Addressing Ohio’s Addiction Epidemic: A Plan for Action

Update

January 2019
Ohio faces an unprecedented addiction and overdose epidemic that is taking its toll on individuals, families, and communities. A coordinated, consistent, and aggressive response is needed to handle new challenges that arise as this epidemic evolves and changes. Ohio’s overdose death rate continues to be among the highest in the country. While deaths involving heroin decreased in 2017, overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and carfentanil continue to rise. Ohio’s problem is not limited to opioids. Overdose deaths involving cocaine and methamphetamines, particularly those cut with fentanyl, have increased significantly. The prevalence of binge drinking in Ohio is among the highest in the country. The impact of the arrival of medical marijuana is uncertain. However, it is yet another change in the landscape. As we endeavor to create a strong and healthy Ohio, we must work to prevent and treat addiction, regardless of the substance involved.

In recognition of the need to take systematic, strategic, and rapid steps to decrease the incidence of addiction and increase the frequency of recovery, the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities, under the direction of its member Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards, is updating and implementing this plan to address addiction and create healthy, drug-free communities.

In this document, you’ll find the outline of an all-encompassing plan of action that builds upon the foundation of local Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care. The success of this plan depends on all of us. Ohioans must come together to marshal all available resources and leverage all relationships to effectively address addiction in Ohio.

We know that treatment works, people recover, and recovery is beautiful. Everyone working together utilizing a public health approach, offers us collectively our best chance to end this epidemic in our state & have a meaningful impact on the lives of our citizens, families, and communities.

This plan involves four prongs: Information & Coordination; Prevention; Continuum of Care; and Funding & Workforce.
Information & Coordination

- Coordinate State and Local Activities
  - Work to develop a statewide strategic plan
  - Ensure coordination among statewide and local activities
  - Coordinate efforts between the state and local opiate/drug task forces and coalitions
  - Support the continued development of local County Hubs
  - Develop a system for partnering between state agencies, associations, and organizations
  - Develop a system for sharing comprehensive data between and among state and local agencies

- Develop and Implement a Stigma Reduction Campaign
  - Educate on addiction as a chronic disease
  - Emphasize the fact that Treatment Works...People Recover
  - Promote the value of naloxone/Narcan as a life-saving tool
  - Celebrate individuals in recovery
  - Highlight the value of individuals in recovery as employees

- Work with the Community
  - Develop and implement a 24/7 hotline that is equipped to respond to addiction in communities
  - Empower Boards via the local County Hubs to ensure cross-system coordination among all stakeholders
  - Engage new partners representing diverse sectors of the community, including individuals & family members
  - Coordinate efforts with local health departments
  - Empower peers and the recovery community

Continuum of Care

- Treatment
  - Increase access to clinically appropriate care, including: withdrawal management programs; inpatient and outpatient treatment; residential treatment; and MAT
  - Work with hospital EDs and jails for warm handoffs to treatment
  - Expand Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) within medical systems
  - Increase access to trauma-informed and culturally competent services and supports
  - Sustain and enhance withdrawal management centers in each psychiatric hospital region
  - Increase availability of care addressing dual-diagnosis of substance use disorders and mental illness
  - Increase access to relapse prevention services such as peer support
  - Expand the use of Quick Response Teams to help individuals who have overdosed get into treatment

- Recovery Supports
  - Ensure adequate housing, transportation, and other recovery services
  - Increase access to peer support and mentoring services and work to streamline the peer certification process
  - Increase access to employment supports for individuals in recovery
  - Provide employers with incentives and training for hiring individuals in recovery

- Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement
  - Work to increase funding for MAT in jails
  - Work to expand specialty dockets, e.g., drug courts
  - Work with jails and prisons on the reintegration of offenders with an addiction
  - Allow for statewide data-sharing between law enforcement and health care systems.
  - Expand evidence-based supply-side reduction strategies
  - Address sentencing laws resulting in the incarceration of non-violent offenders with an addiction

- Children & Adolescents
  - Work across systems to decrease the incidence of babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome
  - Partner with children’s services to help kids in custody/foster care
  - Ensure access to appropriate treatment for adolescents

- Families
  - Provide comprehensive supports and services for families impacted by addiction
  - Support the expansion of the Ohio START Program

Prevention

- Prevention
  - Increase awareness of the effects of substance misuse and abuse on individuals, families, and communities
  - Work with partners to develop and disseminate a statewide prevention campaign
  - Develop and distribute a prevention resource guide
  - Increase prescriber education on appropriate prescribing practices and non-opioid pain management
  - Educate patients on potential for misuse of prescription drugs and marijuana for medical purposes
  - Promote safe storage and disposal of medications and marijuana for medical purposes

- Evidence-based programs
  - Utilize County Hubs to design, implement, and evaluate prevention strategies that are evidence-based
  - Implement evidence-based prevention programs in schools and communities
  - Expand prevention programs for children in foster care

- Harm Reduction
  - Increase the accessibility of syringe exchange programs
  - Increase the availability and access to fentanyl test strips
  - Expand Project DAWN and other naloxone distribution efforts
  - Implement programs that work to delay first-use for high risk youth

Funding & Workforce

- Funding
  - Support the implementation of the State Opioid Response grant
  - Work with the Administration and the Legislature on a biennial budget that supports funding for community-based addiction services

- Economic and Social Impact
  - Collect outcome data to evaluate cost, quality, and effectiveness of policies, programs, and services

- Workforce
  - Address first responder and addiction professional burnout
  - Increase the utilization of innovative technologies, including telemedicine
  - Improve peer training and certification process
  - Increase the number of peer supporters who are able to bill Medicaid
  - Expand the addiction professional workforce in Ohio
  - Increase access to a drug-free workforce
  - Promote CLAS standards among all providers
  - Enhance the OACBHA VISTA opioid project
Ohio's 51 Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and/or Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards are continuing their efforts to implement Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) in their communities. A ROSC places its primary focus on the individuals and families in need of treatment and recovery services, building on their strengths and incorporating a coordinated, collaborative approach across the community. The foundation of Ohio's ROSC is locally managed continuums of care designed to provide person-centered prevention, treatment, and support services to help individuals and families impacted by mental illness and addiction achieve and sustain long-term recovery.


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