

## **Opioid Settlement Funds City of Bismarck Allocation Plan**

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### **Background**

In accordance with North Dakota Century Code 50-36-06, the City of Bismarck is collaborating with Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health to develop and implement a strategy for allocating opioid settlement funds to support local efforts that remediate and abate the opioid crisis.

This updated allocation plan builds on insights from the City's initial pilot efforts and reflects a strategic shift toward a more sustainable, comprehensive solution. Rather than continuing the piloted Better Bismarck Campaign, the City of Bismarck has redirected its focus toward the planning and development of a long-term community solution to address behavioral health and addiction. This approach is designed to more effectively meet the urgent and complex needs of individuals in Bismarck who are experiencing addiction, mental illness, and housing instability.

### **Better Bismarck Campaign: Summary**

Launched in 2023, the Better Bismarck Campaign was a community-driven initiative to address root causes of crisis homelessness, primarily untreated addiction and mental illness. The campaign was designed to:

- Mobilize community engagement and support
- Leverage public donations through a 1:1 match with opioid settlement dollars
- Fund nonprofit service providers through a competitive application process
- Pilot low-barrier, high-impact strategies aligned with national opioid remediation strategies (Exhibit E)

Public donations were matched dollar-for-dollar using City opioid settlement funds, and applicants were required to:

- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
- Serve individuals with chronic behavioral health and substance use disorders experiencing homelessness

- Incorporate evidence-based opioid remediation strategies
- Submit outcome data and a formal progress report

Two local nonprofits were awarded funding during the 2023 pilot cycle:

1. Ministry on the Margins (MOTM) – \$17,000
2. Heartview Foundation – \$8,000

### **Summary of Impact:**

#### **Ministry on the Margins**

- Served an average of 49 individuals per night at a low-barrier overnight coffee house
- Provided access to peer support, a safe space, and direct crisis intervention
- Trained staff administered Narcan, engaged first responders, and supported justice-involved individuals
- Aligned strategies with Exhibit E: N.1, N.2, N.6, N.8

#### **Heartview Foundation**

- Expanded its Opioid Treatment Program from 207 to 254 patients
- Reduced wait times and staff burden by acquiring a second methadone pump
- Assisted ~52 uninsured/underinsured clients per month in accessing MAT
- Aligned strategies with Exhibit E: A.4, N.4, N.8, N.10

While the Better Bismarck Campaign successfully demonstrated the value of local partnerships, it faced significant limitations:

- Minimal uptake from the public in terms of financial donations
- No dedicated staff to promote or manage the fundraising campaign
- Resource constraints limited the program's scalability and sustainability

As a result, the decision was made to discontinue the public-facing campaign model and redirect future settlement funds toward a more strategic, long-term solution.

### **Future Strategy: Community Solution to Address Behavioral Health and Addiction**

In July 2025, the City Commission approved allocating \$100,000 in opioid settlement funds to support technical assistance and planning for the development of a Community Triage Center. Technical assistance will include feasibility studies, site planning, community engagement, financial modeling, service mapping, and multi-sector coordination.

The envisioned Community Triage Center will serve as a low-barrier, wraparound crisis response facility designed to meet the immediate needs of individuals experiencing

addiction, mental illness, and homelessness. It would also support long-term recovery and stability through integrated referral pathways and connections to care.

**The Center is envisioned to:**

- Provide medical detoxification and crisis stabilization services
- Serve as a referral hub for MAT, behavioral health, and housing services
- Reduce the burden on emergency departments, law enforcement, and jails
- Improve long-term outcomes for vulnerable individuals in crisis

**Alignment with National Opioid Settlement – Exhibit E Strategies**

The Community Triage Center directly addresses multiple Exhibit E opioid remediation strategies, including:

- **N.1** – Support people in treatment and recovery
- **N.2** – Connect people who need help to the help they need
- **N.4** – Expand access to detox and stabilization services
- **N.6** – Address needs of justice-involved persons
- **N.7** – Provide reentry services for those exiting incarceration
- **N.8** – Expand warm handoffs and care transitions
- **N.10** – Address barriers to treatment (ID, insurance, transportation)
- **N.12** – Support pregnant/postpartum individuals with Opioid Use Disorder
- **A.4** – Expand services for uninsured and underinsured individuals
- **H.2** – Provide housing supports and recovery linkages

The Center would serve as a critical piece of infrastructure for Bismarck, helping to close current service gaps, divert individuals from crisis settings, and improve public health and safety outcomes.

**Oversight and Collaboration**

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, is leading the triage center planning process in partnership with:

- Behavioral health and substance use treatment providers
- First responders and law enforcement
- Nonprofit, housing, and social service organizations
- State and regional agencies

Regular updates will be provided to the North Dakota Behavioral Health Division as progress is made and milestones are achieved.