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# **Kidder County Opioid Settlement Plan**

## **Background:**

Kidder County has had small harm reduction projects related to the opioid pandemic in the past – all have been in partnership with Western Plains Public Health as part of our regional collaboration. In 2019, Kidder County District Health Unit utilized funds to purchase Detera medication disposal bags. They still remain available through our office and have not had a significant role-out as of today. In early 2023, Western Plains Public Health came to Kidder County and trained public health and emergency responders on the use of naloxone and distributed naloxone to these entities. Naloxone remains readily available to public health and EMS through other programs already within the state.

Other than the regional collaborative funding for substance abuse and opioid response that we benefit from, Kidder County District Health Unit does not receive any other funding for these efforts. Only recently did the county auditor transfer the \$4,857.57 that the county received total from the political subdivision opioid settlement pay outs, which we intend to utilize toward our plan. We did not apply for the State Opioid Response (SOR) grant as a public health unit since we do not have the capacity to apply for, manage, and staff the grant. In addition, the core requirements revolving around naloxone distribution and education were already available through other ways with less reporting requirements and staff time.

We decided to shift our focus to a community-wide approach that encompassed more than just naloxone and medication assisted treatment and to focus more on prevention strategies and mental health infrastructure. The Opioid Settlement Fund grant allows us to access funding as a county to assist multiple entities that work together for a common goal.

This plan will be revisited on a regular basis throughout the funding period by the coalition (more info below) and adjusted as needed to best meet local needs based on available resources.

## **Problem:**

Kidder County District Health Unit completed a Community Health Needs Assessment in 2023 in conjunction with the Center for Rural Health – UND. This included a community wide survey (68 respondents) as well as a focus group of community leaders and stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds.

The focus group identified the availability of mental health services as a top concern for the focus group, along with depression and anxiety. 28% of survey respondents identified mental health provider availability as a concern. Also from the survey, depression and anxiety is the #1 concern in adults (41%) and #4 concern for children (33%). Drug use and abuse rated in the top five concerns for both youth (#5, 24%) and adults (#4, 30%).

Currently, Kidder County lacks any professional mental health providers or counseling services for addiction. Parts of our county also fall out of the 988 mobile crisis team responding area.

## **Goals:**

These goals will change based on community need; however, these are the initial priorities.

Short term priority: To create a Kidder Coalition of Health – comprised of community stakeholders (much like our focus group) to address the health needs of Kidder County, specifically mental and behavioral health. Additionally, fund mental health professionals within the school and create a position to assist with prevention (suicide, substance abuse, tobacco, etc) education within the school.

See the county wide plan below.

Mid-term: To create a mental and behavioral health infrastructure for Kidder County.

Long-term: Have not only a mental health provider in our county but house a mobile behavioral health crisis team to respond to county needs.

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## **Kidder Coalition of Health**

\*Priority\* Formation of. This coalition will be comprised of representatives from at least public health, emergency services, the local health clinic, pharmacy, school, social services, law enforcement, and the county (commissioner).

Create a non-profit status for the coalition..

At least quarterly meetings – total at least 6 for the rest of the biennium.

Meetings will include:

- Discussion on trending health topics in the community (including substance abuse disorders) and how to get ahead of them. Assigning roles to the different entities, tying that in with quarterly wellness events.
- Planning quarterly wellness events for the communities
- Brainstorming ideas on how to create local infrastructure for mental and behavioral health services

- How can we streamline services and connect people to appropriate care – EMS, law enforcement and integration with primary care?
- Eventual behavioral health specialist staffing? Transportation infrastructure?
- Community Planning to identify root causes of the crisis
- Coordinate national speakers to utilize at large community events (suppers, etc).
- Oversee status of expenditure and meeting milestones and goals.

### **Kidder County School:**

Contact: Michael Wachter, high school principal or Jenna Leier, high school guidance counselor

- \*Priority\* -Fund the annual fee for their mental health telehealth provider
- Employ prevention strategists at the school in both the elementary and high school level. Focus would be on prevention education for substance abuse (risky drugs, opioids, alcohol, tobacco, etc). Curriculum would be evidence based such as “keepin it real.”
- Collaborate with the Sources of Strength evidence-based program within the school to fund certain activities.

### **Emergency Medical Services**

Contact: Mona Thompson, director of EMS

TBD

- Fund a Mental Wellness Program for first responders in the county
- Send at least 10 first responders to specialized training for pre/post overdose and/or specialized mental health response courses.

### **Law Enforcement**

Contact: Barry Vannatta, county sheriff or Wendlin Rohrich, city of Steele police officer

-TBD

### **Kidder County District Health Unit**

Contact: Tricia Steinke, admin/DON

- Coordination and planning of the Kidder Coalition of Health
- Point of access for telehealth mental health services in the office in Steele, ND. Services provided by West Central Human Service Center to start. Funding needed for advertising, time of staff to coordinate patients.
- Education and prevention programming through a social media campaign
- Drug disposal programs – Detera bag distribution or something alike and drug take back boxes at strategic locations
- Naloxone:
  - Continue to contract with Western Plains to educate first responders, law enforcement, schools, etc on naloxone administration
  - Ensure naloxone is stocked with any AED throughout the county

### **Four Season Wellness**

Contact: Mandy Rath, FNP or Erin Dewitz FNP

TBD

- Attend a National conference on Opioid Prescribing
- Narcan given with opioid prescription

### **Steele Pharmacy**

Contact: Michelle Hinz

TBD

- Narcan given with opioid prescription

### **Social Services:**

Contact: Michelle Massett

-TBD

- Provide comprehensive wrap around services to individuals in recovery – housing, transportation, childcare, training

-Hire additional social workers or other behavioral health professionals to facilitate

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Duplication: As noted above, currently Kidder County lacks these services. Many people travel at least an hour to Bismarck or Jamestown to receive them. This requires transportation (car, gas, etc) and time off work.

Sustainability: By creating the Kidder Coalition of Health as a nonprofit, it would allow extra funding opportunities for future use. It would also create an accountability piece for all the entities involved in this funding with check-ins, meetings, and events. These meetings will also be used for evaluating the process and gathering outcome measures. Each entity would have a set of goals and recording of activities that would need to happen.

Impact for North Dakota: Kidder County is not the only county in ND that lacks these services. With this extra funding, we are hoping to not only improve the quality of life and services available to Kidder County residents, but also create a template that could be reproducible for other counties with similar problems.

Outcome measurements and reporting: Kidder County District Health Unit will specifically provide all required reporting requests for this grant through communication with the various entities involved. The Kidder Coalition of Health will review the project goals and outcomes at each quarterly meeting.

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