FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ohio Receives $96M in State Opioid Response Grants to Fight Addiction

(COLUMBUS, OH) – Ohio's efforts to battle opioid addiction got a major boost today with word that the Buckeye State has been tapped to receive an additional $96 million in federal State Opioid Response (SOR) grants. The announcement comes as communities across the globe hold awareness events recognizing August 31 as International Overdose Awareness Day.

"Opioid addiction remains a serious public health threat," said Governor Mike DeWine. "This funding will help the state of Ohio achieve the goals I have set forth through the RecoveryOhio initiative. While we are fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, combatting the opioid crisis has not taken a backseat. We must continue to support those struggling with mental health and substance use disorders get the help they need while working to prevent misuse and encouraging long-term recovery."

All told, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced $1.5 billion in grants as part of the 21st Century CURES Act initiative to help states combat the ongoing opioid addiction crisis – a task made even more complicated by the global coronavirus pandemic. This latest round of funding is intended to expand access to treatment and prevention services, promote harm reduction programs, and support capacity with addiction treatment providers.

"COVID-19 has made our job more challenging, but Ohio's addiction prevention, treatment and recovery service providers and local communities are rising to the challenge," said Lori Criss, director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). "We are grateful for this timely influx of federal funding, which will help us strengthen our efforts to connect Ohioans to lifesaving services."

Under the guidance of the Governor's RecoveryOhio initiative, those efforts have included a wide-scale expansion of telehealth services, changes in rules around Medication-Assisted Treatment protocols to ensure access while promoting social distancing and other efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, as well as greater access to the overdose reversal drug naloxone.

OhioMHAS has been preparing for this opportunity since the start of the pandemic, meeting with diverse stakeholders throughout the state to inform decisions on the best use of the funds. In general, the department's strategy calls for funds to support behavioral health innovations, behavioral health workforce development, cross-agency initiatives at the state level, and to strengthen local strategies that support prevention, treatment, and recovery from substance use disorders. The agency will finalize planning for use of the funds over the next 30 days.

This latest round of funding brings Ohio's total share of SOR funding to $235.1 million since inception of the SOR program. The state previously received $55 million per year for 2018 and 2019, plus a one-time supplement of $29.1 million. Click HERE to learn more about Ohio's State Opioid Response program and HERE for more about RecoveryOhio priorities.

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