

Madison County Announces Distribution Of Grants Aimed At Preventing Substance Abuse

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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County officials have announced the distribution of an initial round of local grants aimed at the prevention of substance abuse, utilizing funds from a settlement in a lawsuit against opioid distributors.

The county is receiving approximately \$3.7 million over a period of years, through 2038, as its share of the opioid settlement. The county is using the settlement to provide grants to local agencies and organizations.

“These initial grants will allow the recipients to provide critical, much-needed services,” said Madison County Mental Health Board Director Deborah Humphrey. “The services

of these community partners will help mitigate the harms caused by the opioid epidemic.”

State’s Attorney Tom Haine said: “These wonderful groups were already doing great work to help those affected by our ongoing opioid abuse epidemic. We are glad that these additional funds are now available to help boost their efforts in our community. There is so much to do, and every little bit helps.”

One of the initial grants will be used to provide a full-time mental health professional at the Madison County Jail. Sheriff Jeff Connor said a majority of inmates at the jail suffer from opioid-use disorder, a substance-abuse disorder, a mental health disorder of a combination of the three.

“The opioid and drug epidemics are pervasive in the jail,” Connor said. “This will have a real impact, helping to break the often-intertwined cycles of addiction and incarceration.”

The first distributions from Madison County’s share of the settlement are:

- AMARE: \$44,002

AMARE is an organization that provides recovery-support services in the metro-east to individuals and families in their recovery journey from the impacts of addiction. Utilizing grant funds, a Certified Recovery Support Specialist will work with Anderson Hospital in expanding recovery support services and additional prevention efforts through transition to recovery services. AMARE will broaden the scope of recovery services to include co-occurring substance-use disorders or mental health conditions; and providing comprehensive wrap-around services to individuals in recovery, including housing, transportation, job placement and training, and childcare.

- BJC Healthcare (Alton Memorial Hospital): \$75,329

In an attempt to decrease the number of opioid-related deaths of pregnant women and babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome, Alton Memorial will imbed a Peer Recovery Support Specialist in the Women’s Health and Childbirth Center. The program will use the evidenced-based practice referred to as Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). The Peer Recovery Specialist will provide universal screening, utilizing an individual’s shared experience, motivational interviewing skills, and evidence-informed screening tools. Based on the screening results, the Center will offer interventions, care coordination, and referrals for treatment to women identified with an opioid- or substance-use disorder.

- Chestnut Health Systems: \$80,000

The grant will allow Chestnut to expand its Recovery Specialist and Recovery Support Coordination services countywide to address Naloxone distribution, Medication Assisted Treatment, opioid-related treatment, and expansion of warm hand-off and recovery services.

- Madison County Sheriff/Centerstone of Illinois: \$127,000

The grant will fund an on-site, full-time, qualified mental health professional at the Madison County Jail. A clinician, contracted through Centerstone of Illinois, will develop individualized treatment plans, provide and/or coordinate services with community treatment resources for stabilization, treatment, and support for detainees struggling with an opioid-use disorder, substance-abuse disorder, and mental health disorders.

- Jewell Psychological Services: \$37,700

JPS will serve as Consulting Program Evaluator for each of the grant initiatives. JPS will serve as a grant monitor and work with other grantees to collect data that is relevant to the effectiveness of their program. JPS will then analyze the data to answer specific program questions and report these findings to all stakeholders.

Representatives of the grant recipients met in late May with Haine and Humphrey to discuss the initiatives. The representatives of the agencies said there is significant need for programs to combat opioid addiction.

Ty Bechel, executive director of AMARE, said: "This funding will allow us to assist individuals who are impacted by substance use by going directly to them in a medical setting. Our recovery coach funded by this opportunity can meet them where they're at and begin helping with support and services immediately."

The opioid settlement was reached on behalf of local governments across the country in litigation against three distributors of opioids – AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson – and one manufacturer of opioids, Janssen. Haine announced in November 2022 that the county had begun receiving its installments.

"Pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreements, Madison County is obligated to use the settlement funds to support opioid remediation programs in the community," Haine said. "I continue to urge community groups dedicated to fighting the scourge of opioid abuse to reach out and see if they are eligible for future grants."