



BJA's

Comprehensive
Opioid, Stimulant,
and Substance Abuse
Program



North Carolina

Cleveland County Health Department

Cleveland County Locally Driven Response to the Opioid Epidemic

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

Overview

Cleveland County has a population of 97,334 and shares its southernmost border with South Carolina. Located among Charlotte, Asheville, and Greenville/Spartanburg, Cleveland County is a gateway between major metropolitan areas. Proximity to interstate highways allows for major drug trafficking, which increases the availability of illicit substances. Populations inhabiting areas of high poverty are immensely affected by the use of methamphetamine, heroin, prescription opioids, and cocaine. Furthermore, use of these substances is directly correlated with the amount of crime that occurs annually. In 2018, Cleveland County experienced a 31 percent increase in unintentional overdose deaths. This included nine opioid poisoning deaths, a 25 percent increase from the previous year. In 2018, heroin and cocaine accounted for four overdose deaths each, while neither was responsible for a single death in 2017. Methamphetamine overdose deaths also increased from one in 2017 to four in 2018, while synthetic opioid overdose deaths increased from four in 2017 to six in 2018. Emergency department

visits related to heroin overdose increased 13 percent in 2018. In Cleveland County, substance abuse puts an enormous strain on law enforcement resources. It is estimated that 80 percent of criminal activity and calls for service are related to substance abuse. Overdoses are a common occurrence during patrols. Dealing with substance abuse issues often takes an officer off the road for hours, leaving shifts shorthanded and keeping officers from other duties.

Grant Focus

- Expand peer support services and recovery housing.
- Increase access to naloxone.
- Support children and youth affected by the opioid epidemic.
- Expand public awareness about opioid abuse.
- Educate public safety and criminal justice stakeholders about substance abuse.

Program Approach

The program will enhance supports and services available to at-risk individuals in all five intercepts of the Sequential Intercept Model through the following activities:

- Sustaining and expanding the Points of HOPE (Halting Overdose through Prevention and Education) Syringe Exchange Program (SEP), staffed by a peer support specialist with Olive Branch Ministry.
- Connecting individuals with substance use disorders to needed treatment and social, health, and other resources in the community.
- Distributing naloxone, first-aid supplies, and other harm reduction materials through SEP.
- Facilitating weekly harm reduction training in men's and women's detention centers and connecting to resources in the community.
- Partnering with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to develop and facilitate harm reduction training for DSS staff, particularly those working in Child Protective Services, to reduce the stigma associated with substance use and increase skills to work effectively with families.
- Expanding harm reduction training for other community partners, such as health care and youth-serving organizations, in conjunction with the Cleveland County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, which is composed of approximately 60 community members.
- Developing an antistigma community awareness campaign to increase the likelihood that individuals who are living with substance use disorders will seek treatment.

Project Partners

- Cleveland County Health Department
- Cleveland County Department of Social Services
- Olive Branch Ministry
- Cleveland County Sheriff's Office
- Phoenix Counseling Center

Contact Information

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Visit the COSSAP Resource Center at www.cossapresources.org.

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