

# CONNECTICUT

## USE OF STR/SOR GRANT FUNDS TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID CRISIS

### Background on opioid-specific grants to States

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. These grants aim 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 activities for opioid use disorder (OUD) in the States. States received a total of \$500 million for each of FY 2017 and FY 2018 through STR. Additionally, in FY 2018, States received an additional \$1 billion in new funding through the SOR grants. In FY 2019, States received \$1.5 billion through SOR. Eligible applicants for both STR and SOR are the State alcohol and drug agencies.

### Allocations for Connecticut

Connecticut received \$5.5 million through STR for each of FY 2017 and 2018, and \$11.1 million through SOR in FY 2018. In FY 2019, Connecticut received a total of \$16.9 million through SOR.

### Overview of Connecticut's efforts to address the opioid crisis

Connecticut's overarching goal is to reduce overdose deaths in the State. With that in mind, there is a great focus on distributing naloxone kits to emergency departments, treatment providers, police departments, homeless shelters and the community at large. The next goal is to make evidence-based medication-assisted treatment (MAT) and recovery support services easily attainable.

Through STR/SOR funds, Connecticut has been able to support outpatient clinics, residential programs, and the CT correctional system to focus on MAT induction and maintenance. CT has a great appreciation of recovery coaching, and recovery support services have been added to hospital emergency departments and treatment providers to address needs of the person, as well as the family and the community. There are also a variety of prevention strategies, including media campaigns to educate the public. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS; the State alcohol and drug agency) has partnered with the Judicial Branch and the Consumer Protection, Children and Families, Correction, and Public Health Departments to develop a strategic and comprehensive approach to combat the CT opioid crisis.

# Primary prevention: stopping opioid misuse before it starts

## Education

- Change the Script Campaign: CT DMHAS has provided 75 mini-grants to community coalitions across the state to disseminate “Change the Script” materials to parents, prescribers, pharmacists, dentists, and veterinarians. This is a Statewide public awareness and educational campaign to increase awareness among the general public about opioid use, misuse, and overdose. The campaign was deployed across billboards, TV and radio stations, social media, and mall and bus advertising. Change the Script was customized for prescribers, funeral homes, realtors, libraries, and construction trades. Change the Script materials can be accessed [here](#).
- Workplace initiatives: Targeted five places of employment to provide opioid misuse prevention information through paycheck inserts, “lunch and learns”, and distribution of other materials. Employment Assistance Program (EAP) personnel were also educated on how to provide staff training.
- College awareness campaigns: 17 college campuses were awarded mini-grants under the Connecticut Healthy Campus Initiative (CHCI). Colleges received \$10,000 to implement campus based public awareness and education events.
- Web-based Trainings: Development of a hybrid, interactive web-based training and a webinar along with an accompanying user guide on Opioid Education and Awareness. The trainings are intended for parents, EAP staff, and the general public.
- Courage to Speak: Implementation of a drug prevention education program that helps parents understand and address the impact of substance use on children and youth. The program trains parents in both English and Spanish on communicating effectively with children on the dangers of drug use.
- School-based Education: Providing support to the State Education Resources Center (SERC) to develop and provide an opioid-related curriculum to school systems. SERC is currently developing a plan and recruiting school district participants.

## Tracking and Monitoring

- Academic Detailing: Promote best practices for opioid prescribing and dispensing through implementation of the theory-based Academic Detailing (outreach education for health care professionals) program. Community prescribers and pharmacists in four high-burdened health districts were identified for aberrant prescribing practices and will participate in the program.

## Proper Medication Disposal

- Education on opioid safety: DMHAS has funded 75 mini-grants to community coalitions across the State to provide education and resources regarding dispensing, safe storage, and disposal of prescription medications
- Storage & Disposal: Worked with the State's Department of Consumer Protection to create a YouTube video on medication disposal, licensed additional law enforcement drops boxes, and provided brochures for distribution.

# Increasing access to treatment

## Access to MAT

- Providing support for fourteen outpatient clinics in sixteen locations across Connecticut. Six of these clinics are providing enhanced MAT services, with the addition of recovery coaching and employment support staff.
- Providing vouchers for residential treatment in conjunction with MAT for people with opioid use disorder who are uninsured or under-insured.
- Providing street- based MAT in two cities identified as overdose “hot spots”.
- Supporting substance use residential treatment programs to become “MAT-friendly”.
- Supporting recovery coaches in eight methadone clinics.
- Developing a web-based residential treatment locator with real-time bed availability.
- Implementing community and faith-based initiatives aimed at outreach and engagement in overdose “hot spots”.

## Criminal Justice-involved population

- Supporting the CT Department of Correction in providing MAT maintenance and induction at five correctional centers, including one female-only institution.
- Implementation of the “Treatment Program Pathway”, enabling those in the court system to be evaluated by a clinician and recommended for treatment.

# Overdose reversal efforts: saving lives

- 3,000 kits have been distributed to Hospital Emergency Departments
- 3,000 kits have been distributed in communities via Regional Behavioral Health Organizations
- 2,000 kits have been distributed to local health districts via the Department of Public Health
- 1,000 kits to service providers, police departments and homeless shelters

# Supporting recovery

- Providing on-call Recovery Coaches at twelve hospital emergency departments.
- Implementing Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) to address the needs of individuals whose contact is through police departments.
- Supporting families with education and support groups.
- Supporting harm reduction, outreach, and engagement at an inner city “drop in center”.
- Addressing youth substance misuse in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families by offering SMART (Smart Management and Recovery Training) Recovery, SMART family and friends, and Alternative Peer Groups.
- Providing temporary housing support to individuals in early recovery who are in urgent need of safe housing.

## Additional outcome information

- 5,288 receiving recovery support services.
- 1,257 newly admitted to MAT.
- 704 providers who attended training, of which 179 went through Drug Addiction Treatment Act (DATA) waiver training.
- 14,244 individuals received naloxone training and opioid overdose education. Among them were physicians, nurses, social workers, addictions counselors, law enforcement, EMTs, family members, schools, and friends of overdose victims.
- The drugfreeect.org website received 17,216 page views. Average time spent on each page was 3 minutes and 46 seconds.
- 14,504 college students and personnel received opioid education and awareness training.
- 150 mini-grants were awarded to community coalitions across the State.
- 2,628 Naloxone Overdose Reversal Kits were distributed by RBHAOs between December 2017 and September 2018.
- Developed and deployed Statewide Change the Script opioid public awareness campaign; guidelines for opioid education; and naloxone distribution.
- 500 drug deactivation pouches will be distributed for disposal of unused and unwanted pills for home, clinical, and public settings.

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