



BJA's
Comprehensive
Opioid, Stimulant,
and Substance Abuse
Program



Mississippi
Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources
Behavioral Health Diversion Center

10/01/19 Grant Start → 09/30/22 Grant End

Overview

This project will serve the Hattiesburg Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Forrest, Lamar, and Perry counties in southern Mississippi. Methamphetamines, opiates, and marijuana are the most frequently abused substances. The I-59 corridor runs through the targeted area and is a regular thoroughfare for transporting marijuana, methamphetamine, Mexican oxy, and heroin from Mexico to the East Coast. In 2019, authorities discovered methamphetamine mixed with fentanyl in the area, resulting in several overdose deaths. Statistics indicate 3.3 million opioid prescriptions (1.1 per capita) were dispensed in Mississippi in 2017, with an average of 500,000 dosages dispensed every day (Mississippi Department of Public Health, 2018). During the same year, there were 7,556 treatment admissions for OUD (opioid use disorder), with 2,375 unique patients. The target area has been designated by the Mississippi Department of Public Health as an "opioid hot spot," because of high rates of overdose deaths, hospitalizations,

and emergency department visits. Drug overdose deaths disparately affect white males in the prime of life.

Grant Focus

- Expand law enforcement diversion and first-responder models that connect individuals to substance abuse treatment and recovery support services.
- Employ the use of alternatives to incarceration programs for nonviolent drug offenders.
- Educate public safety and criminal justice stakeholders about substance abuse.

Program Approach

Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources will utilize a two-pronged approach to address substance use in the Hattiesburg area. It will develop and implement a pre-arrest law enforcement diversion program for individuals

who commit low-level, nonviolent, drug-related offenses, diverting them to community-based substance use and behavioral health services. In addition, peer support specialists will be stationed at a hospital emergency department to connect individuals at risk for overdose and survivors of a nonfatal overdose with substance abuse and recovery support service providers.

Program goals include the following:

- Implement a diversion center, replicating the Living Room Model, for individuals with substance use disorders who encounter law enforcement officers or present at an emergency department.
- Assess referrals from crisis intervention team officers and emergency departments to the diversion center.
- Develop transition and service plans for diversion center guests.
- Provide recovery rooms for guests to de-escalate.
- Within 24 hours, guests will be discharged, either to a more intensive level of care or to a community location with a safety plan.
- All discharges will be offered follow-up recovery support services to facilitate their recovery.
- Utilizing motivational interviewing techniques, peer support specialists will engage individuals in the emergency department who have experienced an overdose or are at risk for one.

Project Partners

- Forrest General Hospital
- Hattiesburg Police Department
- Petal Police Department
- Forrest County Sheriff's Office
- Lamar County Sheriff's Office
- NAMI—Pine Belt

Contact Information

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