

Press Release

November 15, 2017

Access to Opioid Treatment Programs to Expand in Arizona¹

Five, 24-hour crisis and Medication Assisted Treatment centers planned across the state using Federal Grant Funds

PHOENIX, AZ – The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) announced today that the second year of a two-year, \$24 million Federal grant to address the opioid crisis in Arizona will begin in January 2018. Through evidence-based practices, Arizona is using grant funds from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to expand access to opioid treatment programs throughout the state.

Under the grant program, the first of five, 24-hour centers for opioid treatment, including two medication-assisted treatment (MAT) centers and three crises centers, opened in October 2017 to address the growing need for access to opioid use disorder treatment.

“With expanded opioid treatment center hours, Arizona is setting a national example by making access to medication-assisted treatment a priority. We are fighting the opioid epidemic on many fronts—through prevention, education, and treatment—and we are committed to ending the opioid epidemic in our state,” said Dr. Sara Salek, AHCCCS chief medical officer.

Typical MAT centers, called Opioid Treatment Programs, are open from 4:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in order to give patients access to treatment at the start of the workday. Arizona-based Community Medical Services expanded the hours at an existing OTP to offer treatment services at the moment a patient needs it most.

“We understand that when those suffering from an opioid-use disorder make a decision to seek treatment, time is of the essence. They might change their mind within a matter of hours, so it is absolutely imperative that we give them access to treatment at any given time,” said Community Medical Services CEO Nick Stavros.

OTPs can provide medication-assisted treatment using methadone, Suboxone, and Vivitrol, in conjunction with psycho-social counseling and medical support. The Community Medical Services clinic provides all three FDA-approved medications, administered by a full-time staff

¹Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System. Press Release. November 15, 2017.
<https://www.azahcccs.gov/shared/news/PressRelease/AccessToOpioidTreatment.html>

of physicians, counselors, and peer support specialists. Since adding expanded hours, the Community Medical Services clinic has served more than 200 patients with opioid use disorder, enrolling them in treatment.

In 2018, a second MAT center in Phoenix will expand hours and three opioid treatment crisis centers will open in Prescott Valley, Kingman, and Tucson.

SAMHSA awarded the \$24 million, non-competitive State Targeted Response grant to Arizona based on need in an effort to combat opioid use disorder and opioid-related deaths. Improving access to comprehensive medication-assisted treatment programs, followed with recovery support, is a key initiative of the grant.