2023 Annual Report

OCTOBER 18, 2023

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services
GRETCHEN WHITMER, GOVERNOR | ELIZABETH HERTEL, DIRECTOR

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

M
OPIOID RESEARCH INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

WAYNE STATE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

States joining the national opioid lawsuits against manufacturers and distributors contributing to the opioid epidemic have secured billions of dollars in settlement funding. Based on the first round of settlements for Michigan, the state is expected to receive around $776 million over the next 18 years. This expected total will increase with the recent settlement reached with Walgreens that could provide for an additional $338 million with approximately $200 million dispersed over 15 years and $138 million spread out over 18 years. There are other pending settlements to be reached, which will add to the state's overall total in opioid settlement dollars.

Of the initial round of settlements reached, around 50% will go directly to county, municipal, and local governments that sign the subdivision agreements. Of the funds received, 70% must be used for future opioid remediation in accordance with Exhibit E of the allowable uses for settlement funds.

In the spring of 2022, in anticipation of this funding going to counties, cities, and townships, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), brought together the state's three largest research universities, Michigan State University (MSU), University of Michigan (U-M), and Wayne State University (WSU) to discuss ideas on how to best support and assist local governments. MSU, U-M, and WSU are well poised to provide expertise and assist county, municipal, and local governments on evidence-based programs, best practices, and promising high-impact programs to abate opioid use disorder, remediate overdose deaths, and support substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health treatment in communities.

This collaboration resulted in multiple strategy meetings amongst the three universities and MDHHS. In October of 2022, MSU, U-M, and WSU jointly submitted a proposal to MDHHS for consideration to establish the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC). The TAC was launched in April of 2023.

This report describes work that was conducted by the TAC for approximately 6 months. MSU began their work on March 17, 2023 while WSU and U-M began their work on April 1, 2023. Work of the TAC conducted through September 30, 2023, is included in this report and was focused on building the capacity to provide technical assistance to counties. Support and technical assistance will be expanded to include cities and townships during the next fiscal year in 2024.

MSU, U-M, and WSU each received $200,000 as a part of the TAC. The funding for the TAC allowed the universities to build their capacity to provide technical assistance and expertise at no cost to counties, cities, and townships. Not all the funding were expended during the 6 months the TAC has existed. Unspent funds will allow for the TAC to continue to provide valuable support and technical assistance to counties, municipalities, and local governments in 2024. This has been a collaborative effort in partnership with MDHHS; MDHHS has also served as a liaison between the TAC and relevant statewide associations and organizations.

AREAS OF FOCUS

During the first six months of the TAC, the Universities quickly discovered and identified areas of focus, noted in the following table, to help distribute the workload and expertise:

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Expertise & Lead Role
- Community-engaged assessment coordination
  - Training
  - One-on-one consultations
  - Collaborations

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Expertise & Lead Role
- Learning Series coordination
- Exhibit E: Program examples of allowable uses of opioid settlement funds (Naloxone distribution, training and education of providers, drug take back events, connections to care, etc.)
- TAC communication

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Expertise & Lead Role
- Opioid use disorder treatment in jails coordination
- Evaluation of prevention, treatment, and recovery programs and policies
  - Training
  - One-on-one consultations
  - Shared resources

COLLECTIVE WORK

Community Learning Series
U-M and WSU took the lead in coordinating and establishing the following online webinars as part of the TAC Learning Series for county, city, and township officials and communities interested in hearing from experts related to core strategies and allowable uses of the Opioid Settlement funds:

MAY 16, 2023 - Community Engagement to Assess Needs and Priorities
- Jessica Barnes-Najor, PhD, MSU
- Rose Henderson, MSU
- Thomas Panther, MSU
- Reiana Merrill, MSU

JUNE 8, 2023 - Opioid Settlement & Exhibit E Overview
- Matthew Walker, AAG
- Amy Bohnert, PhD, MHS, U-M

JULY 27, 2023 - Treating Opioid Use Disorder in Jails
- Matthew Costello, LMSW, WSU
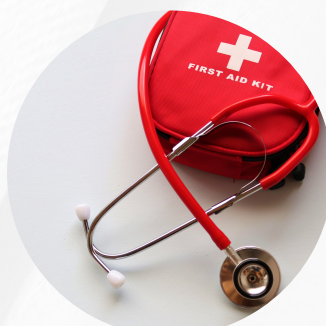- Allison Gorine, LMSW, WSU

SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 - Technical Assistance Collaborative Overview
- Brandon Hool, MDHHS
- Amy Bohnert, PhD, MHS, U-M
- Jessica Barnes-Najor, PhD, MSU
- Stella Resko, PhD, WSU

The TAC shared information on the learning series through statewide associations such as the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC), Michigan Municipal League (MML), and the Michigan Townships Association (MTA) to share the notices for the TAC Learning Series. Each webinar included time for a question-and-answer session. Attendance ranged from 17 to over 70 participants, and each webinar was scheduled for an hour to 1.5 hours.

These webinars and presentations are recorded, shared with registered attendees, and available to the public upon request.

MDHHS-OPIOIDSETTLEMENTHELP@MICHIGAN.GOV

COLLECTIVE WORK

Community-Engagement for Assessing Needs & Priorities

MSU consists of a team of experts who focus on engaging communities when assessing needs and assets to help identify priorities for a specific program, project, or community. MSU began providing technical assistance, expertise, and consultation on March 17, 2023. The MSU team has provided community-engaged assessment support to 19 counties throughout the first 6.5 months of the TAC via one-on-one consultations, trainings, and collaborations. For most counties, technical assistance has included ongoing discussions and collaboration between MSU and county representatives.

MSU has worked with each county to tailor community assessment tools and supports based on the county's unique needs. Community assessment tools include survey, focus group, and interview protocols, and MSU has provided support to county representatives in creating and implementing these protocols. MSU has also provided guidance to county representatives on how to involve community members in the assessment process. MSU team members have administered surveys and led focus group discussions in some of the communities supported through the TAC. The earliest community assessment supports are just beginning to yield data. In the next year of the TAC, MSU will support communities in analyzing and reporting on the data collected.

Opioid Settlement Evaluation

Given the expertise around metrics and evaluations at WSU, the University has taken the lead on providing technical assistance and expertise around opioid settlement evaluation. WSU experts provided consultation to one county that is developing substance use treatment programs for individuals involved in the criminal/legal systems. The goal in working with this county is to determine how best WSU can assist in helping to establish evaluation plans related to the opioid settlement funds.

Conclusion

There are a number of resources on opioid settlement processes that exist from the respective statewide associations such as MAC, MML, and MTA and national groups like NACo, Vital Strategies, John Hopkins University, and many others.

The TAC is unique among the available resources in that it is a collaboration across the state's largest research institutions, MSU, U-M, and WSU, and it includes a strong partnership with MDHHS. This collaboration among research experts allows communities to more easily access information on gathering reliable assessment/evaluation data, evidence-based programs, best practices, and high-impact promising programs that can support county and local governments as they make informed decisions.

In the first 6 months of the TAC, collaborators from MSU, U-M, and WSU successfully developed a workflow, points of contact, distribution of responsibilities, and operationalized the group while also initiating technical assistance support to counties. The TAC will continue to expand its activities during the 2024 fiscal year.

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