



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Lake Region District Health Unit

Lake Region District Health Unit Opioid Settlement Funds Plan and Future Strategies Proposal:

Lake Region District Health Unit proposes Opioid Settlement funds be used for the following mitigation plan:

1. Sponsor a community opioid response coalition beginning June 2023.
  - a. Provide staff to coordinate a community opioid response coalition.
  - b. Solicit and maintain membership from key community sectors.
  - c. Hold monthly coalition meetings.
  
2. Distribute naloxone throughout the community and train on use, with a focus on high-risk groups.
  - a. Provide support for counseling in schools.
  - b. Provide support for counseling in jails.
  - c. Provide naloxone to first responders including law enforcement agencies and fire departments.
  - d. Provide naloxone to EMS for distribution and education to individuals after an overdose.
  - e. Provide naloxone to organizations that serve high-risk individuals.
  - f. Research the use of vending machines for low-barrier distribution of naloxone.
  - g. Provide high visibility naloxone boxes to high use areas in county buildings, schools, malls, etc.
  
3. Maintain a comprehensive, needs-based harm reduction program for persons who use drugs.
  - a. Purchase of syringes and safe use supplies.
  - b. Offer harm reduction supplies including syringes, safer use supplies, naloxone, sharps containers, and safer sex supplies.
  - c. Provide services, education and training including safer injection education, naloxone education, safer sex education, education on HIV, hepatitis C and STIs, rapid HIV and hepatitis C testing, immunizations, and sharps disposal.
  - d. Provide referrals to treatment, healthcare, behavioral health, and social services.
  - e. Explore and implement new and promising practices for harm reduction programming as funding allows.

4. Lake Region District Health will dedicate staff to coordinate the program and provide outreach services. Staff will guide program planning and implementation, and convene regular stakeholder discussions to ensure continued project implementation and redirection if needed.
5. Lake Region District Health Unit in collaboration with Lake Region Law Enforcement Center plan to provide opioid overdose prevention and Narcan administration training to inmates prior to release, and have jail staff distribute Narcan to inmates upon release.

#### Future Strategies Proposal:

Depending on funding and collaboration between the Lake Region District Health Unit and partnering agencies, other mitigation strategies could be implemented, including the establishment of a medical detox center for adults and another for juveniles; as well as Lake Region District Health Unit working with a local provider(s) to bring the Medically Assisted Treatment Program and counseling to the multi county correctional facility located in our area of service. We would like to support bringing full time counselors into our local schools.

This program would greatly enhance the ability to bring drug overdose prevention to our communities of Ramsey, Eddy, Benson, and Pierce counties. Current responses include police officers advising overdose survivors to “get some help” and emergency departments treating, stabilizing and discharging them. As a result, some family and friends of persons who use drugs contact law enforcement begging to have their loved ones arrested and incarcerated so they don’t die of overdose. The police department does not have the time or resources to provide overdose outreach and gladly welcomes assistance in this area.

This program would establish structure and resources for providing coordinated efforts among all committed stakeholders and agencies in our county. This includes staff dedicated to coordinate the program and provide outreach. Coordination with overdose survivors, family members, first responders, law enforcement, emergency department staff, and service providers is essential. Outreach staff will provide a number of services including training on opioid overdose response and Narcan administration; dissemination of Narcan kits for persons who use drugs, family, and friends; instructions on harm reduction practices and distribution of supplies; referral to treatment, offering peer recovery coaching; and linkage to other resources including transportation, housing, and medical care.