones of this effort include assisting sites in developing a tailored MOUD implementation model, implementing a continuous quality improvement process, and providing concierge technical assistance, training, and education. Since 2020, Pitt PERU has partnered with 15 healthcare sites to provide technical assistance, expanding access to quality MOUD, and conducted over 200 consultations with MOUD providers.

The PA MOUD Expansion Project continued its collaborative effort between DDAP and Pitt PERU in 2022, implementing the "All Pathways, All People: Advancing Opioid Recovery for All" project, previously referred to as the Three-County MOUD (3C-MOUD) project. This initiative is focused on developing and implementing a comprehensive, community-based program for adults with OUD residing within three Pennsylvania counties: Allegheny, Lackawanna, and Northumberland. The project improves access to high-quality, individually tailored MOUD, psychosocial treatment, and overall health and recovery when compared historically to the same indicators for similar adults



### Coordinated Case Management

SOR has supported establishing care managers at SCAs to assist individuals in navigating the treatment system, keeping individuals with OUD in treatment, and coordinating treatment with follow-up care and community support.

## Supporting Long-Term Recovery

Pennsylvania has used SOR to assist individuals in recovery by providing housing services, employment support, and expanding support services through recovery community organizations (RCOs).

### SCA: Housing and Housing-Focused Case Management

Housing and housing-focused case management for people in recovery from OUD or StUD assists with obtaining and maintaining safe, supportive housing. It also expands case management services to alleviate barriers that undermine stable housing. These expanded case management services include, but are not limited to, housing navigation, employment support services, childcare assistance, integrated care coordination, legal assistance, advocacy, educational assistance, assistance obtaining government benefits, and transportation services.

Since 2020, over 11,000 individuals have participated in the Housing and Housing-Focused Case Management Program.

### Regional Recovery Hubs

DDAP is supporting a recovery-oriented system of care (ROSC) by establishing a recovery hub-and-spoke model. Nine regional recovery hubs have been established to work in partnership with recovery community leaders. They conduct ongoing needs assessments through surveys and focus groups, providing technical assistance to organizations offering recovery supports that enhance and promote recovery within each region. Community-driven services serve as the spokes.

### Recovery Support Services

Four RCOs expanded or enhanced recovery support services for approximately 4,872 individuals with OUD. The services provided under this initiative included recovery coaching, telephonic support, education, employment supports, and life skills groups.

### Employment Support Services

Thirteen organizations delivered employment services to individuals in recovery from OUD. The projects partnered with at least one employer committed to supporting and employing individuals recovering from opioid use. Approximately 625 individuals were served, and over 1,000 employers were recruited.



## Reaching & Serving Populations of Focus

Pennsylvania has identified several subpopulations for targeted initiatives: youth and young adults, pregnant and parenting women, justice-involved populations, and veterans.



### **Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Higher Education**

SBIRT is provided at state colleges and universities through collaboration between PCCD, DDAP, and Pitt PERU. The project implements SBIRT within university-based student health centers to address substance misuse in higher education. Its goal is to reduce rates of binge drinking, daily marijuana use, and prescription stimulant misuse by providing students with more opportunities to contemplate their use through SBIRT.

### **Addressing Youth Substance Use and Mental Health Concerns**

The Addressing Youth Substance Use and Mental Health Concerns Initiative is a collaboration between PCCD and DDAP. Its primary goals are to:

- Increase availability of community-based programming and services for the intersections of substance use and mental health concerns among adolescents and young adults through various approaches
- Identify and address local needs for youth-focused substance use and mental health supports
- Increase community partnerships to better coordinate youth-focused substance use and mental health services

### **Pregnancy Support Services**

In fall 2020, \$2.9 million was awarded to nine organizations to provide support services to pregnant or postpartum women experiencing stimulant or opioid misuse. These grantees served 27 counties over the project period, focusing on linking patients to 14 evidence-based SUD treatment programs, specialty medical and mental health care, and case management related to employment, childcare, and transportation. In October 2021, the nine organizations received a renewal of their grant agreements, providing an opportunity to continue their pregnancy support services programming.

### **Pennsylvania Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PA PQC)**

Originally launched in April 2019 by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation with the participation of more than 140 advisory and work group members across the state, PA PQC was established. It focuses on reducing maternal mortality and improving care for pregnant and postpartum women and newborns affected by opioids. PA PQC serves as an action arm of DOH's Maternal Mortality Review Committee.

The primary goals of PA PQC include improving the identification of and care for maternal substance use (including OUD) and substance-exposed newborns, including neonatal abstinence syndrome. Accidental poisoning is the number one cause of pregnancy-associated deaths in Pennsylvania. Perinatal care teams from PA PQC sites form a team, participate in quarterly learning sessions, launch quality improvement initiatives, access quality improvement resources (including coaching, milestone-based quality improvement awards, toolkits, initiative-specific virtual meetings, and trainings), and report aggregate data. This process drives improvement around PA PQC's focus areas, and these steps repeat each quarter when the teams participate in the next learning session.

PA PQC includes 58 birth hospitals and neonatal intensive care units, representing 81% of live births in Pennsylvania and 14 commercial and Medicaid health plans across the state. PA PQC identifies perinatal processes that need improvement.

### **Police Diversion to Treatment**

In 2019, DDAP released a funding initiative announcement for the Police Diversion to Treatment Project for all SCAs. The aim was to create or expand collaborations between local law enforcement, treatment professionals, and recovery support providers, establishing a diversion program for individuals experiencing legal consequences related to OUD. The project's goal is to facilitate alternatives to arrest, booking, and



incarceration for individuals whose minor criminal behavior is directly due to their stimulant or opioid misuse. Rather than facing legal consequences, individuals receive treatment and support services for the underlying cause of the arrest. Since 2019, over 1,000 law enforcement officers have been trained, and over 400 individuals were referred to SUD treatment.

In addition to the work done by SCAs, DDAP collaborated with the Pennsylvania State Police to make treatment referrals while conducting operations to cut the supply of illegal opioid distribution. One objective of these operations is to reduce overdose deaths while significantly reducing the supply and distribution of illegal opioids in the targeted areas. Trained police officers engage individuals with OUD and encourage them into treatment.

### **MOUD and StUD Treatment for Individuals in State Correctional Institutions**

The Department of Corrections (DOC) continues to partner with DDAP to expand MOUD access across the 24 state correctional institutions (SCIs) by offering oral and injectable naltrexone and buprenorphine. DDAP, DOC, and all 47 SCAs collaborate to ensure inmates started on MOUD during incarceration continue upon release.

Additionally, DOC implemented the StUD therapeutic program within 24 of the SCIs. These program modules include components of treatment and recovery evidence-based practices, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), the matrix model, SMART recovery, and contingency management. Since 2021, over 1,500 individuals have received StUD treatment services

### **PCCD County Jail-Based MOUD Program**

DDAP partnered with PCCD to increase MOUD access within county jails. The goal of the County Jail-Based MOUD Program is to enhance opportunities for counties to provide MOUD with CBT to individuals who are incarcerated and upon their release from county jails. In addition to providing access and administering medications to individuals while incarcerated, SOR allows for individualized treatment plans, clinically appropriate inpatient or outpatient services, individual discharge plans, and aftercare services for each program participant.

In addition to the County Jail-Based MOUD Program, DDAP has partnered with PCCD on county-based drug courts and innovative pre-trial diversion initiatives. These projects supported expansion of existing drug courts, enhanced support services for drug court participants, and opioid-related treatment services. Funding also sustains local coordinators, professional development, and additional services to drug court participants.

Since 2019, 5,697 individuals have received MOUD through the County Jail-Based MOUD Program.

Over 6,000 individuals have received support from the county-based drug courts and innovative pre-trial diversion initiatives.

### **Veteran Services**

The Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMVA) awarded subgrants to ten nonprofit organizations serving more than 50 counties across Pennsylvania. These grants support a variety of existing programs tailored to the unique needs of veterans with OUD and StUD. The programs provide a combination of evidence-based services for co-occurring SUD and mental health conditions, including housing, counseling, peer mentoring, education, case management, suicide prevention and training, MOUD, employment support, financial security and stability, referrals to follow-up treatment services, and support groups for veterans and their families. Over 3,000 veterans have been served by DMVA and their subgrantees.



**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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