

ALASKA

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 Alaska

Alaska received \$2 million through STR for each of FY 2017 and 2018, and \$4 million through SOR in FY 2018. In FY 2019, Alaska received a total of \$6 million through SOR.

Increasing access to treatment

Expanding MAT

The State Targeted Response funds have contributed to the expansion of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in Alaska. Three sub-recipients have received grant funds to expand MAT in the communities of Fairbanks and Kenai. The community of Fairbanks has benefited from the use of the Opioid Response Network in mapping out the availability of SUD services throughout the continuum of care and has identified where referrals and care coordination needed strengthening. In addition to expanding access to MAT, Alaska is focusing on improving the quality of MAT services. For example, STR funds helped one standalone clinic in Fairbanks enhance its capacity to provide onsite psychosocial services in addition to medication management.

Educating providers

The State of Alaska partnered with the University of Alaska Anchorage to implement Project ECHO-Opioid. To date, this model has successfully been implemented and has focused on topics related to pain, addiction, and opioids and has included presentations on screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT), pain management, and an introduction to the neurobiology of addiction. There has been representation from 25 communities statewide, with sessions ranging from 8-27 participants.

Overdose reversal efforts: saving lives

STR funds have contributed to Alaska's "Project Hope," an overdose education and naloxone distribution program offered statewide. As of July 2019, nearly 18,000 kits have been distributed and 108 programs became distributors of naloxone.

Supporting recovery

The State Opioid Response funds are contributing toward further developing and enhancing recovery supports throughout the State. Sub-recipients have received funds to hire and train peer support specialists. Funds have also been awarded to each region in the State to establish recovery residences. Technical assistance will be provided to these programs to ensure that they are meeting the standards of National Accreditation of Recovery Residences (NARR). SOR funds also will go toward a State recognized certification for peer support. This activity is very significant in Alaska, as there has been a great deal of grassroots peer support activity underway for quite some time. This new certification will further develop this workforce need in Alaska.

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