Combatting 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
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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