Cudahy, South Milwaukee, Oak Creek, and St. Francis Team Up to Fight the Opioid Epidemic

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Cudahy, South Milwaukee, Oak Creek, and St. Francis have teamed up in an effort to fight the ongoing opioid epidemic that is affecting the nation. The four municipalities are going to pool their resources in order to tackle the crisis more effectively.

Last year, the South Shore had 28 accidental overdose deaths. The police departments also reported 74 non-fatal overdoses that year. To combat this issue, the four municipalities will work together by having their health, police, and fire departments collaborate. So far, Cudahy, South Milwaukee, Oak Creek, and St. Francis have earned a total of $70,000 as an emergency preparedness grant.

Cudahy will act as the lead fiscal agent, according to a release from the Cudahy Health Department. ?If we can save even one of those lives, this is worth it,? South Milwaukee Mayor Erik Brooks wrote on his blog.

The grant comes from the Division of Public Health in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Its goal is to help strengthen local agencies in the area of public health preparedness. It will help the four municipalities respond to the opioid overdose epidemic in Wisconsin.

The grant will be used to train all police, fire, and health department staff in the four communities in trauma-informed care. ?This training will help our first responders and public health staff to better recognize and respond to the various types of trauma that impact children and adults in our communities,? said Cudahy's Acting Health Officer Heather Puente.

The long term goal is to ensure that the trained staff can become trainers themselves and teach future staff. The funds will have to be spent by August 31 this year. Puente hopes that the programs can be maintained after the funding deadline. Click the link to see Anaheim's top rehab placement programs.

?When the funding opportunity became available, we wanted to apply,? said Cudahy Health Department health officer Katie Lepak. ?One of our team members suggested doing it across the South Shore to strengthen our application, so we reached out to the neighboring communities.?

She said an opioid conference got the idea started. The four communities will collaborate in other aspects as well: using and reviewing real-time reporting of overdoses through a map; training the police, fire, and health personnel; creating quick response teams; and running an awareness campaign through social media.

The Cudahy Fire Department is currently using the overdose map in order to log overdoses as they happen. The mapping system can now be used to monitor for spikes in activity.

The four communities will also begin a training program to teach participants how to provide trauma-informed care. The goal is to help first responders as well as healthcare workers to recognize trauma in the community and provide the appropriate response. This training will be done in collaboration with SaintA, a human services agency in Milwaukee.

The communities will then develop their own Quick Response Teams, consisting of a police officer, a public health nurse, and a recovery/peer support specialist. The goal of the team is to review recent nonfatal overdoses and attempt to make contact with the victim or a family member in order to give assistance. This should allow addicted individuals to get the medical treatment they need.

Lepak believes that an evaluation of the work is necessary to determine the effectiveness of the programs. ?We look forward to sharing that information as the project progresses,? she said.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs

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