

Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council grantees for Fiscal Year 2024

A multi-faceted approach is needed for Minnesota to prevent opioid use disorder, reduce the number of opioid overdoses and improve treatment of opioid addiction. For Fiscal Year 2024, the Minnesota Department of Human Services is issuing \$20 million in grant funding to 28 organizations as part of a comprehensive statewide effort to address the opioid addiction and overdose epidemic. Grantees were recommended by the Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council. Below are the organizations receiving funding and activities being funded.

Twin Cities metropolitan area

- **Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research will receive \$298,000** for "Vecinos Unidos," a culturally-centered bilingual prevention program. Vecinos Unidos aims to educate Hispanic/Latinx families on the different aspects of opioid use disorder (OUD) and offer opioid overdose reversal training. This program has three main components: a bilingual, culturally-sensitive awareness social media campaign with bite-size factual info on OUD; an online survey assessing current knowledge and cultural barriers/myths on OUD and treatment; and a series of family-oriented, culturally-centered workshops that address OUD and train participants in the proper use of naloxone.
- **Pillsbury United Communities will receive almost \$227,000** for its Opioid Awareness Creation and Prevention project, which will reach 1,500 people with awareness and stigma-reduction services to reduce the impact of OUDs on East Africa, Latinx and Black communities in Minneapolis. The project will increase individual and group interactions between community health staff, community champions, faith leaders and clients; boost Pillsbury's reach through media campaigns in multiple languages through social enterprises and local partners; and increase the emphasis of OUD stigma reduction, prevention and response through community events.
- **Ka Joog Nonprofit Organization will receive \$976,000** to develop and implement evidence-based primary prevention and education services around opioid-related substance use disorders for Somali American youth and their families in the Twin Cities, Moorhead and Rochester. Ka Joog will draw on deep community ties to deliver a three-part culturally attuned project that prevents youth from developing opioid use disorders, builds healthy development and removes barriers to addressing misuse to ultimately save lives.
- **Hennepin Healthcare System, Inc. will receive \$506,000** to initiate a syringe services program within its two specialty clinics: Positive Care Clinic and the Addiction Medicine Clinic. Adding this crucial onsite

service to the existing one-stop shops will not only help reduce stigma and community transmission of infectious diseases, but also improve overall health outcomes.

- **Ramsey County will receive just over \$1 million** for Ramsey County Harm Reduction and Treatment Connection, which provides harm reduction services and treatment referrals to people who use drugs in Ramsey County and surrounding communities. The project targets justice-involved individuals and people experiencing homelessness, and serves racial and ethnic communities disproportionately impacted by OUD including African American and American Indian communities, through Ramsey County's correctional facilities, syringe service program, and their mobile medical unit.
- **Independent School District 622 (North St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale) will receive \$23,000** to focus on harm reduction through opioid use disorder training and increased availability of naloxone. With this increased access, the school district will also be creating a training module for all staff (including staff that support community-based events) that will educate on the prevalence and effects of opioid use disorder as well as how to use naloxone to prevent opioid related deaths.
- **Native American Community Clinic will receive almost \$618,000** to expand its community-based treatment workforce and provide training necessary for responding to OUD. They will hire a Peer Recovery Coach, Community Health Worker, and a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, as well as enter into an agreement with Normandale Community College to further clarify roles along the recruitment, training, and employment pathway for community health workers. The clinic will also host American Society of Addiction and Medicine training for these key staff.
- **The Karen Organization of Minnesota will receive \$857,000** to lead a collaborative partnership including U of M Physicians, St. Paul Public Schools, Fairview clinics and the Urban Village to design and implement a comprehensive, culturally responsive continuum of care for Karen and Karenni youth with opioid dependence in Ramsey County. This proposal includes systemic improvements, youth and family case management, overdose prevention, MOUD access, and culturally specific mentorship and aftercare groups to decrease disparities in access to OUD treatment and improve recovery outcomes for Karen/Karenni youth.
- **Women's Advocates will receive \$395,000** to integrate chemical dependency treatment and counseling, including access to suboxone, into its day-to-day operations serving survivors of domestic violence. This grant will allow them to hire a LADC to provide individual and group substance abuse counseling to survivors, and when appropriate, refer them to suboxone treatment.
- **Al-Maa'uun will receive \$1.62 million** to support clients who are experiencing OUD entering its "Second Chance" housing program from incarceration with recovery coaching, housing support, employment training and access to recovery community partners.
- **Southside Harm Reduction Services will receive \$432,000** to develop a drop-in community hub that will offer low-barrier access to harm reduction and overdose prevention services, medical care, treatment for substance use disorder, community events, and other resources and support designed for people most impacted by opioid overdose deaths: Indigenous and unhoused people who use drugs. Locally

there are no low-threshold spaces specifically built for unhoused people who use drugs, resulting in profoundly unmet needs. The hub will fill many of the gaps left by traditional health and human services systems.

- **Neighborhood HealthSource will receive \$572,000** for its Latino Family project, which will decrease opioid misuse among Latino youth and young adults. To recruit participants and to address community stigma, Neighborhood HealthSource will host a series of parent workshops and connect families to a community health worker. Workshops will allow families to build trusting relationships in which they can discuss difficult topics like OUD. Neighborhood HealthSource will also launch a WarmLine to respond to Spanish speakers' requests for information and support for SUD.

Greater Minnesota

- **Essentia Institute of Rural Health will receive almost \$492,000** for its Upper Midwest Rural Interdisciplinary SUD/OUD ECHO Project. This projects aims to improve the capacity of interdisciplinary teams in primary care and other health care settings to treat individuals with SUD and OUD. It will offer two series (nine sessions each) of education regarding SUD/OUD prevention, treatment and recovery, and will provide continuing education credits using the Project ECHO model.
- **Kandiyohi County will receive almost \$725,000** for a project that aims to enhance rural justice coordination and community response to opioid misuse and mental health issues. It involves adding critical positions to address substance use and provide case management for individuals involved in drug offenses. A specialized position will collaborate with law enforcement to establish an early engagement model for substance use and mental health-related encounters, providing coordinated services. The ultimate goals are to reduce recidivism, offer early engagement, and improve community response for a safer and healthier Kandiyohi County.
- **Harm Reduction Sisters will receive \$1.47 million** to expand its harm reduction-based syringe service program to include direct linkage to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) by modifying and adopting STAMINA (Syringe Service Telemedicine Access for Medication-assisted Intervention through Navigation). This program will serve persons with opioid use disorder from rural and underserved communities in Northeastern Minnesota. Harm Reduction Sisters will partner with medical providers to remove barriers and offer consultations and treatment plans for qualifying participants.
- **Red Lake Chemical Health Programs will receive \$870,000** for its Warrior Down program, which will provide peer recovery support for Native Americans who are experiencing substance use disorder, seeking treatment services, currently incarcerated or returning to the community from incarceration, and individuals who have been working on their recovery journey and returning from treatment programs.
- **Goodhue County Health and Human Services will receive \$583,000** to build strong relationships with youth in order to build a youth-led, school-based substance use prevention program. These efforts will

center on youth voice and leadership at River Bluff Education Center, which is part of the Goodhue County Education District.

- **Minnesota North College-Mesabi Range Campus will receive almost \$797,000** to empower individuals with opioid use disorder to obtain an education for substance use disorder counseling. The funding will go to individuals with opioid use disorder who have an established healthy recovery lifestyle. The purpose of this project is to expand the workforce in addictions counseling, reduce recidivism, and instill passion to help others. This training includes existing grant scholarship awardees and the recruitment of 40 new individuals.

Statewide

- **Allina Health System will receive \$517,000** to expand substance use primary prevention content in its Health Powered Kids (HPK) and Change to Chill (CTC) programs, and to work with community partners to co-create a model to package and deliver content to youth and supportive adults. HPK (ages 3-14) and CTC (teenagers) are free, primarily web-based programs led by Allina's Community Benefit & Engagement Team. Using the social-emotional learning framework, the programs aim to support the mental wellbeing of children and teens living in our communities and provide free and accessible resources on interactive websites.
- **The Steve Rumlmer HOPE Network will receive \$494,000** for its Overdose Prevention Program's ongoing services, including free naloxone training, harm reduction resources and community-focused education. The proposal targets residents statewide, prioritizing vulnerable communities at high risk of opioid overdose. Additional education will target newly mandated professional groups. The requested funds will expand program capacity, support the direct provision of harm reduction tools, and build community-wide awareness of important legislative changes impacting overdose prevention strategies in Minnesota.
- **Stratis Health will receive almost \$493,000** to implement a workforce training and development program to increase the use of medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in Minnesota county jails. To improve the quality of care and strengthen service delivery for justice-involved adults, Stratis Health will leverage evidence-based practices targeting jail administrators, medical staff and correctional officers. They will foster a culture of continuous learning to increase awareness of and capacity to implement MOUD, reduce stigma for those at-risk, and address issues such as medication diversion.
- **The University of St. Thomas Morrison Family College of Health will receive \$912,000** to leverage its faculty expertise and strong relationships with culturally-specific community organizations to launch a new Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counseling program for masters level social work students in less than half the time typically required. Scholarships and stipends to students and free training to working professionals will eliminate financial barriers preventing workforce growth and promote adoption of culturally responsive, evidence-based treatment approaches to address opioid addiction.

- **The Regents of the University of Minnesota will receive \$891,000** for its workforce development proposal to expand access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) by minimizing existing barriers in health care – especially stigma around OUD, harm reduction and treatment. They will evaluate the impact of their family medicine residency program which includes an addiction medicine curriculum to prescribe MOUD and manage care for substance use disorders. With this knowledge, they will work with health care settings to offer stigma-free training (in-person and online modules), distribute harm reduction supplies, and optimize care coordination for patients with OUD.
- **The Regents of the University of Minnesota will also receive almost \$680,000** for its Community-University Health Care Center to increase access to its existing suboxone program by launching mobile health opioid treatment services and related primary care; and by increasing its referral partnerships with community agencies that serve populations including residents of Minneapolis’ Phillips Community, unhoused individuals, Somali youth and the Latinx community. The clinic will improve treatment outcomes through Peer Recovery Support, additional medication options, contingency management incentives, staff training and more. The center aims to serve 560 people with opioid use disorder.
- **Beyond Brink will receive almost \$1.26 million** for the MN Recovery Access Project, which is designed to target the most at-risk population in Minnesota — people with substance use disorders who are incarcerated for short periods of time in county jails. This project makes it as easy as possible for these individuals to connect with effective medical, clinical, harm-reduction and peer-based supports through an innovative, virtual and in-person hybrid model of care, anywhere in the state.
- **Hennepin Healthcare System, Inc. will also receive \$1.6 million** for The Center for Teaching, Learning and Coordination for Wellness on Wheels (TLC-WoW), which will bring integrative pain management, community engagement, and group medical visit training across Minnesota. TLC-WoW builds on highly impactful, previously state funded programs addressing the opioid crisis, training providers and systems across Minnesota and improving access to holistic care for people living with chronic pain as upstream prevention of opioid use disorders statewide.
- **Empowered Relief Offering will receive \$33,000** to support adoption and offering of Empowered Relief™, an evidence-based, single-session pain class that rapidly equips patients with pain management skills. Incorporating upstream patient-facing pain management education will help address a key condition resulting in significant opioid prescribing.
- **Amethyst Recovery Solutions Inc. Neural Discovery United with Recovery (N-DUR) will receive \$712,000** to connect clinicians and neuroscientists with the recovery community for niche perspectives in designing clinically relevant, groundbreaking OUD research paradigms. N-DUR performs longitudinal human neuroimaging to reveal recovery-associated brain changes and utilizes preclinical neuromodulation and nanoparticle technologies to develop safe, personalized, community-embraced therapeutics for people with OUD.