



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON  
DIRECTOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Jan. 8, 2020

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**MDHHS announces \$17.5 million in grant funds to combat the opioid epidemic**

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced the allocation of \$17.5 million from the State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to respond to the opioid epidemic and help meet Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s goal of cutting opioid overdose deaths by half within five years.

The funds will support services for individuals at highest risk of overdose, including offering medications to treat opioid use disorder, as well as naloxone within the criminal justice system and in emergency departments following an overdose. MDHHS will also invest in programs to help expand community-based treatment opportunities such as adding mobile care units, supporting start-up costs for new treatment services and offering student loan repayment to health care providers who offer medications to treat opioid use disorder. Finally, the grant will help continue the expansion of syringe service programs.

“This epidemic is hurting families in every community in our state and we need to use every tool in the toolbox to address it,” said Whitmer. “These efforts will help move us closer to our goal of cutting the number of opioid deaths in half in five years.”

These efforts will offer new targeted programs within MDHHS’s strategy of prevention, treatment and harm reduction. An application was submitted to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to approve this use of the funds; services will begin upon approval.

“We cannot tackle this epidemic alone,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, MDHHS chief medical executive and chief deputy director for health. “Providing communities and medical providers with tools and resources to fight this crisis is critical to our efforts to end this public health crisis.”

Through these funds, MDHHS is working to address racial disparities in opioid overdose deaths. In 2018, death rates rose by nearly 20 percent for African American Michiganders, while falling by 5 percent for Caucasian residents. Increases in deaths in Wayne and Genesee counties accounted for much of this disparity. MDHHS will work closely with local partners to support new services in these counties, as well as support community outreach to aid local response efforts, make connections to treatment resources and fight stigma.

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The breakdown of funds is as follows:

Program	Budget
Naloxone distribution to high-risk areas and populations	\$4.5 million
Medications to treat opioid use disorder in emergency departments	\$4 million
Medications to treat opioid use disorder in jails	\$3 million
Syringe service programs	\$2 million
Mobile care units	\$1.7 million
Loan repayment for providers beginning or expanding medication-assisted treatment	\$1.25 million
Outreach to increase providers offering medications to treat opioid use disorder	\$410,000
Data-driven overdose response efforts	\$235,000
Start-up costs for new treatment services	\$235,000
Community engagement in majority-minority communities	\$200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17.5 million</b>

These new projects will build on work already underway through the SOR grant. In the grant's second year, which began Oct. 1, nearly \$28 million was allocated to prevention, treatment and recovery support efforts that include offering local prevention programs, promoting safer prescribing practices, increasing access to medication-assisted treatment, funding individual treatment costs, recovery housing and distributing naloxone.

For more information about the state's opioids response and available resources, visit [Michigan.gov/opioids](http://Michigan.gov/opioids).

### Support from Stakeholders

"Michigan's investments represent a necessary turning point in strategic thinking on opioids and drug overdose. We applaud Governor Whitmer and her leadership team for adopting proven harm reduction strategies. By prioritizing the health of Michiganders who are using drugs – with investments in methadone and buprenorphine for people in emergency rooms and behind bars, increased access to the overdose reversal drug naloxone, and expanded syringe services – the governor's plan will reduce overdose deaths. When people can get care, resources, and support, regardless of where they live, their experiences, or the color of their skin, we save lives and our communities are richer for it."

- **Daliah Heller, Director, Vital Strategies' Overdose Prevention Program, a lead partner in Bloomberg Philanthropies' initiative to address the overdose epidemic in the United States**

"The Michigan Opioid Partnership is committed to continuing our work with the State of Michigan to reduce the number of opioid deaths. With this anticipated grant, the partnership will address the increasing overdose death rate in some of the hardest hit counties in the state, including the disparities that exist around barriers to treatment. This coordination is an example of how philanthropy, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the State of Michigan can work together to make a real difference in the lives of Michiganders."

- **Mariam Noland, President, Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan**