



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



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



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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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