

Project Abstract Summary

Arkansas, like many states, faces a pressing need to expand access to evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for individuals affected by opioid use disorders (OUDs) and other substance use disorders (SUDs), especially for underserved populations including mothers and pregnant women, rural populations, justice-involved populations, and other minorities. The Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (OSAMH) in the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) proposes to address these critical gaps in the State through the implementation of the State Opioid Response (SOR) IV grant. The OSAMH SOR IV project will help expand an infrastructure across the continuum of care for SUDs through multifaceted approaches in prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The OSAMH SOR IV project expects to serve over 5250 individuals (1750 individuals annually) by providing prevention services through targeted outreach to raise awareness about substance misuse, prevention strategies, and available resources to reduce misuse and overdoses. This will include culturally and linguistically appropriate educational materials, workshops, and presentations as well as provision of health protective measures such as opioid reversal agent training and distribution.

An estimated 1200 individuals (400 individuals annually) will receive treatment funded by the OSAMH SOR IV project. There will be a focus on addressing the treatment needs of those in rural areas and minorities. SOR IV funding will be braided with other government funding to address the specialized needs of mothers and pregnant women in treatment. In addition, by establishing and strengthening partnerships with healthcare providers, community-based organizations, and local agencies, this project aims to improve training for the treatment workforce and the sustainability of substance use services through Medicaid services.

To promote sustained recovery and mitigate the shortage of housing for individuals new to recovery, this project also will work towards increasing the number of certified recovery residences in the State, bolster the peer workforce, and better integrate peer services into all aspects of prevention, treatment, and recovery. Over 1200 individuals in the entire continuum of care (400 individuals annually) will receive peer recovery support services through this project. Peer recovery support specialists play a pivotal role in linking individuals to ongoing treatment and community resources. By centralizing funding and training, implementing national accreditation, and emphasizing the need for ongoing revenue, the project hopes to provide more stability and sustainability to the peer workforce in Arkansas.

Rigorous data collection and analysis will be conducted to assess the impact of interventions, identify ongoing barriers to care and inform continuous quality improvement efforts. This will ensure that strategies are evidence-based and responsive to the needs of target populations. Advocacy efforts will focus on advocating for policy changes and systems improvements that support increased access for all to treatment and recovery services, especially underserved populations.

In conclusion, this project represents a crucial step towards alleviating the impact of the opioid crisis in Arkansas by fostering a comprehensive, community-driven approach to prevention, treatment, and recovery for all while also ensuring the State makes meaningful and lasting strides toward equal access for individuals in underserved locations and populations.