**Wyoming County Overdose Response Demonstration Pilot Project**

**November 2020 Summary Update**

Senate Bill 272, effective June 5, 2018, enabled the Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) to establish Community Overdose Response Demonstration Pilot Projects in several West Virginia counties. *See* W. Va. Code §16-5T-6. In collaboration with community partners, Marshall University has launched the Wyoming County pilot project.

This pilot project builds upon community assets and develops infrastructure for a coordinated system of addiction care to provide prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery support to impact substance use disorder (SUD) and opioid use disorder (OUD) in Wyoming County.

The well-established partnerships and ongoing collaborative efforts that exist in Wyoming County have been leveraged as a catalyst through the development of a coordinated Wyoming County System for Addiction Care that addresses various needs across a continuum. Underlying all aspects of the model is the need for stakeholder collaboration and coordination in order to effectively establish systems of care in local communities.

As part of this project, the Wyoming County HOPE Coalition was developed with the philosophy that “recovery should not be harder than staying in active addiction.” The Coalition is a consortium of more than 20 organizations that meet regularly, working together to make a difference in their communities. The Coalition’s plan is intended to implement multidimensional strategies in five areas: prevention, early intervention, treatment, recovery, and building recovery supports by identifying strengths, providing access, and becoming a sustainable model of recovery. This report, provided 1 year after distribution of funding, provides a comprehensive update on progress to establish and strengthen the Wyoming County System for Addiction Care.

The approach used for the Wyoming County Community Overdose Response Demonstration Pilot was to develop a continuum of care where individuals can be met “where they are” and can access needed resources regardless of where and how they move along the continuum. This summary provides an update for each of the areas in accordance with the defined and approved statement of work for the project with subsequent reports also provided quarterly. Using this approach, Wyoming County is building and strengthening system infrastructure to have measurable impact in saving lives and changing the course and future of individuals, children, and families impacted by substance use disorders and the opioid epidemic using data-driven decision making, evidence-based strategies as well as innovation that results from the collective expertise of Consortium members.

**Project Goals and Objectives**

A summary of progress for each component of the continuum of care that is being developed in Wyoming County in provided below, including the impact of COVID-19 at the local level. While the pandemic has presented numerous challenges, it has also resulted in many successes as services have been sustained in needed, innovative ways.

**Prevention**

In the area of prevention, the Wyoming County HOPE coalition is utilizing funding to invest in programs and curriculum for school-age youth to increase the existing prevention system. The overall objective continues to be development and implementation of innovative, evidence-based prevention initiatives. In 2020, the “Too Good for Drugs Curriculum” was implemented through the fall semester, and in the spring until March 2020 when school was closed due to COVID-19. Since then, the Wyoming County Board of Education has held school in person only 8 days this fall; thus, COVID-19 has significantly impacted this component of the planned prevention activities. Wyoming County has been successful however in transitioning the Future Leaders Program to a ‘touchless, virtual format’ to maintain critical connections with enrolled high school students. Subsequently, the fall 2020 semester has seen 69 students remain engaged from Westside High School and 116 students from Wyoming East High School. This is an increase of approximately 60 additional students in 2020 as compared to one year ago. Highlights from the 2019-2020 Future Leaders Program for the past year, until school was disrupted, can be found at the link below with evaluation ongoing to understand the impact of virtual delivery of the program and virtual activities as it is being delivered currently. . <https://www.facebook.com/1358372032/posts/10217760618991380/?d=n>.

**Early Intervention**

For early intervention, the Wyoming County HOPE Coalition is utilizing funding to invest in local programs that can reduce the harm associated with substance use disorder and to ‘meet people where they are’, including through comprehensive harm reductions services and referral to treatment. A primary objective of early intervention is to expand and strengthen comprehensive harm reduction services, including needle exchange to reduce the risk of blood-borne transmission of HIV and other infectious diseases, distribution of naloxone to reduce overdose deaths, and to increase opportunities to link individual to treatment among persons who inject drugs in Wyoming County. Since funding was received, comprehensive harm reduction services have been provided via a mobile unit that weekly visits two locations in the county, with the addition of a third location in planning phase. In addition, the comprehensive nature of the program assures that hepatitis C and HIV testing, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and flu vaccine administration are provided to harm reduction clients, in addition to syringe services and Naloxone education/distribution.

The program collects data monthly on overdose events from program participants to enable ongoing responsiveness to what is occurring in the county. For example, during the spring, the County saw an uptick in overdose incidents. The Wyoming County Harm Reduction program responded by increasing efforts to distribute Narcan in the community which seemed to help lower the overdose cases. Sadly, some overdoses are still being reported. In June 2020, their clients reported 5 overdoses, in July 2020 there were 7 overdoses reported, and in August 6 overdoses reported. This reporting directly from program participants provides near real time data which can be aggregated monthly and over time. No fatalities have been reported as of this date through Harm Reduction Program participants as of the time of this report. The recovery coaches from the Harm Reduction Program, Southern Highlands Mental Health Center, or Recovery Point continue to provide counseling and work with most Program clients as part of the comprehensive services provided. The staff of the Program also work closely with the Quick Response Team, which is a collaborative efforts among local partners, including the Health Department, Southern Highlands, and Community Connections.

Throughout the course of the pandemic, as resources, staff capacity, and safety have allowed, the Health Department has continued to provide mobile harm reduction services. This has been especially important as one key component of the comprehensive services offered is the education and distribution of naloxone to participants. When the mobile unit is out, they continue to provide naloxone education and distribution to at risk individuals, as well as syringe exchange, immunizations, testing for HIV and HCV, referrals to treatment programs and other supportive efforts. These services are provided with appropriate social distancing, utilization of masks and increasing sanitization efforts..

**Treatment and Recovery**

The Highlands Community Mental Health Center is expanding the continuum of care in Wyoming county by establishing a community-based, family oriented treatment facility in

Pineville. This approach will establish an outpatient hub and spoke system for youth mental health and adult substance use disorder treatment. When the facility opens, it will add an additional outpatient treatment facility in the Rock View/Pineville area that will focus on treatment of adults and youth impacted by substance use including increasing access to health care, medication-assisted treatment services, peer recovery services, community services, children’s therapy, telehealth services, and transportation. In addition, a community needs assessment is being conducted to determine the willingness of schools and parents to participate.

This is a change in the scope of work for Southern Highlands this year. The original scope of work called for the addition of twelve ASAM Level 3.5 treatment beds to Wyoming County in the Rock View/Pineville area. Since that time, numerous programs have been opened across the state with more than 750 available beds and several more ‘in the pipeline’. Southern WV alone has three additional inpatient programs opening in McDowell, Nicholas, and Raleigh counties. After careful review of this information and serious evaluation of Wyoming county needs, a change in scope of proposed services was recommended. Southern Highlands worked with the Bureau of Behavioral Health to analyze bed data for several months. As it appeared as if there were adequate Men’s ASAM 3.5 treatment bed availability to meet the needs of West Virginians with substance use disorder, this change was proposed, submitted and approved. Instead of an inpatient program, Southern Highlands is developing a ‘hub and spoke’ system for treatment by adding an additional outpatient treatment facility in the Rock View/Pineville area.

This expansion of outpatient services will help diminish the burden of rural access to outpatient mental health and SUD services for adults and youth. This facility will also act in conjunction with the full range of services that Southern Highlands has to offer (including linkage to inpatient treatment), but will have a focus on treatment of adults and youth that have been impacted by substance use. The project timeline was updated this year with the one year no cost extension and the facility will be completed and operational by June 30, 2021.

This year has also seen strengthening of infrastructure with the employment of an additional full time Peer Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS) who has been working with/providing Peer Coaching for consumers in the outpatient based medication assisted treatment program at Southern Highlands as well as with the Quick Response Team (QRT) and Wyoming County Harm Reduction Program. Southern Highlands (Wyoming County) now has 3 Peer Recovery Support Specialists working within substance use treatment programs.

In addition, Southern Highlands (Wyoming) has begun Wrap-Around services for children ages 0-12 in the CPS system that have been identified as being affected by substance use in their home. The goal of this program is permanency/re-unification for these families. The Facilitator and Recovery Coach will work with the children and adults in these families to help them meet their mental health and substance use recovery goals. This is a partnership with Prestera, FMRS, Southern Highlands, and the DHHR through the Regional Partnership Grant (RPG-6). They also continue to offer Crisis Services, Detox services, and residential treatment for men and women (ASAM levels 3.7, 3.5, and 3.1) and a Moms and Babies Program (Fathers too!) called BIBS (Babies in proven Better Situations) which are located in Mercer county, but available to Wyoming county residents.

The initially funded recovery related work to be performed by the Wyoming County Recovery Network (WCRN) was not renewed for Year 2 at the end of the contract on June 30, 2020 due to failure to meet deliverables. Funds were redirected to support the community-based recovery support efforts by OneVoice.

**Recovery Support**

To address gaps in aftercare and support during recovery in Wyoming County, the Wyoming County HOPE Coalition is utilizing funding to meet this objective by establishing a community center through OneVoice that provides structured recovery in a safe, recovery community environment with daily onsite access to Recovery Coaches, life skill training, employment assistance/training, and daily support groups, and builds a strong community of peers in recovery to support health and wellness in recovery.

We are pleased to report that One Voice Inc., located in Oceana, West Virginia, opened their new facility in July 2020 through the funding provided as part of Governor Jim Justice’s Pilot Demonstration Project. Due to the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while a ‘virtual’ grand opening was planned for October, Governor Jim Justice visited the facility for a formal grant opening in August.

The new One Voice, Inc. facility is now serving Wyoming County by:

* Providing an education and training conference center that is accessible to the community to promote recovery, entrepreneurship, and to immediately fight stigma. county wide.
* Serving as a ‘hub’ for recovery services by providing office space to partners working with individuals in recovery, including but not limited to Jobs and Hope, WV DHHR, Marshall CORE (Creating Opportunity for Recovery Employment), Wyoming County Partners for Hope Coalition, Wyoming County Board of Education, Day Report, Co Works and the Wyoming County Health Department.
* Providing the local economic system with opportunities through job development and jobs for those in recovery that will complement the community. Partners: Workforce, CORE, Jobs and Hope, Oceana City Hall.
* Providing community programs that bring families and community together to build strong families. Partners include the Board of Education, churches, SADD, Wyoming County Partners for Hope Coalition, and local businesses.
* Opening a new business, One Cup Cafe, to provide a safe place for families to gather. The cafe will provide catering services for the conference center and community and employs individuals in recovery.
* Providing available dedicated office space for rent to partners from across the state as they work in Wyoming County. Space will provide state of the art media capabilities for Telehealth, teleconferencing, Zoom meetings, phone conferences and face to face meetings when applicable. Partners include the DHHR, Career Counseling, CORE, Wyoming County Partners for Hope, Local businesses, Southern Highlands, out of town and traveling guests.

Of critical importance to note is that as renovations were undertaken for the new facility, all funding was kept local (i.e. contractors, lumber store, heating and cooling, local grocery, and eateries to feed the crews daily, installation of technology, furniture store, excavation work, metal fabrication, and graphic design).

Community engagement is already underway and has been immediately successful, with appropriate precautions taken for social distancing, and other measures to assure safety using the ongoing pandemic. Throughout the construction period of September 2019 to present, and throughout the pandemic (March to present), One Voice services never stopped. OneVoice, inc. has continued to have 8 certified Peer Recovery Coach Specialists available and serving new and existing clients. The OneVoice, Inc. leadership team is comprised of 16 individuals who reside in 7 different counties in West Virginia. This span of influence allows us to very effectively network across the state to address substance use and to offer services and resources related to recovery, basic needs, housing, and employment for individuals in need. In Wyoming county

**Looking Ahead to 2021 (Remaining Project Period Through June 30, 2021)**

In the months ahead, partners of the Wyoming County HOPE Coalition will continue to meet monthly (virtually as long as needed) to report and monitor progress of all activities. There will be continued delivery of the Youth Leadership Program using a virtual format, comprehensive harm reduction services, construction toward opening of the new community-based, family oriented treatment facility in Pineville, and continued services in the OneVoice, Inc., community-based recovery support center. In addition, if/when school convenes in the spring of 2021, prevention education will be re-established. The Wyoming County HOPE Coalition will additionally be strategically focused on ongoing evaluation and sustainability planning for the Wyoming County System for Addiction Care. Collectively these efforts will assure the continued provision of resources in a systematic and strategic manner for prevention, early intervention, treatment, and recovery in Wyoming County.