SAMHSA First Responders Cooperative Agreement with Arizona Department of Health Services - ADHS Interagency Services Agreement with AzCRH – Executive Summary

On June 5, 2017, Arizona Governor Douglas Ducey signed a declaration of emergency and notification of enhanced surveillance advisory in response to the significant deleterious impact the opioid epidemic has had in Arizona. From 2012-16 Arizona opioid related deaths increased by 74%. In 2016, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) confirmed 790 opioid-related deaths, more than two per day. In the same year, Arizona’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies responded to over 64,000 substance-abuse-related 911 calls (175 calls per day).

Governor Ducey’s declaration required the ADHS Director to “develop and provide training to local law enforcement agencies on proper protocols for carrying, handling, and administering naloxone in overdose situations.” To meet this requirement, the ADHS Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System applied for funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) First Responders – Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act Funding Opportunity to develop, implement, and assess:

- A statewide naloxone delivery system to provide access to naloxone for first responders;
- A statewide acute opioid-overdose recognition and naloxone administration training program for first responders;
- A targeted first responder Opioid Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT-EMS) curriculum teaching first responders how to recognize opioid-related substance abuse or the potential thereof, providing appropriate interventions and referrals to care.

The Bureau partnered with the University of Arizona (UA) Center for Rural Health, UA Center for Population Science and Discovery, the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board, and other key stakeholders. AzCRH will work with ADHS through and Interagency Services Agreement (ISA) to decrease opioid-related overdoses, morbidity, and mortality by:

- Identifying rural training needs for EMS, first responders, family, and community members to administer naloxone;
- Developing a naloxone distribution system so first responders can have it readily available to administer in rural areas;
- Training EMS, first responders, family, and community members to administer naloxone;
- Developing, implementing, and assessing the first responder Opioid Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment SBIRT curriculum to instruct EMS, first responders, family, and community members on how these interventions in the field.

Success will be measured by determining the extent to which the three initiatives contribute to lowering of the number of opioid overdose deaths in Arizona over the course of the 4-year project period. Particular focus will be placed on comparing and contrasting changes in overdose deaths among rural and urban areas disproportionately impacted by the epidemic. Secondary success will be determined by assessing the number of first responders trained to administer naloxone and the number of naloxone kits distributed and used during the project period.

Tertiary success will be measured by successfully piloting the first responder Opioid Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT-EMS) curriculum to train first responders in at least two rural and two non-rural areas of Arizona.

https://crh.arizona.edu/samhsa-first-responders-initiative