

Emergency Responder Integration of Technology to Enhance Substance Use Disorder Treatment Linkage to Care Sponsorships

Introduction

State of Alaska DHSS DPH Office of Substance Misuse and Addiction Prevention (OSMAP), in collaboration with SOA DHSS DPH Section of Rural and Community Health Systems (RCHS) Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), would like to offer a minimum of five selected emergency responder agencies each up to \$15,000 in sponsorships to support the integration of technology to scale up linkage to care for those with substance use disorders. The award ceiling for this sponsorship opportunity is \$75,000.

Background and Purpose

A linkage to care strategy can improve the quality of life of people living with substance use disorder while decreasing the demands associated with substance abuse on emergency departments. The extent of emergency department utilization in Alaska cannot be underestimated with Alaska's utilization rate being three times more than the national average of 1.66 per 1000 people¹. In Alaska, between 2016 and 2018, one in four patients who present to emergency departments have primary or secondary behavioral health diagnoses². In 2018, 78 percent of those presenting to the emergency departments with the behavioral diagnoses had alcohol or drug-related diagnoses including alcohol dependence and drug dependence, and account for the majority of people presenting in the emergency department². There are many economic consequences including the estimated lost potential earnings of inpatient and emergency department treatment of diseases and conditions attributable to drug misuse as a primary and secondary diagnosis in FY 2019 being \$24,079,412³. Emergency responder utilization of technology to collaborate with behavioral health providers can be a cost-effective, lifesaving approach to addressing the difficulties those at most risk find in connecting to resources.

Across the United States, emergency responder agencies are incorporating technological advances to work with behavioral health providers in improving treatment access for those they serve for the purposes of reducing recidivism, mortality, and unnecessary emergency department visits. Examples of programs that have integrated this technology are initiatives by those listed in Attachment A. This is in line with Alaska Statewide Opioid Action Plan Goal One: Alaskans unite to reduce stigma and change social norms surrounding substance misuse and addiction and Goal Two: Alaskans have timely access to the screening, referral and treatment services.

This funding comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) funding opportunity.

Example activities to be supported

- Integration of technological apps and programs

¹ RI International. (2019). "Crisis Now consultation report: The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority."

² Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association. (2019). "Acute behavioral health improvement project report and recommendations for positive change in Alaska's communities and hospitals." Retrieved 9 March 2020 from https://www.ashnha.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ASHNHA-Acute-Behavioral-Health-Project-Report_FINAL-with-Full-2018-Data5-03-19.pdf

³ McDowell Group. (2020). "The economic costs of drug misuse in Alaska: 2019 update." Retrieved 31 March 2020 from <http://www.mcdowellgroup.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/mcdowell-group-drug-impacts-report-final-1.21.2020.pdf>

- Technological supplies and equipment
- Technological training
- Technological subscription and fees
- Establishing technological connection to existing platforms and overall health information interfacing
- Technology such as iPads to interface with behavioral health providers
- Establishing data use agreements

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be an emergency responder agency. For the purposes of this sponsorship opportunity, this includes but is not limited to law enforcement and other tribal, municipal, and village police agencies; fire, emergency medical services, dispatch centers, and agencies overseeing village safety officer programs and community health aide programs.

To apply:

1. Review “Sponsorship Attachment One” to see how other emergency responder agencies have incorporated behavioral health support.
2. Send a letter of request, to fund technology related activity(ies) and/or technology purchases, that directly assist people in receiving substance use disorder treatment and other resources to osmap@alaska.gov by August 14, 2020.

Please include in your request:

- Point of contact
- Budget for each activity and/or purchase, not to exceed \$15,000
- Description of how proposed activity aligns with improving linkage to substance use disorder care for those served by emergency responders
- Justification for request
- How the purchase of the technological aspect, proof of use and implementation of the technology, frequency of use for this technology, training on this technology, and communication regarding this technology across emergency responder staff will be demonstrated.

Deadlines

- To file a request: August 14, 2020
- Anticipated date of funding: August 31, 2020
- End of activity/funding: August 31, 2021

Supportive Documents

- Attachment One: Emergency Mental Health Co-Responder Examples and Research

Contact

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns by contacting the following individuals:

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 EMS Program Specialist
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