



Rowan County Health Department
1811 East Innes Street – Salisbury, NC 28146-6030

MEMO

To: Rowan County Board of Commissioners
CC: Aaron Church, County Manager
From: Alyssa Harris, Public Health Director
Subject: North Carolina Grants to Prevent Prescription Drug/Opioid Overdose-Related Deaths (PDO)
Date: August 18th, 2022

Situation:

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services has identified Rowan County as one of eighteen counties in the state, who are deemed high need for prescription drug and opioid overdose-related program development. Rowan County Public Health is requesting permission to apply for a four year, \$50,000 a year grant to develop a Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) program in partnership with the Rowan County Detention Center.

Background:

Year to date, Rowan County has experienced 506 documented overdoses. Of the 506, Narcan was administered in 327 cases, with 314 successful reversals. PORT was established in 2019 to intervene after an opioid overdose episode, establish referrals to various community partners that specialize in substance use treatment and harm reduction programming, and build trusting relationships with individuals who are in active substance use. Since the inception of PORT, the team has continuously adapted to the changing climate in our community regarding the opioid epidemic such as expanding outreach services, ensuring care is trauma informed and resiliency focused, and paying more attention to education. We are proposing the addition of a medically assisted treatment (MAT) program in the Rowan County Detention Center to support long-term behavioral changes for this population. According to the National Institute of Health, studies have shown that giving medications for opioid use disorder in jail or prison can reduce the likelihood of a return to opioid use or an overdose after release.

This award provides an opportunity for Rowan County Public Health to serve as the chief health strategy organization in establishing a network of partners to identify individuals who are incarcerated in Rowan County and who meet the American Disabilities Act's definition of someone with an Opioid Use Disorder and provide the assistance needed to exit the prison system with a higher probability for success.

Assessment:

Implementation of a MAT program within the Rowan County Detention Center allows us the opportunity to provide equitable treatment opportunities for individuals within the criminal justice system who have an opioid-use disorder and establish a link to care that can support long-term behavioral changes post-release.

Recommendation:

We respectfully ask the Board of Commissioners allow RCPH to apply for \$50,000 in funding for year one of four to begin the establishment of a MAT program, beginning initially with the Rowan County Detention Center, with plans to expand services to the RCPH in later years. Funding in year one will go towards paying for the comprehensive training of Rowan County medical providers, one within the detention center, one within the RCPH, and potentially one partnering community agency that could assist with providing support to this population post-release.