NCIPC COVID-19 Activity: Novel Harm Reduction and Treatment Strategies to Support Individuals with Opioid Use Disorder

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Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
Board of Scientific Counselors
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cooperative agreement between NCIPC and National Council for Behavioral Health (NCBH) to:

1. Identify and document **novel, innovative, and emerging harm reduction strategies** implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

2. Fund promising strategies for **ensuring or increasing access to services** during COVID-19
BACKGROUND

COVID-19 may increase fatal opioid overdoses, owing to:

- Increased substance use or a return to use after remission
- Delays in seeking treatment or disruptions in access to treatment and naloxone
- People using substances alone

References:
Percentage change in provisional drug overdose death counts from 12-months ending in June 2019 to 12-months ending in May 2020*

*12-months ending in May 2020 includes the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as months prior to the pandemic

>=20% increase
10-19% increase
0-9% increase
1-10% decrease
ACTIVITIES

- Environmental scan of **challenges and opportunities** related to the provision of harm reduction services during COVID-19
  - Literature review
  - Key informant interviews
- Identification of **innovative and effective harm reduction practices** employed during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Funding harm reduction organizations** and developing **peer-to-peer learning** among grantees
- **Technical assistance tools** to disseminate best and promising practices
KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- 21 key informant interviews conducted with field experts
- Environmental scan submitted and undergoing revision
- Competitive request for funding applications developed and released to over 100,000 stakeholders
  - 16 stakeholders selected for awards up to $33,333
- Evaluation plan developed to assess program impacts/outcomes

Project period ends on July 31, 2021
# ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN: FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people who use drugs</th>
<th>risk of contracting COVID-19; substance use-related health harms; impact on mental health; social and economic harms; criminal-legal system impacts; barriers to essential services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on harm Reduction organizations</td>
<td>increased need for harm reduction services; operational disruptions; staffing; supply distributions; impact on workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Adaptations and innovations made by harm reduction organizations</td>
<td>operational changes; technology-based adaptations and innovations; partnerships and collaborations; resources and tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
233 Applicants from 45 states + DC
## FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIPS (Honoring Individual Power and Strength)</td>
<td>DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Perfectly Flawed Foundation</td>
<td>IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southside Harm Reduction Services</td>
<td>MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Access Points</td>
<td>ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan Puskar Health Right</td>
<td>WV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trystereo / New Orleans Harm Reduction Network</td>
<td>LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Purchase Project/Tacoma Needle Exchange</td>
<td>WA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Workers and Allies Network of New Haven</td>
<td>CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition</td>
<td>IA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoran Prevention Works</td>
<td>AZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEXT Distro</td>
<td>NY (nationwide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Survivors Union</td>
<td>NC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation</td>
<td>AK</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWOP Behind Bars</td>
<td>FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bronx Movil</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHOTS Tulsa</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FUNDED STRATEGIES

- **Distribution** of harm reduction and hygiene supplies
  - no contact delivery; postal delivery; call in and secondary exchange

- **Communication and education**
  - educational videos; online resource hub with chat function; virtual peer support meetings; Never Use Alone line

- **Outreach**
  - mobile health unit; outreach van; outreach to homeless encampment

- **Low threshold employment** for people who use drugs

- **Linkage to care** for individuals released from correctional facilities
Budget Period Outcomes

- Improved capacity to identify, prioritize, and customize harm reduction programs and services to address public health needs during COVID-19
- Increased capability of public and behavioral health practitioners to implement evidence-based/informed harm reduction programs, policies, and services to address public health needs during COVID-19

Outputs for Public Dissemination

- Results from environmental scan (3/2021)
- Technical assistance tools to disseminate best and promising harm reduction practices during COVID-19 (7/2021)
Thank you!

For questions:
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For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.