

State Opioid Response (SOR) Press Release

September 19, 2018

Arizona Awarded \$20 Million to Combat the Opioid Epidemic¹

PHOENIX — Arizona will receive more than \$20 million to continue the efforts to combat the nation’s opioid epidemic. The funding is provided by the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and is the first of a two-year grant for State Opioid Response (SOR). AHCCCS will administer the grant and work with other state agencies, health plans, and community partners to address specific initiatives.

“Arizona has taken serious action in the last year in the fight against the opioid epidemic in our state. Through coordinated efforts and bipartisan legislation, we’ve reduced the number of opioid prescriptions written, reduced the total number of pills dispensed, and have provided significant new funding for treatment,” said Governor Doug Ducey. “We know this fight is far from over and this grant will help more Arizonans receive the support they need.”

“Opioid use disorder continues to be a public health crisis that affects families in all corners of our state,” said Dr. Sara Salek, AHCCCS chief medical officer. “SOR grant funding will allow state agencies and partners to increase access to evidence-based treatment and trauma-informed care.”

Specifically, the year’s funding will support initiatives that:

- Increase access to medication-assisted treatment in both urban and rural areas of our state;
- Increase distribution and public awareness of the overdose reversal medication, Naloxone;
- Expand access to recovery support services including housing, peer support, and job search assistance;
- Reduce recidivism by creating supports for individuals who transition from correctional settings;
- Enhance support for opioid-exposed newborns and pregnant women who have opioid use disorder.

¹ Arizona Health Care Cost Containment Press Release. September 19, 2018.

<https://www.azahcccs.gov/shared/News/PressRelease/SORGrant.html>

Grant-funded work will focus efforts on populations that have identified unmet needs, including individuals in rural and isolated areas; veterans, military service members and military families; pregnant women and parents with opioid use disorder; individuals experiencing homelessness; tribal populations; individuals who have experienced trauma, toxic stress or adverse childhood experiences; and individuals re-entering the community from correctional settings.

AHCCCS will distribute SOR funding through many community partners and state agencies, including but not limited to: Arizona Department of Health Services; Governor's Office of Youth, Faith, and Family; Arizona Department of Child Safety; Arizona Department of Corrections; Arizona State University; Gila River Health Care; Pascua Yaqui Tribe; Mercy Care Plan; Arizona Complete Health; Steward Health Choice Arizona; High Intensity Drug Trafficking Agency; and the University of Arizona.

Highlighting the dangers of opioid abuse and Arizona's fight against the epidemic, Governor Ducey issued a proclamation declaring September 16 through September 22, 2018 as Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week.