

# **Hernando County Opioid Settlement Response Plan**



**BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSION**

**2024-2027**

## **Hernando County Opioid Settlement Response Plan**

Hernando County, being a “non-qualified county” per the Florida Opioid Allocation and Statewide Response Agreement Between the State of Florida Department of Legal Affairs, Office of the Attorney General, and Certain Local Governments in the State of Florida (the “Opioid Agreement”), has prepared this preliminary plan to govern the use of Hernando County Opioid Response funds and the Regional Opioid Settlement Funds (the “Interlocal”), and in furtherance of the expansion of its currently existing opioid response programs and others it may choose to adopt. This plan will be revised as needed to adapt to changes based on community needs and the availability of resources. This plan is intended to provide options and aspirations for opioid abatement within Hernando County and its municipalities and is not to be construed as a binding authority that any specific provision(s) will be implemented.

Hernando County provides several services towards the goals of treatment and opioid abatement, through various agencies with which it contracts. Contracted services are currently existing from general funds or funded through various grants.

LSF Health System met with Hernando County and provided information concerning deadlines, budgets, and authorized usage. The County then met with the Public Safety Coordinating Council and established the usage of funds.

### **TREATMENT: TREAT OPIOID USE DISORDER (OUD)**

Support treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and any co-occurring substance use disorder or Mental Health (SUD/MH) conditions through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Expand availability of treatment for OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including all forms of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
2. Support and reimburse evidence-based services that adhere to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) continuum of care for OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions
3. Expand telehealth to increase access to treatment for OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including MAT, as well as counseling, psychiatric support, and other treatment and recovery support services.
4. Improve oversight of Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) to assure evidence-based or evidence informed practices such as adequate methadone dosing and low threshold approaches to treatment.
5. Support mobile intervention, treatment, and recovery services, offered by qualified professionals and service providers, such as peer recovery coaches, for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions and for persons who have experienced an opioid overdose.
6. Treatment of trauma for individuals with OUD (e.g., violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, or adverse childhood experiences) and family members (e.g., surviving family members after an overdose or overdose fatality), and training of health care personnel to identify and address such trauma.
7. Support evidence-based withdrawal management services for people with OUD and any co-occurring mental health conditions.

8. Training on MAT for health care providers, first responders, students, or other supporting professionals, such as peer recovery coaches or recovery outreach specialists, including tele-mentoring to assist community-based providers in rural or underserved areas.

8.1. Host trainings or conferences on addiction and drug trends for behavioral health organization, as well as the public.

9. Support workforce development for addiction professionals who work with persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.

10. Fellowships for addiction medicine specialists for direct patient care, instructors, and clinical research for treatments.

11. Scholarships and supports for behavioral health practitioners or workers involved in addressing OUD and any co-occurring SUD or mental health conditions, including but not limited to training, scholarships, fellowships, loan repayment programs, or other incentives for providers to work in rural or underserved areas.

12. Provide funding and training for clinicians to obtain a waiver under the federal Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000) to prescribe MAT for OUD and provide technical assistance and professional support to clinicians who have obtained a DATA 2000 waiver.

13. Dissemination of web-based training curricula, such as the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry's Provider Clinical Support Service-Opioids web-based training curriculum and motivational interviewing.

14. Development and dissemination of new curricula, such as the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry's Provider Clinical Support Service for Medication Assisted Treatment.

### **SUPPORT PEOPLE IN TREATMENT AND RECOVERY**

Support people in treatment for or recovery from OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide comprehensive wrap-around services to individuals with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including housing, transportation, education, job placement, job training, or childcare.

2. Provide the full continuum of care of treatment and recovery services for OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including supportive housing, peer support services and counseling, community navigators, case management, and connections to community-based services.

3. Provide counseling, peer-support, recovery case management and residential treatment with access to medications for those who need it to persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.

3.1. Recovery Community Organization (RCO) Coordinator

3.2. RCO Navigation Center: Resources and outsourcing options.

3.3. Peer Support Specialist (full-time positions)

4. Provide access to housing for people with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including supportive housing, recovery housing, housing assistance programs, training for housing providers, or recovery housing programs that allow or integrate FDA-approved medication with other support services.
5. Provide community support services, including social and legal services, to assist in deinstitutionalizing persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
6. Support or expand peer-recovery centers, which may include support groups, social events, computer access, or other services for persons with OUD and any cooccurring SUD/MH conditions.
7. Provide or support transportation to treatment or recovery programs or services for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
8. Provide employment training or educational services for persons in treatment for or recovery from OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
9. Identify successful recovery programs such as physician, pilot, and college recovery programs, and provide support and technical assistance to increase the number and capacity of high-quality programs to help those in recovery.
10. Engage non-profits, faith-based communities, and community coalitions to support people in treatment and recovery and to support family members in their efforts to support the person with OUD in the family.
11. Training and development of procedures for government staff to appropriately interact and provide social and other services to individuals with or in recovery from OUD, including reducing stigma.
12. Support stigma reduction efforts regarding treatment and support for persons with OUD, including reducing the stigma on effective treatment.
13. Create or support culturally appropriate services and programs for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including new Americans.
14. Create and/or support recovery high schools.
15. Hire or train behavioral health workers to provide or expand any of the services or supports listed above.

### **C. CONNECT PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP TO THE HELP THEY NEED (CONNECTIONS TO CARE)**

Provide connections to care for people who have – or at risk of developing – OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Ensure that health care providers are screening for OUD and other risk factors and know how to appropriately counsel and treat (or refer if necessary) a patient for OUD treatment.
2. Fund Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) programs to reduce the transition from use to disorders, including SBIRT services to pregnant women who are uninsured or not eligible for Medicaid.

3. Provide training and long-term implementation of SBIRT in key systems (health, schools, colleges, criminal justice, and probation), with a focus on youth and young adults when transition from misuse to opioid disorder is common.
4. Purchase automated versions of SBIRT and support ongoing costs of the technology.
5. Expand services such as navigators and on-call teams to begin MAT in hospital emergency departments.
6. Training for emergency room personnel treating opioid overdose patients on post-discharge planning, including community referrals for MAT, recovery case management or support services.
7. Support hospital programs that transition persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, or persons who have experienced an opioid overdose, into clinically appropriate follow-up care through a bridge clinic or similar approach.
8. Support crisis stabilization centers that serve as an alternative to hospital emergency departments for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions or persons that have experienced an opioid overdose.
9. Support the work of Emergency Medical Systems, including peer support specialists, to connect individuals to treatment or other appropriate services following an opioid overdose or other opioid-related adverse event.
10. Provide funding for peer support specialists or recovery coaches in emergency departments, detox facilities, recovery centers, recovery housing, or similar settings; offer services, supports, or connections to care to persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions or to persons who have experienced an opioid overdose.
11. Expand warm hand-off services to transition to recovery services.
12. Create or support school-based contacts that parents can engage with to seek immediate treatment services for their child; and support prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery programs focused on young people.
  - 12.1 Early Childhood Counselor position to reduce trauma and encourage brain development in the zero to five population due to parents with substance use disorders and child welfare involvement. Extend available treatment of children/parents in dependency cases (including dependency drug court cases) to include access to Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) for families with children five and under (as well as providing CPP certified training to cadre of local counselors), provide other trauma treatment to older children, provide tutoring for children with fetal drug exposure, provide for substance abuse risk screening and subsequent treatment for school-age young provide for young mentoring services, family peer mentoring, provide for rental deposit assistance to families in an effort to aid them to secure stable housing necessary for reunification
13. Develop and support best practices on addressing OUD in the workplace.
14. Support assistance programs for health care providers with OUD.

15. Engage non-profits and the faith community as a system to support outreach for treatment.

16. Support centralized call centers that provide information and connections to appropriate services and supports for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.

a. Funding for software programs such as First Watch to instantly notify community leaders of detailed statistical trends, patterns and geographical clusters of incidents of overdoses seen and provide maps of the crises within communities. (9-1-1, EMS, Fire, Police, Public Health, hospitals)

17. Fund/reimburse for Treat & Release and/or Treat & Transport programs

#### **ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF CRIMINAL-JUSTICE-INVOLVED PERSONS**

Hernando County currently has in effect a multi-phase Drug Court program, which encourages candid participation in confidential individual and group counseling for addictions treatment and requires drug screening in conjunction with probation. The Drug Court program also attempts to assist in ancillary services, such as the provision of mental health counseling and/or medication; residential treatment; transitional housing family counseling; and primary medical services. All these services are candidates for expansion, as resources are limited.

Address the needs of persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions who are involved in, are at risk of becoming involved in, or are transitioning out of the criminal justice system which include Mental Health Court, Veterans Court, and Youth Court programs through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Support pre-arrest or pre-arraignment diversion and deflection strategies for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including established strategies such as:

a. Self-referral strategies such as the Angel Programs or the Police Assisted Addiction Recovery Initiative (PAARI);

b. Active outreach strategies such as the Drug Abuse Response Team (DART) model;

c. "Naloxone Plus" strategies, which work to ensure that individuals who have received naloxone to reverse the effects of an overdose are then linked to treatment programs or other appropriate services;

d. Officer prevention strategies, such as the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) model;

e. Officer intervention strategies such as the Leon County, Florida Adult Civil Citation Network, or the Chicago Westside Narcotics Diversion to Treatment Initiative.

f. Co-responder and/or alternative responder models to address OUD related 911 calls with greater SUD expertise.

2. Support pre-trial services that connect individuals with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions to evidence-informed treatment, including MAT, and related services.

3. Support treatment and recovery courts that provide evidence-based options for persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions

4. Provide evidence-informed treatment, including MAT, recovery support, harm reduction, or other appropriate services to individuals with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions who are incarcerated in jail or prison.

a. Provide additional mental health/medical staffing for screening for substance abuse disorder and co-existing mental health issues;

i Direct additional resources to provide more comprehensive mental health screening, and provide mental health assessments for all inmates reporting substance abuse issues;

ii Increase staffing for medical professionals trained in provision of drug treatments services, and potentially expand to managing physician with prescription authority for detox units;

b. Provide expanded MAT agonist therapy utilizing;

i This program will exclusively utilize FDA-approved medications

5. Provide evidence-informed treatment, including MAT, recovery support, harm reduction, or other appropriate services to individuals with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions who are leaving jail or prison have recently left jail or prison, are on probation or parole, are under community corrections supervision, or are in re-entry programs or facilities.

a. Establish/Expand the current opioid diversion programs.

b. Hire additional substance abuse counselors.

Substance Use Disorder Counselor/Re-Entry Planner: Requesting an individual that would be able to instruct substance use disorder classes and provide counseling services to those that are incarcerated and demonstrate motivation for change. This individual will also assist the Program Department with making appropriate referrals and re-entry planning to assist these inmates in obtaining sober living upon their release and scheduling follow-up services in the community, to include outpatient services.

6. Support critical time interventions (CTI), particularly for individuals living with dual-diagnosis OUD/serious mental illness, and services for individuals who face immediate risks and service needs and risks upon release from correctional settings.

7. Provide training on best practices for addressing the needs of criminal-justice-involved persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions to law enforcement, correctional, or judicial personnel or to providers of treatment, recovery, harm reduction, case management, or other services offered in connection with any of the strategies described in this section.

a. Hire additional case managers to establish continuum of care/resources to obtain assistance for:

i Long-term inmates, including planning the process for reentry, collaboration with probation officers, and funding for targeted caseloads, as well as diversion programs for probation violations related to opioid/substance abuse.

ii Short-term inmates—further development of informational packets directing to resources relating to addiction assistance.

b. Engage in a system-wide assessment of criminal justice or health-related services/processes currently in place throughout the community to best identify points of intervention and options for treatment without engaging the criminal justice system itself.

### **ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PREGNANT OR PARENTING WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES, INCLUDING BABIES WITH NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME**

Address the needs of pregnant or parenting women with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, and the needs of their families, including babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Support evidence-based or evidence-informed treatment, including MAT, recovery services and supports, and prevention services for pregnant women – or women who could become pregnant – who have OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, and other measures to educate and provide support to families affected by Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.

2. Expand comprehensive evidence-based treatment and recovery services, including MAT, for uninsured women with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions for up to 12 months postpartum.

2.1. Substance Exposed Newborn care kits for parents to take when the babies are going home.

2.2. Connect/Schedule MAT appointment upon discharge.

3. Training for obstetricians or other healthcare personnel that work with pregnant women and their families regarding treatment of OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.

3.1. Annual summit, educational session for obstetricians or other healthcare personnel that work with pregnant women and their families with continuing education units or certification,

4. Expand comprehensive evidence-based treatment and recovery support for NAS babies; expand services for better continuum of care with infant-need dyad; expand long-term treatment and services for medical monitoring of NAS babies and their families.

5. Provide training to health care providers who work with pregnant or parenting women on best practices for compliance with federal requirements that children born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome get referred to appropriate services and receive a plan of safe care.

6. Child and family supports for parenting women with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.

7. Enhanced family supports and childcare services for parents with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.



8. Provide enhanced support for children and family members suffering trauma as a result of addiction in the family; and offer trauma-informed behavioral health treatment for adverse childhood events.

9. Offer home-based wrap-around services to persons with OUD and any cooccurring SUD/MH conditions, including but not limited to parent skills training.

10. Support for Children's Services – Fund additional positions and services, including supportive housing and other residential services, relating to children being removed from the home and/or placed in foster care due to custodial opioid use.

## **PREVENTION**

F. PREVENT OVER-PRESCRIBING AND ENSURE APPROPRIATE PRESCRIBING AND DISPENSING OF OPIOIDS  
Support efforts to prevent over-prescribing and ensure appropriate prescribing and dispensing of opioids through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Fund medical provider education and outreach regarding best prescribing practices for opioids consistent with Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including providers at hospitals (academic detailing).

2. Training for health care providers regarding safe and responsible opioid prescribing, dosing, and tapering patients off opioids.

3. Continuing Medical Education (CME) on appropriate prescribing of opioids.

4. Support for non-opioid pain treatment alternatives, including training providers to offer or refer to multi-modal, evidence-informed treatment of pain.

5. Support enhancements or improvements to Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs), including but not limited to improvements that:

a. Increase the number of prescribers using PDMPs;

b. Improve point-of-care decision-making by increasing the quantity, quality, or format of data available to prescribers using PDMPs, by improving the interface that prescribers use to access PDMP data, or both; or

c. Enable states to use PDMP data in support of surveillance or intervention strategies, including MAT referrals and follow-up for individuals identified within PDMP data as likely to experience OUD in a manner that complies with all relevant privacy and security laws and rules.

6. Ensuring PDMPs incorporate available overdose/naloxone deployment data, including the United States Department of Transportation's Emergency Medical Technician overdose database in a manner that complies with all relevant privacy and security laws and rules.

7. Increase electronic prescribing to prevent diversion or forgery.

8. Educate Dispensers on appropriate opioid dispensing.

## **PREVENT MISUSE OF OPIOIDS**

Support efforts to discourage or prevent misuse of opioids through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Fund media campaigns to prevent opioid misuse.
  - a. Create educational materials for EMTs and other first responders to distribute to patients during their routine work;
  - b. Create a safe station program with around the clock resources at each EMS station where residents can contact EMS providers to receive NARCAN, information, and referrals without fear of judgment or legal consequences.
2. Corrective advertising or affirmative public education campaigns based on evidence.
3. Public education relating to drug disposal.
4. Drug take-back disposal or destruction programs.
5. Fund community anti-drug coalitions that engage in drug prevention efforts.
6. Support community coalitions in implementing evidence-informed prevention, such as reduced social access and physical access, stigma reduction – including staffing, educational campaigns, support for people in treatment or recovery, or training of coalitions in evidence-informed implementation, including the Strategic Prevention Framework developed by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
7. Engage non-profits and faith-based communities as systems to support prevention.
8. Fund evidence-based prevention programs in schools or evidence-informed school and community education programs and campaigns for students, families, school employees, school athletic programs, parent-teacher and student associations, and others.
9. School-based or youth-focused programs or strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness in preventing drug misuse and seem likely to be effective in preventing the uptake and use of opioids.
10. Create of support community-based education or intervention services for families, youth, and adolescents at risk for OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
11. Support evidence-informed programs or curricula to address mental health needs of young people who may be at risk of misusing opioids or other drugs, including emotional modulation and resilience skills.
12. Support greater access to mental health services and supports for young people, including services and supports provided by school nurses, behavioral health workers or other school staff, to address mental health needs in young people that (when not properly addressed) increase the risk of opioid or other drug misuse.

## **PREVENT OVERDOSE DEATHS AND OTHER HARMS (HARM REDUCTION)**

Support efforts to prevent or reduce overdose deaths or other opioid-related harms through evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Increase availability and distribution of naloxone and other drugs that treat overdoses for first responders, overdose patients, individuals with OUD and their friends and family members, individuals at high risk of overdose, schools, community navigators and outreach workers, persons being released from jail or prison, or other members of the general public.
2. Public health entities provide free naloxone to anyone in the community
3. Training and education regarding naloxone and other drugs that treat overdoses for first responders, overdose patients, patients taking opioids, families, schools, community support groups, and other members of the general public.
4. Expand, improve, or develop data tracking software and applications for overdoses/naloxone revivals.
5. Public education relating to emergency responses to overdoses.
6. Public education relating to immunity and Good Samaritan laws.
7. Educate first responders regarding the existence and operation of immunity and Good Samaritan laws.
8. Syringe service programs and other evidence-informed programs to reduce harms associated with intravenous drug use, including supplies, staffing, space, peer support services, referrals to treatment, fentanyl checking, connections to care, and the full range of harm reduction and treatment services provided by these programs.
9. Expand access to testing and treatment for infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C resulting from intravenous opioid use.
10. Support mobile units that offer or provide referrals to harm reduction services, treatment, recovery supports, health care, or other appropriate services to persons that use opioids or persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
11. Provide training in harm reduction strategies to health care providers, students, peer recovery coaches, recovery outreach specialists, or other professionals that provide care to persons who use opioids or persons with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions.
12. Support screening for fentanyl in routine clinical toxicology testing.

#### **OTHER STRATEGIES**

**FIRST RESPONDERS** In addition to items in sections C, D, and H relating to first responders, support the following:

1. Educate law enforcement or other first responders regarding appropriate practices and precautions when dealing with fentanyl or other drugs.

2. Provision of wellness and support services for first responders and others who experience secondary trauma associated with opioid-related emergency events.

### **LEADERSHIP, PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

Support efforts to provide leadership, planning, coordination, facilitation, training, and technical assistance to abate the opioid epidemic through activities, programs, or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Statewide, regional, local, or community regional planning to identify root causes of addiction and overdose, goals for reducing harms related to the opioid epidemic, and areas and populations with the greatest needs for treatment intervention services; to support training and technical assistance; or to support other strategies to abate the opioid epidemic described in this opioid abatement strategy list.
2. Provide a dashboard to share reports, recommendations, or plans to spend opioid settlement; to show how opioid settlement funds have been spent; to report program or strategy outcomes; or to track, share, or visualize key opioid-related or health-related indicators and supports as identified through collaborative statewide, regional, local, or community processes.
3. Invest in infrastructure or staffing at government or not-for-profit agencies to support collaborative, cross-system coordination with the purpose of preventing overprescribing, opioid misuse, or opioid overdoses, treating those with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, supporting them in treatment or recovery, connecting them to care, or implementing other strategies to abate the opioid epidemic described in this opioid abatement strategy list.
4. Provide resources to staff government oversight and management of opioid abatement programs.

### **TRAINING**

In addition to the training referred to throughout this document, support training to abate the opioid epidemic through activities, programs, or strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Provide funding for staff training or networking programs and services to improve the capability of government, community, and not-for-profit entities to abate the opioid crisis.
2. Support infrastructure and staffing for collaborative cross-system coordination to prevent opioid misuse, prevent overdoses, and treat those with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, or implement other strategies to abate the opioid epidemic described in this opioid abatement strategy list (e.g., health care, primary care, pharmacies, PDMPs, etc.).
  - 2.1. Position: to gather all data surrounding drug trends, substance exposed newborns, youth use, recovery success from treatment programs, conduct focus groups, and local surveys to keep local stakeholders informed as trends change.

### **RESEARCH**

Support opioid abatement research that may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Monitoring, surveillance, data collection, and evaluation of programs and strategies described in this opioid abatement strategy list.
2. Research non-opioid treatment of chronic pain.
3. Research on improved service delivery for modalities such as SBIRT that demonstrate promising but mixed results in populations vulnerable to opioid use disorders.
4. Research on novel harm reduction and prevention efforts such as the provision of fentanyl test strips.
5. Research on innovative supply-side enforcement efforts such as improved detection of mail-based delivery of synthetic opioids.
6. Expanded research on swift/certain/fair models to reduce and deter opioid misuse within criminal justice populations that build upon promising approaches used to address other substances (e.g. Hawaii HOPE and Dakota 24/7).
7. Epidemiological surveillance of OUD-related behaviors in critical populations including individuals entering the criminal justice system, including but not limited to approaches modeled on the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) system.
8. Qualitative and quantitative research regarding public health risks and harm reduction opportunities within illicit drug markets, including surveys of market participants who sell or distribute illicit opioids.
9. Geospatial analysis of access barriers to MAT and their association with treatment engagement and treatment outcomes.

#### **ADDENDUM TO THE HERNANDO COUNTY OPIOID SETTLEMENT RESPONSE PLAN USES FOR EXPENDITURE OF OPIOID ABATEMENT FUNDS**

This Addendum to the Hernando County Opioid Response Plan outlines the assignment of projects for the award, expenditure, and use of Hernando County's regional opioid settlement funds and county funds. Initial recommendations were compiled during the Public Safety Coordinating Council's stakeholders meeting on October 21, 2023 and again January 17, 2025. These recommendations were subsequently utilized to prioritize the allocation of Hernando County Abatement Funding and Hernando County Regional Abatement Funding.

#### **PRIORITIZATION OF ABATEMENT FUNDING USES:**

The Public Safety Coordinating Council is composed of appointees who represent a broad spectrum of knowledge and experience related to opioid issues, including elected officials, law enforcement, fire and emergency services, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and other community stakeholders. Together, they bring valuable expertise and perspectives to the issue of opioid abatement in Hernando County. To assess the most critical needs in the community related to the ongoing opioid crisis, discussions were held among community agencies, service providers, and County staff, with opportunities for public participation and input.

LSF Health Systems and Hernando County Housing and Supportive Services collaborated to efficiently evaluate proposals aimed at addressing community needs and to establish recommendations for the allocation of regional settlement funds. The priority uses outlined here align with the schedule of allowable uses established by the State of Florida and the Hernando County Opioid Settlement Response Plan. While all uses on the

schedule may be considered at any time; however, the following items were given greater weight when soliciting, evaluating, and recommending requests for funding. As needs and opportunities change, evolve, or arise, this list of recommendations will be continually reviewed and updated for consideration and approval.

## **RECOMMENDED OPIOID ABATEMENT FUNDING PRIORITIES:**

**1) Medication-assisted treatment (MAT)** - MAT is the use of medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies and is considered the standard of care for treatment of opioid use disorders. MAT treatment overtime can help some people sustain a more lasting recovery. Expand MAT access throughout all SUD/MH providers and traditional healthcare channels, especially in criminal justice settings and for pregnant women.

**2) Drug abuse response teams (DART)** - Collaborative efforts between fire and emergency responders, law enforcement, and substance abuse and mental health providers provide crucial assistance and resources directly to those who need them most, fighting addiction and bringing recovery to the home.

**3) Increase/Establish usage of Recovery Housing and Wraparound Assistance** - comprehensive wrap-around services to individuals with OUD and any co-occurring SUD/MH conditions, including housing, transportation, education, job placement, job training, or childcare

**4) Education and prevention programs** - The goal of opioid education is to prevent drug abuse from occurring; the earlier the better. Once drug use has started, stopping becomes much more difficult. In addition, education and training resources for care professionals, responders, and community stakeholders is crucial. What is more, education about the stigma surrounding opioid use disorder can alleviate barriers for people seeking treatment and access care.

**5) Hands-free CPR devices for EMS/Fire vehicles** - Opioids cause respiratory apnea, which is a primary cause of death during an opioid overdose. Making more CPR equipment available on emergency vehicles will free up the hands of responders to perform other life-saving services on overdose calls.

**6) Expand screening and brief intervention (SBIRT) for SUD in Criminal Justice settings** – Expand screening and brief intervention SBIRT for SUD for individuals involved in the criminal justice system Explore opportunities to screen all individuals at booking with evidence-based screens Expand use of peers and family peer supports and connections to in-jail programming for those who have positive screens

**7) Recovery Community Organization** – Explore expansion of peer recovery services with the development of a Recovery Community Organization. Encourage strong linkages between treatment and reentry setting and the RCO.

**OVERVIEW OF TIMELINE FOR EXPENDING AND REPORTING ON ABATEMENT FUNDS:** The annual State timeline for expenditure of regional settlement funds is July 1 to June 30. Hernando County must submit to the State its plan for expending funds for the following fiscal year. The Public Safety Coordinating Council in collaboration with Health and Human Services Department worked with LSF Health Systems to solicit and distribute funds according to its recommended priorities and other allowable uses within the State fiscal year. The County will adhere to State guidelines regarding monitoring and reporting on funding expenditures.

---

**Brian Hawkins, Chair**

**Approved for Form and Legal Sufficiency:**

By: *Melissa Tartaglia*  
**County Attorney's Office**