

GEORGIA

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 Georgia

The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) received \$11 million through STR for each of FY 2017 and 2018, and \$19 million through SOR in FY 2018. In FY 2019, Georgia received a total of \$30 million through SOR.

Overview of Georgia's efforts to address the opioid crisis

DBHDD is using STR and SOR funds in a variety of ways to reduce opioid overdose deaths, meet opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment needs, and provide safe and supportive communities to individuals returning from treatment:

- Bringing the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) model into several high-risk counties
- Providing naloxone training and distribution to communities, recovery support centers, treatment providers, and first responders
- Providing access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for the uninsured and underinsured
- Supporting the operation of several recovery support centers
- Providing recovery coaches in eight hospitals
- Supporting a warmline that is open 365 days a year from 8:30am – 11pm
- Offering recovery peers to support individuals with maintaining their recovery after completing MAT program

Primary prevention: stopping opioid misuse before it starts

There were 4 Public Service Announcements (PSAs) developed and displayed in 103 theatres as a part of a media campaign:

- **Good Samaritan:** Georgia's 911 Medical Amnesty Law (don't run, call 911)
- **Naloxone Availability:** raise awareness for Georgia's citizens about the standing order for naloxone
- **Advocate for Self:** the importance of speaking with your doctor or healthcare provider about your family history, predisposition, or any aversion you may have to taking opioids
- **Safe Storage & Disposal:** the importance of safely storing and disposing of opioids and other prescription medication

All of these initiatives were aimed at preventing opioid misuse and reducing opioid overdose deaths.

Increasing access to treatment

The STR grant allowed DBHDD to greatly increase availability of MAT. The funding has helped the State add the following MAT programs, which has resulted in 1,651 individuals being served:

- 24 residential beds dedicated to individuals receiving MAT
- 2 beds for women only in residential MAT program
- 5 additional detox beds for OUD clients only
- 9 outpatient programs throughout the State

The SOR grant allowed DBHDD to add eleven more outpatient programs of MAT services in areas with gaps in coverage. DBHDD also added transitional housing in two rural areas.

Overdose reversal efforts: saving lives

DBHDD has contracted with Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition, Inc. to train and distribute naloxone kits to citizens throughout the State. The DBHDD Office of Behavioral Health Prevention trains and distributes kits to first responders throughout the State. DBHDD has achieved the following astounding results as of April 30, 2019:

- 1,564 First responders trained
- 1,415 Kits distributed to first responders
- 5 Overdose reversals reported by first responders
- 7,455 Citizens trained
- 4,542 Citizens received kits
- 10,126 Kits distributed to citizens
- 1,293 Self-reported overdose death reversals

Supporting recovery

DBHDD recognizes the importance of strong recovery community support and believes that the opposite of addiction is connection. To provide more recovery support, DBHDD partnered with providers to perform the following services:

- A warm line that is open 365 days a year from 8:30am – 11pm
- Training for all recovery residences that are a member of the Georgia Associated Recovery Residences on the many pathways to recovery
- Recovery coaches in eight (8) emergency rooms
- Operational support of five (5) recovery community organizations
- Approximately 8,000 individuals have received recovery support services
- Medication Supported Recovery peers – have trained 18 peers that have been or are in a medication assisted treatment program

Collaborating with local entities

DBHDD acknowledges the gravity of the work to reduce the number of overdose deaths, providing access to those needing treatment and increasing the availability of recovery support in communities throughout the State cannot be accomplished by one agency. The Department has partnered with the following organizations in order to address opioid addiction and overdose in a collaborative way:

- Department of Corrections/Community Supervision – to advise of addiction as a brain disease, how to provide support to those with OUD returning to communities, and to help them feel empowered with information and resources to assist those in their program
- Accountability Court Judges – teaches on addiction as a brain disease, why treatment cannot be limited to one medication, and the challenges and triumphs of having a MAT program within an accountability court
- Department of Family and Children Services – teaching on addiction as a brain disease, the challenges of providing support to a parent with OUD, and the resources available to assist individuals that may need treatment or connection to a recovery support center
- Department of Public Health – providing strong support in the development of the State strategic plan on the opioid epidemic, sharing information regarding trainings throughout the State and gaps in coverage, and education on ways to collaborate to reduce overdose deaths and provide greater recovery support
- Physicians at various hospitals – provide the required three (3) CME's through education on the risks and known benefits of treating pain with opioids, addiction as a brain disease, and identifying and educating patients at greater risk for addiction
- Provider network – provide training on improving communication around substance use disorder to increase appropriate language awareness and reduce stigma
- Partnered with Georgia Council on Substance Abuse to launch a statewide project titled, "Georgia Recovers." This project will consist of billboards and videos of people that have recovered from substance use disorder sharing their story.

Positive outcomes

The services that DBHDD has offered since the inception of the STR grant have proven to reduce opioid overdose deaths, increase access to MAT need, and provide strong recovery support for those with OUD. Through the funds from STR/SOR, the State has seen an increase in overdose reversals, more people receiving treatment, and communities that are able to support individuals with OUD by meeting transportation, housing, employment assistance, and other needs to aid in a successful recovery. As numbers continue to grow, the State looks forward to also seeing a significant decrease in the number of overdose deaths and an increase of individuals recovering.

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