Governor DeWine Announces Major Investment in Battle Against Opioids

December 17, 2020

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Governor Mike DeWine joined with Sen. Rob Portman, Recovery Ohio Director Alisha Nelson, and Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Director Lori Criss today to announce grants totaling $76,534,000 for new strategic efforts combatting Ohio's drug crisis in local communities.

The grants, which represent a portion of Ohio's overall share of $96 million in federal State Opioid Response (SOR) 2.0 funding, come at a time when many communities are seeing a spike in demand for behavioral health services amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. OhioMHAS will grant $58,884,000 directly to local county alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services boards and their community partners. Additional funding for innovations in approaches to connecting people to care will be made available by OhioMHAS as part the SOR 2.0 investments.

"Many communities are seeing an increase in demand for mental health and substance use disorder services as the pandemic continues. The uncertainties of the pandemic intensify the struggle with substance use disorder that many Ohioans face," said Governor DeWine. "Through the leadership of the teams at OMHAS, in partnership with the agencies under the RecoveryOhio initiative, we have been better able to meet the needs of Ohioans that are struggling, and federal funding will increase the flexibility of communities to address their specific, unique needs."

"State Opioid Response funds are vital for Ohio's continued efforts to combat the addiction epidemic, and I'm pleased to have led efforts to create this federal funding stream through the CURES legislation and to help secure this funding for Ohio. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges and we are now seeing a heartbreaking surge in overdose deaths," said Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH). "That's why I'm glad this federal funding will make a difference and continue to help save lives throughout Ohio. I will continue to work with my colleagues and Governor DeWine to ensure that our local communities and addiction providers have the resources they need to continue to combat this epidemic."

Consistent with Governor DeWine's RecoveryOhio strategies, Ohio's SOR 2.0 project seeks to strengthen and expand the available array of treatment and recovery support services available to Ohioans. County boards will leverage the grants to support a variety of projects, including treatment programs for new or expecting mothers who have an opioid use disorder, recovery housing, treatment supports for criminal justice-involved Ohioans, and expanded access to the overdose reversal drug naloxone, among others.

"While addiction and mental illness are a national and statewide crisis, we know that prevention, treatment, and recovery take place in local communities," said Director Criss. "This investment marks a true partnership among federal and state government to support local planning and service delivery and improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities across Ohio."

For more on what Ohio is doing to fight opioid addiction, visit recoveryohio.gov. Click HERE to view a one-page overview of Ohio's SOR 2.0 project and HERE for background on Ohio's State Opioid Response efforts to date. For a list of COVID-19-related resources for Ohioans struggling with mental illness or addiction, visit: https://mha.ohio.gov/Health-Professionals/About-Mental-Health-and-Addiction-Treatment/Emergency-Preparedness/Coronavirus.