

The behavioral health ecosystem

How do communities work across multiple sectors to address opioid use disorder? It takes all of us!



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CLINICS

Primary care and addiction medicine clinics have the capacity to provide comprehensive medication assisted treatment (MAT) with medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), mental health services, peer groups, trauma therapy and community outreach. Opioid treatment programs are specialized addiction medicine clinics that provide methadone treatment to individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD). Depending on the individual and setting, methadone, buprenorphine, naloxone and naltrexone are the most effective MOUD therapies, alone or in combination.

SCHOOLS

Awareness campaigns available for fifth graders and older on the dangers associated with substance use. Schools have access to health behavior specialists and counselors who work on preventative methods, such as mental health education, awareness and support for all students.

LIBRARIES

Libraries offer a variety of resources for those impacted by OUD, including information regarding recovery clinics and potential support groups. Those who would like to access these resources can ask a librarian for more information or find it on the library's website. Libraries also provide a safe sheltered space to the public for free. Within this space, people can also access free and safe activities and materials, such as books, magazines and movies.

HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

Local health departments (LHDs) have services for opioid treatment, including naloxone distribution, health fairs and educational workshops, and other community resources. Some also provide direct OUD treatment. They play a central role in convening multi-sector coalitions to address public health issues like OUD. Every LHD offers different services, so reach out to yours to see what they provide.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

CBOs offer a varying range of services to individuals with OUD or activities to prevent OUD, including harm reduction-related activities. Many CBOs engage with community members to better understand the needs of individuals with OUD. Others lead the way in developing peer support specialists to walk alongside OUD treatment and recovery journeys. CBOs also provide essential resources to address associated social drivers of health and substance use.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Emergency medical services and law enforcement officers often serve as front-line responders in moments of crisis around OUD. They carry naloxone and are trained to use it. Some law enforcement officers provide training and resources to local organizations, which can help more people prevent overdose deaths. First responders have a critical role in linking individuals they encounter with OUD to the care they need.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government administration — led by the elected Board of County Commissioners at the county level or the elected City Council at the municipal level — can coordinate activities across public sector organizations, including health departments, school districts and police departments. County commissioners serve as a primary distributor of funds received in the N.C. Opioid Settlement with major drug manufacturers. This funding will be used for opioid prevention and treatment programs, including recovery support services, housing services, and job training and job skills programs. When determining the use of these funds, local elected officials should work with community members, others in local government and private agencies to collectively determine which strategies will be most effective at combating the epidemic.

