

Prescription drug/opioid misuse and abuse prevention

Overview

To address the prescription medication abuse and the opioid crisis in Washington, the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) and partnering agencies support prescription drug misuse and abuse prevention strategies that align with the [Washington State Opioid Response Plan](#).

Prescription drug/opioid, misuse and abuse is a critical health issue. Young adults ages 18-25 are the largest group misusing opioid pain relievers and other medications. Opioid misuse and abuse can lead to dependency, addiction and an increased risk of death from overdose. Most young people who misuse and abuse prescription drugs are taking medications prescribed to others, often friends and family members. Up to sixty percent of prescribed medications are unused by patients, and much of this unused medication remains in private homes. Often they are not stored securely, providing easy access to young people and others seeking medications to abuse.

Prescription drug abuse including opioids is linked to abuse of and addiction to other non-scheduled opiates such as heroin.

Since 2014, DBHR has supported more than 10 Targeted Enhancement Project (TEP) grants to qualifying Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI) coalitions, enabling grantees to purchase, install, and maintain permanent secure medication drop boxes. The intent is to reduce availability of prescription medications in communities. With the award of the State Targeted Response (STR) to the Opioid Crisis grant in 2017, five new CPWI sites and four community-based organizations (CBOs) were funded to expand statewide opioid prevention efforts, including implementing evidence-based direct service programs aimed at reducing opioid misuse and abuse, and participation in local, state, and national

drug take-back events. Grantees partnered with law enforcement, coalitions, and community-based organizations to collect 3,507 pounds of medication on October 27, 2018, National Drug Take-Back Day.

In 2018, DBHR expanded to an additional 18 CPWI sites with funding from both the State Opioid Response (SOR) and the Partnerships for Success 2018 grant. With SOR, Washington is funding nine community-based organizations to implement prevention services in high-need communities around the state.

DBHR staff are key members and leads of the Prescription Drug & Opioid Misuse and Abuse Prevention Workgroup implementing the following goals and strategies of the Washington State Opioid Response Plan:

- Engaging our community to implement strategies to prevent opioid misuse, especially among youth
- Training and supporting health care providers to use best practices when prescribing opioids
- Increasing the use of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program among health care providers to coordinate care
- Educating the public about the risks of opioid use, including overdose, through public education campaigns, such as the Starts with One campaign: www.getthefactsrx.com and www.watribalopioidsolutions.com
- Promoting safe home storage and implementing a statewide drug-take back system
- Collaborating with law enforcement and stakeholders to decrease supply of illegal opioids



Eligibility requirements

CPWI coalitions, community-based organizations, and state agency partners with a demonstrated need and key leaders' readiness and support to implement a project.

Authority

DBHR is authorized as the single state agency to receive and administer STR and SOR grants that focus on comprehensive prevention strategies for opioid misuse and abuse.

Budget

The STR Grant provides \$2,355,768 per year from 2017-2019 for primary and secondary prevention. The SOR grant provides more than \$4 million per year for two years for prevention activities for Washington State from 2018-2020. All other prevention education and awareness efforts are unfunded and implemented with existing staff and resources.

People served

The five STR-funded CPWI sites served 3,088 youth in the first year of the grant. We anticipate serving approximately 15,000 people through the SOR grant through CPWI and community-based organization grants.

Partners

This work continues through ongoing partnerships with the Washington State Department of Health, Labor and Industries, University of Washington, Washington State University, Washington State Poison Center, several other state agencies, and local community-based organizations and providers supporting the goals of the Washington State Opioid Response Plan.

Oversight

Internal: Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery
External: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/ Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

For more information

Alicia Hughes, Strategic Development and Policy Supervisor, 360-725-1687, alicia.hughes@hca.wa.gov

Website: <https://www.theathenaforum.org/rx>