

## **Recommendations for Priority Uses of Opioid Settlement Funds** **Columbia/Boone County Board of Health**

Approved by the Board of Health, June 8, 2023

### **Background**

The state of Missouri is scheduled to receive settlement funds over the next 18 years resulting from a lawsuit against the manufacturers of synthetic opioids. The funds will be administered through the Missouri Attorney General's Office. Of the total funding, 85% will be allocated to state agencies and 15% to counties to address the opioid overdose crisis. Specific counties, including Boone, may also receive individual settlements resulting from lawsuits against distributors and retailers.

Although agency-specific planning is taking place at the state level and a state "summit" was held in November 2022, no state planning document has been released to date.

The Columbia/Boone County Board of Health is an advisory body for the city council and county commissioners. Janet Thompson, Northern District County Commissioner, requested at its January meeting that the board study best practices and local needs, and create recommendations to help guide the best use of the county's settlement funds.

### **Process**

A subcommittee consisting of Mahree Skala, Wade Schuette and Kathleen McKinney was established. This group identified key stakeholders involved in opioid overdose response in the county and the state and interviewed them about unmet local needs (see attached list). The group also looked at information from federal agencies and other states to identify evidence-based practices (see References). The full Board of Health prioritized the following response components at its April 13, 2023 meeting.

### **Priority response components with examples of local needs:**

#### **Leadership, planning, and coordination to address the opioid epidemic**

This component underpins many of the other priorities below. Designated leadership would assist in navigating the complexity of multiple legal settlements and the many local entities involved in addressing opioid use disorder.

- Designate a dedicated leader to enhance communication and coordination among the partners represented on the Opioid Response Coalition and the Central Missouri Recovery Coalition
- Develop a county-wide response plan to maximize collaboration and prepare for best use of future funding. St. Louis County's plan is a good model for this; see References)

- Develop a data collection and decision support system to better identify and characterize the extent of the problem and those affected by it
- Enlist all partners to actively enhance awareness of the issue, and of effective interventions, among their staff and people they serve
- Include an evaluation component in all settlement-funded programs

**Connect people to appropriate care** (including inmates and parolees)

- Develop a seamless system for care and treatment services for opioid users immediately after naloxone is administered by first responders
- Enhance awareness of opioid use disorder among social service providers and the public, including how to access naloxone and treatment services

**Access to treatment** of opioid use disorder and any co-occurring substance use disorders or mental health conditions (including medication-assisted therapy)

- Address shortage of treatment providers and beds for inpatient detoxification and rehabilitation services
- Identify and address barriers to inpatient detox and therapy (such as pet care, family caregiving obligations, etc.)
- Promote awareness of and access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid users
- Enhance medical providers' awareness and use of medication-assisted treatment

**Diversion of criminal justice-involved people** impacted by opioid use from incarceration to supervised treatment, including peer support services

- Enhance effectiveness of the circuit drug court by providing more resources for peer support services
- Provide naloxone to all drug court clients "up front"
- Develop an agreement with the Central MO Humane Society to care for pets while drug court clients receive inpatient detox/rehab services (similar to the service they provide for women seeking shelter from domestic violence)
- Provide immediate connections to service/treatment providers for incarcerated opioid users and those being released from incarceration

**Access to community-based recovery support services** following treatment

- Enhance the effectiveness of the existing network of recovery support services by providing more resources for peer support services
- Build on the existing network to include inpatient treatment and community supports for non-religiously affiliated opioid users

**Adequate supplies and widespread distribution of naloxone**

- Build on existing efforts to educate about and make naloxone widely available to businesses, religious institutions, social service agencies, unhoused persons, school nurses, drug court clients, inmates as they are released, and anyone who wishes to acquire it for use as a "good Samaritan" in an emergency

- Acquire naloxone through state programs (MO Institute for Mental Health, MO Department of Mental Health, MO Department of Public Safety, etc.) to conserve local resources for other priorities

The Columbia/Boone County Board of Health stands ready to assist in the forthcoming planning process for utilization of the opioid settlement funds.

## References

List of persons interviewed, attached

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Drug Overdose Strategies and Partnerships  
<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/strategies/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Evidence-Based Strategies for Preventing Opioid Overdose: What's working in the US  
<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/featured-topics/evidence-based-strategies.html>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Evidence-Based Resources About Opioid Overdose  
<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/overdose>

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Increased Use of Telehealth Services and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder During the COVID-19 Pandemic Associated with Reduced Risk for Fatal Overdose  
<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/increased-use-telehealth-services-and-medications-opioid-use-disorder-during-covid-19-pandemic>

Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Dose of Reality: Opioid Settlement Funds  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/settlement-funds.htm>

St. Louis County, Missouri. Substance Use Action Plan  
<https://stlouiscountymo.gov/st-louis-county-departments/public-health/health-data-and-statistics/community-health-research/substance-use-action-plan/>

Kansas City, Missouri Council Resolution, attached