

VERMONT

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 Vermont

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

Overview of Vermont's efforts to address the opioid crisis

Vermont's STR and SOR grant activities aim to increase access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT), increase workforce capacity to treat substance use disorder (SUD), increase regional capacity to implement community-specific opioid strategies, and decrease opioid overdose-related deaths. The activities will focus on the following three populations to improve treatment access and engagement: 1) individuals who are in need of but not actively seeking opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment, 2) individuals awaiting administration of MAT, and 3) individuals who may be at heightened risk for opioid overdose. Vermont will achieve these goals by implementing activities that support and enhance direct service and capitalize on Vermont's existing prevention, treatment, and recovery systems to address opioid misuse and serve all 623,657 Vermonters.

Primary prevention: stopping opioid misuse before it starts

Vermont has invested the STR/SOR funds into several prevention activities. These include:

Law Enforcement Drug Disposal Pilot Project: mobilization of the community and law enforcement working together to collect unused medications.

Vermont Parent Child Centers: training of Parent Child Center staff in the use of evidence-based screening tools such as UNCOPE and CRAFFT. Individuals who screen positive will continue to be referred for services. Evidence-based family education substance use prevention parenting programs such as Nurturing Families will be implemented in all 15 Parent Child Centers.

Cultural Brokers: provides integrated prevention, education, and early intervention services to Vermont's New Americans with and at risk for developing opioid use disorders. Six Cultural Brokers represent the immigrant and refugee communities they serve (e.g. Somali, Bantu, Congolese, Bhutanese, Nepali) and provide effective liaisons with schools, clinics, community agencies, medical providers, mental health agencies, Juvenile Justice, and Law Enforcement. Cultural Brokers build trusting relationships with Vermont's New Americans in identifying and addressing substance misuse. They also provide educational opportunities and information on available SUD community resources.

Community Prevention Capacity Building Grants: prevention mini grants will be coordinated with and through the lead or sub-grantee of Vermont's Regional Prevention Partnerships. The counties targeted have a total of 459,814 Vermonters.

Combatting Stigma Campaign: public messaging campaign to increase understanding of addiction as a health issue, increase understanding of MAT as a tool in the treatment of OUD, and promote action steps for getting to treatment.

Prevention Hubs and Capacity Grants: establishment of two regional prevention hubs in Vermont. These programs will develop and maintain regional readiness and capacity for primary and secondary substance misuse prevention.

Rocking Horse Program (RH): evaluation and expansion of the program; material revision and curriculum update; training for RH program facilitators. The program focuses on parenting women who are impacted by substance use in their lives.

Kingdom County Productions "Listen-to" Project: development of a youth-focused musical production and discussion guide for distribution among Vermont schools statewide.

Increasing access to treatment

SUD Centralized Intake & Resource Center: funds will support the design, development, marketing and implementation of a Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centralized Intake and Resource Center encompassing a call center, web-based appointment board, information website, waitlist management, and interim services management in compliance with the Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant (SABG). The SUD Treatment Centralized Intake and Resource Center is intended to support consumers and providers accessing timely care for substance use disorder; and improve integration of services, coordination of care, and retention of individuals in treatment.

Rapid Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT): System-wide change to ensure individuals seeking treatment for OUD will receive MAT as appropriate within 72 hours or less from time of first contact.

Overdose reversal efforts: saving lives

Harm Reduction To-Go Packs: overdose prevention education materials, information on treatment and recovery resources, and naloxone. These will be distributed to the recovery supports in the emergency room program, syringe service exchange programs, pregnant women and individuals leaving corrections.

Supporting recovery

Vermont Recovery Network - Recovery Services in Vermont Hospital Emergency Rooms: this project places a peer recovery support model in hospital emergency rooms across the State. The model includes two FTE peer recovery support staff in each emergency department, as well as a program coordinator to provide supervision and program management of the recovery support staff. This peer recovery support model connects individuals in hospital emergency rooms experiencing an opioid overdose with recovery services and connections to treatment delivered by certified peer recovery coaches. Prior to being released from the hospital emergency room, a peer recovery coach will work with the individual to offer recovery supports and resources to help maintain their recovery.

Vermont Recovery Network - Recovery Coaches/Pathway Guides: support for six recovery coaches/pathway guides. Recovery coaches will form partnerships with individuals to: create a vision for their recovery; identify and remove barriers to recovery; navigate through the human services system; access community resources; and connect with recovery services including treatment facilities, recovery centers, and mutual support groups. Pathways guides work out of local Recovery Centers and Opioid Treatment Hubs (clinics) to engage people who want to receive MAT for OUD. Pathway guides also introduce participants to the existing peer recovery support services available in their community.

Recovery Coach Pregnant and Parenting Women's Specialist: Peer support specialists working in the recovery centers who focus on pregnant and parenting women. Space is available for women to bring their infants. Women are connected to health care, social supports, housing, etc.

Vermont Recovery Network - Telephone Recovery Supports: funding for telephone-based peer recovery support services for individuals transitioning out of residential SUD treatment. Trainings will increase and sustain the Vermont Recovery Network's peer volunteers. The project includes continuation funding for two support staff, evaluation capacity, a software license for the TRSS program, and supervision of the volunteers.

Employment Services Pilot Program: funds will be used to develop a supported employment program in three regions of the State. Implementation will occur in the local Recovery

Centers and Opioid Treatment Hubs (clinics). Employment specialists will provide recovering individuals with the necessary skills-training and work with employers in the community to establish relationships and develop agreements for employing individuals enrolled in the program. The employment specialists will also provide employers with support and training on employing individuals in recovery, as well as employer incentives.

Collaborating with local entities

Throughout Vermont local communities have organized coalitions to address the opioid crisis. The Vermont Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs works with all the coalitions and has worked closely with law enforcement on the drug disposal program with much success.

Positive outcomes

- 9,600 pounds of medication collected through the Law Enforcement Drug Disposal pilot project
- 608 individuals served through the Parent Child Center
- 133 individuals have made contact and have received MAT. 79% of those making contact in February 2019 received MAT within 72 hours.
- 1,000 naloxone kits have been distributed
- 388 individuals served through recovery services in emergency rooms
- 24 individuals served through telephone recovery supports
- 82 individuals served through the employment services pilot program

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