**Berkeley and Jefferson Counties Overdose Response Demonstration Pilot Project**

**Year 2 Summary**

**December 2020**

Senate Bill 272, effective June 5, 2018, enabled the Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) to establish county-level Community Overdose Response Demonstration Pilot Projects. *See* W. Va. Code §16-5T-6. On August 1, 2019, WVU Health Sciences Center Eastern Division (WVU HSC EAST), in collaboration with community partners in both counties, launched the Berkeley and Jefferson Counties Demonstration Pilot Project. This report details the progress made over the course of 2020.

The pilot project builds upon community assets and develops a coordinated community action response to prevent and combat the impact of substance use disorder (SUD) and opioid use disorder (OUD) in Berkeley and Jefferson families. Evidence-based practices across the spectrum from prevention to recovery have been implemented in each county, expanding upon existing strategies and programs while launching new initiatives in the following areas:

* Rural outreach to bring services and education directly to communities: Community Outreach for Resources and Education (CORE)
* Supporting families with substance use disorder
* Naloxone education and distribution
* Stigma reduction

The WVU School of Public Health is evaluating the Berkeley and Jefferson Counties Pilot Project to determine its impact. Successful and unsuccessful approaches will be shared with other counties and communities in West Virginia to promote understanding of specific models and innovative activities effective in preventing and reversing overdose; reducing stigma; and providing comprehensive services across the continuum of care for individuals, mothers, and families impacted by SUD.

**Project Goal and Objectives**

***Goal: Develop and implement innovative, evidence-based initiatives in a community response to prevent overdose in Berkeley and Jefferson counties.***

**Objective 1: Establish and launch rural outreach teams to bring services and education directly to communities - Community Outreach for Resources and Education (CORE)**

This objective includes the hiring, training and launching of two teams, one in each county, to deliver comprehensive harm reduction programs, prevention, education, case management, behavioral health services, and public health services to individuals and their families in need. CORE Teams are launched and serving in each county. Each week, they conduct mobile outreach to organizations, families, and individuals and connect people to the specific help, education, services, and resources they need. Over the months of August, September, October they planned and hosted “outreach events” to promote recovery success stories, overdose awareness, and naloxone access. In December of 2020 they engaged and partnered with local churches to reduce stigma in their congregations and conduct street outreach with church members in high risk areas. Both teams remain active during COVID-19 and physical outreach continues as team members adhere to strict safety guidelines.

**Objective 2: Provide wraparound care and support for women and families via Critical Interventions to Recover through Community Linkages and Empowerment (CIRCLE)**

This objective includes the hiring, training, and launching of a Multi-Disciplinary Team to provide comprehensive, wraparound care and services consisting of case management, behavioral health, linkages with DHHR’s Child Protective Services, and additional community resources to mothers, children, and families. The CIRCLE initiative is now fully launched and increasing each month the number of families and individuals enrolled in the program.

**Objective 3: Expand Naloxone education and distribution throughout each county**

This objective includes addressing common misconceptions and reducing stigma to increase access to Naloxone for first responders and the larger community. In 2020, all project personnel received the necessary training to distribute Naloxone to community members. As of December 1st, 2020, over 100 community members have received Narcan training and kits. This includes staff and management in common overdose settings such as libraries, churches, convenient stores, motels, etc.

**Objective 4: Coordinate a targeted stigma reduction campaign in systems and communities in both counties**

This objective includes using evidence-based curricula to develop an educational program that reduces stigma in the general community and in health care systems. Meetings and trainings led to the development of a stigma reduction plan including the identification and justification of the specific sectors to focus on and specific stigma reduction interventions tailored to those populations. The plan was launched in January 2020 and expanded to include evidenced based curricula to train individuals how to best cope during COVID-19.

**Objective 5: Engage the community and establish structured mechanism for stakeholders in each county to guide project initiatives and provide consistent feedback and recommendations**

This objective includes the establishment of a bi-county steering committee to engage stakeholders. COVID-19 significantly impacted this objective. However, input from existing community collaboratives is helping to drive project activities, increase referrals to project programs, and develop creative solutions to conducting outreach and care during the pandemic.

**Objective 6: Coordinate with WVU School of Public Health to develop a robust evaluation plan of the Demonstration Pilot Project in Berkeley and Jefferson counties**

This objective includes the collection and analysis of all project data on a quarterly basis. In the first year of project implementation, a full evaluation plan was drafted. Currently, data is being collected and submitted each week to the evaluation team. At the end of year 1, the evaluation team conducted a survey of project personnel to capture the perceived success and challenges of the project. The results of the surveys drove strategic meetings and critical changes to project activities.

**The Year Ahead**

In 2021, the work beneath each objective will continue to expand. The CORE and CIRCLE programs will increase the number of individuals they serve and the locations and settings of the mobile outreach. As uncertainty around COVID-19 remains, this project will continue to be flexible and adapt to safely meet the needs of community members in need of help.

Partnerships will continue to be explored with local organizations across prevention, treatment, and recovery, to include their personnel and services on certain days of outreach as determined by need. Discussions with local EMS partners, Berkeley County Emergency Ambulance Authority and Jefferson County Emergency Services Agency include how to coordinate CORE Team services with local Quick Response Teams and ensure a response to individuals and families following an overdose.

Using real-time data from the evaluation team, project personnel will be able to determine the impact of these programs and make necessary changes to meet the emerging needs of communities in Berkeley and Jefferson counties. The Demonstration Pilot Project website is expected to launch in January 2021. This will be a portal for individuals and community organizations in need of resources or education to navigate and receive the specific help they need. In addition, some data from the evaluation team will be published to this site for other counties in WV to learn the specific components of the project determined to be successful.

Finally, with a core goal of this project and dedicated time focused on developing a sustainability plan, in 2021 project personnel expect to formalize a plan influenced by the community relationships, collaborations, and as a result, strengthen the coordination between multi-sectoral agencies working across the continuum of care to enhance West Virginia communities’ ability to collectively respond to individuals and families impacted by SUD and OUD following the end of the funding period.

**Conclusion**

W. Va. Code §16-5T-6 enables communities to establish a “Community Overdose Response.” In 2020, ODCP dedicated time and funds in order to launch community-based project initiatives in Berkeley and Jefferson counties. Key accomplishments during this phase of the project period are:

1. Launching 2community-based mobile teams across Berkeley and Jefferson counties capable of physically or virtually providing services to individuals and families suffering from the impacts of SUD in a wide variety of community settings.
2. Launching and expanding the CIRCLE program to tailor services to meet the specific needs of families in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties.
3. Strategically distributing Naloxone into the hands of the individuals at risk of overdose and their friends and families.
4. Launching an evidence based approach to addressing stigma across different sectors.
5. Incorporating stress relief curricula to help professionals best to cope during COVID-19.
6. Strengthening and increasing additional community partnerships to help implement and guide project interventions, including the plan for sustainability.