

NEBRASKA

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 Nebraska

Nebraska received \$2 million through STR for each of FY 2017 and 2018, and \$4 million through SOR in FY 2018. In FY 2019, Nebraska received a total of \$5 million through SOR.

Overview of Nebraska's efforts to address the opioid crisis

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. Nebraska has been focusing on prevention strategies and workforce capacity and development. Through the Nebraska Opioid Coalition, the following strategic initiatives emerged:

- Educate opioid prescribers and dispensers regarding best practices and requirements for Nebraska's prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP)
- Expand public awareness of opportunities for prescription drug take back
- Promote awareness of opioid misuse through the "Dose of Reality" advertising campaign, school presentations, and other forums
- Educate prescribers and dispensers on comprehensive pain management guidelines

- Expand number of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) providers for OUD
- Provide training for health professions students and providers on evidence-based diagnosis and treatment of pain and OUDs
- Reduce barriers for treating OUD in primary care settings
- Expand naloxone availability and training for law enforcement

Primary prevention: stopping opioid misuse before it starts

Nebraska utilizes several coalitions throughout the six regional behavioral health authorities (BHAs) to deploy prevention strategies in communities. Nebraska's prevention efforts consist of evidence-based practices primary prevention initiatives, naloxone distribution, and overdose education. All BHAs are participating in awareness campaigns through local media outlets, which include the statewide Dose of Reality campaign and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Rx Awareness. In coordination with the Division of Public Health, coalitions aid in prescriber education on opioid prescribing guidelines. Coalitions are also distributing educational materials and prescription lock boxes. There have also been drug take-back events which have collected over 1,400 pounds of medication.

Increasing access to treatment

- Increasing buprenorphine reimbursement for MAT providers.
- Prescriber education, including promotion of Drug Addiction Treatment Act (DATA) waiver certification. Under SOR, a new program will implement MAT mentoring for newly certified prescribers.
- Project ECHO virtual case consultations: the virtual platform connects experts in pain management and substance misuse with healthcare providers across the State. The program contains a 15-minute didactic presentation followed by a de-identified case presentation from a participant who then receives consultation from the expert team.
- Addiction Medicine Fellowship housed in the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Family Medicine department to support residents in obtaining specialized addiction medicine education and DATA waiver certification.
- Executive Fellowship, also housed at UNMC, gives practicing providers a one-month addiction medicine experience with one-on-one training and work towards their DATA waiver certification.

Overdose reversal efforts: saving lives

Nebraska has purchased and distributed 2,139 naloxone kits. In partnership with the Division of Public Health, pre- and post-cards are given out with a pamphlet on the OpiRescue App. The pre- and post-cards are an attempt to gather information about when the kits are distributed (pre) and what the outcome of the naloxone use was (post). The Division of Public Health is gathering data from the cards. Additionally, the Division of Public Health is in the process of contracting with OD Maps to track overdose reversal information.

Supporting recovery

Nebraska held a peer support training for Medication Assisted Recovery Services (MARS) in which 37 peer support workers gained knowledge in working with OUD populations. Recovery housing services are currently being discussed with Oxford House to provide outreach support to OUD populations for recovery housing and education for providers. Under SOR the State will employ 3 full-time outreach workers through Oxford House to help connect the OUD population with recovery homes and services along with overdose prevention and education.

Collaborating with local entities

Nebraska's Behavioral Health System has six regional health authorities that are responsible for local network prevention, treatment, and recovery initiatives, such as partnering with prevention coalitions and network treatment providers.

Positive outcomes

- Over 22,200 individuals served through evidence-based individual opioid prevention programming. An estimated 125,000 individuals have been reached through all evidence-based programming.
- Over 3,000 prescription lock boxes have been distributed along with educational materials.
- 1,463 pounds of medication collected at drug take-back events.
- Project ECHO held 7 sessions in Year 1 of STR with over 163 registrants and 92 session participants. Another 17 sessions were held in Year 2 of STR. Sessions continue through the SOR grant and are planned through September of 2020.
- 121 individuals served with MAT.
- 45 prescribers waived to prescribe buprenorphine compared to 19 prescribers in 2017.
- 2,139 naloxone kits distributed.
- 37 peer support workers trained.

For more information, contact Robert Morrison, Executive Director, at rmorrison@nasadad.org, or Shalini Wickramatilake-Templeman, Federal Affairs Manager, at swickramatilake@nasadad.org.