



Public Health

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Panhandle Health District

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Media Contact:
Katherine Hoyer
208-415-5108

NEWS RELEASE

Opioid Settlement Funds Available for Community Partners

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According to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare’s Drug Overdose Prevention Program (DOPP), in 2021, Idaho experienced 241 deaths related to opioid overdose. Of those deaths, 152 were related to fentanyl overdose. The state also experienced over 5,000 drug overdose visits to emergency departments and over 1,000 of those visits involved opioids. In the Idaho panhandle, 97 overdoses occurred in 2020, increased to 122 in 2021, and rose again to 161 in 2022. Those numbers include both non-fatal and fatal overdoses related to opioids.

Opioids are a class of drugs that include prescription pain relievers such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, and morphine, synthetic opioids like fentanyl and the illegal drug heroin. Short-term effects of opioids can include pain relief and feelings of euphoria, but non-medical or long-term use can lead to increases in overdose, opioid use disorder, and death.

The DOPP also reported over 2.6 million prescriptions for opioids written in 2021 for Idaho residents. The state of Idaho has a population of 1.9 million. A CDC study of retail opioid prescription data shows that in 2019, the opioid prescribing rate for Idaho was 68.9 per 100 persons compared to a national average of 46.7 per 100 persons.

“Supporting providers and clinicians with safe prescribing practices has been a priority of our public health initiatives since our work in opioids began in 2017,” said Kelsey Orlando, Substance Use Disorder Program Manager at Panhandle Health District (PHD). “Bringing our community together for educational events and working to expand treatment and recovery services are additional ways we are working toward long-term positive changes. Knowing how much of an active and important role our community partners play in those positive changes, we invite them to help us champion this cause.”

Opioid settlements from drugmakers and major pharmaceutical distributors will provide funding for treatment, recovery, prevention, and harm reduction in Idaho. Panhandle Health District is one of the recipients of the settlement funds and is accepting applications from

community partners who would like to utilize funds to focus on efforts to combat the opioid crisis in the panhandle.

To date, PHD has received approximately \$1.3 million and will continue to receive funding annually over the next eighteen years from opioid settlement funding. The state received around \$12 million, and city and county funds totaled over \$8 million. City and county funds have the option of reallocating their funds to local health districts in their jurisdiction.

“Examples of strategies eligible for funding include treatment, prevention, research, and education efforts within our community,” said Orlando. “We are excited to see how the community wants to utilize this funding to make a lasting positive impact.”

The opioid settlement funds application can be found on PHD’s website:

<https://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/opioid-reversal-medication/>.

There is no minimum or maximum funding request, and although the application is open all, priority will be given to non-profit organizations, local governments, first responders, schools, and healthcare providers.

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Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.