

The background of the slide is a soft, misty landscape. It features rolling hills or mountains in the distance, partially obscured by a light fog or mist. In the foreground, there is a calm body of water, likely a lake or a wide river, which reflects the surrounding scenery. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of teal, light blue, and pale green, creating a serene and somewhat ethereal atmosphere. The text is centered over this background.

Combating the Opioid Epidemic through Rural Coalitions

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Session Objectives

- Gain an awareness of the ways that substance abuse coalitions working throughout rural Minnesota have been formed and sustained, with a focus on the continued work between sovereign nations and community members in **Carlton, Kanabec, Cook, St Louis, and Pine counties**
- Gain an awareness of what **activities, events, and opportunities** community-based coalitions can provide rural communities seeking to address and prevent substance misuse and abuse

Session Objectives

- Become familiar with the **long-term benefits** of a coalition addressing substance abuse in a rural community
- Utilizing the expertise of a Regional Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drug Prevention Coordinator, understand some of the “**best practices**” of community coalitions working throughout northeastern Minnesota
- Gain an awareness of **resources** that rural communities can use in forming and sustaining a coalition focused on addressing and preventing substance misuse and abuse

An Introduction to the Rural Coalitions

- **Carlton County:** Carlton County Drug Prevention Coalition
- **Kanabec County:** Substance Abuse Coalition of Kanabec County
- **Cook County:** Grand Portage Drug Education Committee
- **St. Louis County:** Opioid Abuse Response Strategies Workgroup (North and South)
- **Pine County:** Pine County Chemical Health Coalition

The Formation of Rural Coalitions

- Grassroots efforts by community members
- Response to Minnesota's Statewide Substance Abuse strategy
- Public health (community health assessment) response
- Funding opportunities create needed momentum



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Sustaining Rural Coalitions

- Funding opportunities allow for the creation of new positions, educational events, Community Forums, and continued collaborative work towards a common goal
- Recruiting of new members at Coalition events and in local institutions and organizations
- Integrating strategies into organizational programs and practices
- Collaborating with local school districts and agencies that serve youth
- Support from directors and decision makers
- Increased community awareness of potential to make change
- Recognition as a community resource



Coalition Activities, Events and Opportunities

- Community Forums
 - Panelist format
 - Conference-style
- Educational Events
 - Evening community educational events
 - Above the Influence weeks at local High Schools
 - Programming for parents
- Pursuit of Funding Opportunities
 - Drug Free Communities Grant
 - Department of Human Services Grants
 - Foundation Grants
 - University Grants
 - Local donations



Carlton County Opioid and Heroin Community Forum October 5, 2015 Hosted by the Carlton County Drug Task Force with grant funding from the University of MN Clinical and Translational Science Institute



Coalition Activities, Events and Opportunities

- Take it to the Box
- Public Service Announcements
- Prescription Drug Storage Recommendations
- Engaging Law Enforcement



Long-Term Benefits of Local Coalitions

- Addressing a community need in a community-specific way
- Relationship building
 - Collaboration
- Increased awareness of the issue
 - Community buy-in
- Funneled resources
 - Financial, Human, Organizational
 - Decreased duplication of services
- A healthier, safer community
- Opportunity for sharing lessons learned



Challenges to Local Coalition Work

- Time commitment
- Scheduling difficulties
- Funding
- Maintaining member engagement and motivation
- Unexpected resistance
- Barriers that result from perceived roles and responsibilities
- Variety of priorities based on agency needs and duties
- Stigma and bias towards mental health and substance use disorders

Coalition Best Practices

- Use your data!
- Dedicate time to pursue funding opportunities
- Dedicate time to engaging local partners
- Have goals and a plan to know where you're going
- Know what your community wants and needs
- Engage the health professions and schools in your area in practice and protocol review and modification
- Know what evidence-based best practices are
- Review your strategic plan annually and revise as needed

Additional Resources

- Existing Coalitions
- Local Community Health Board
- Local Public Health Department
- University of Minnesota – College of Pharmacy
- National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices
- SAMHSA online resources
 - Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies
- AWARE Rx website
- Over-The-Counter Medicine Safety Website (Scholastic)
- Dose of Reality website
- CADCA.org

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