

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS PLAN

FOR 2024-2025

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

SWDHU serves 8 counties in southwestern North Dakota. Those counties include: Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Hettinger, Slope and Stark.

Our plan regarding the State Opioid Settlement funds directed to cities and counties in our region was to contact each of those entities for their input. We wanted to know what they felt their communities needed and wanted to see in reference to how those monies could be best utilized. SWDHU CEO, Sherry Adams meets annually with each of our counties. Her plan was to discuss this with each county and get their input. We would then follow that up with a call to each county/city auditor for any additional ideas or plans. We also planned to get input from our local law enforcement as well as our Behavioral Health Coalition. This coalition consists of key stakeholders from the community. Key stakeholders include (but are not limited to): Heartview, Medical, Corrections, Community Treatment Program, Law Enforcement, Badlands Human Service Center, Elder Care/Public Transit, Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Domestic Violence, Sunrise Youth Bureau, Dickinson Public Schools, etc. After much discussion and reviewing what is already happening in the community, the group decided to offer an in-person training.

We then reached out to Amy Lies, who put us into contact with Robyn Priest with Live Your Truth. Robyn and some of her staff then presented to the Behavioral Health Coalition. It was agreed that Robyn would send out a survey link that our community could send out to their contacts. Over 300 surveys were sent out with a return of 50. The majority of the responses indicated they were wanting information related to care of behavioral health issues and SUDS in the ER, getting past stigma, the role of medications, and information for families and general community members.

Then the planning began. April 1st was the date chosen to have the workshop. We then reached out to our local police department who offered to work with someone to create a flyer and to request POST credits. The Chamber of Commerce was contacted and agreed to assist in distributing the information via their website and other contacts. SAVE THE DATE was provided at all meetings/coalitions. Dickinson State University Psychology Professor, Wendy Wilson was contacted to reserve the Beck Auditorium and also get assistance from her class. The Dickinson Press was contacted to do a story for the weekly newspaper.

The workshop is entitled “When You’re Not Sure”. Two sessions will be provided. One will be in-person only as it will encourage active participation. The second session will be held virtually (to accommodate those out in the region) as well as in-person. The goals are to help those interacting with people with mental health issues, opioid and other substance use issues gain an understanding of stigma, discrimination and trauma; how to support them and how to have a meaningful conversation with them. Presenters include: Robyn Priest, a mental health and peer support specialist; Moses Jones IV, lived experience and Kirsten Drybrough, family member.

ADDENDUM: A meeting was held with Dickinson Police Chief Joe Cianni, City Administrator Dustin Dassinger, Linda Carlson and Karen Goyne (for Sherry Adams). We discussed the Opioid Settlement Funds received by the City of Dickinson and what they were wanting to do with those monies. Chief Cianni indicated the Police

Department felt training would be something to consider but was unsure of what type of training they wanted. It was decided they would discuss it further and let me know. Later Deputy Chief Matt Hanson indicated they wanted training specific to law enforcement addressing opioid use disorder but something for the community as well. This request was then addressed with the workshop entitled “When You’re Not Sure” that was presented on April 1st, 2025 at two separate times to allow increased attendance for those working. (For further information see above.)