

\$350 Million Grant Goes to Opioid Epidemic Research

April 23, 2019

April 23, 2019 - PRESSADVANTAGE -

Researchers in four states were granted \$350 million by US health officials in order to focus on the deadly opioid epidemic affecting the country. Locations in Ohio, Kentucky, New York, and Massachusetts were selected for opioid abuse prevention and treatment initiatives because they are among the hardest hit by the opioid crisis.

These treatment initiatives are part of a multimillion-dollar interagency federal research effort, led by the National Institutes of Health.

The grants will go to the University of Kentucky, Boston Medical Center, New York City?s Columbia University, and Ohio State University. The study aims to cut overdose deaths by 40 percent over three years in local communities grappling with misuse of addictive medications.

The researchers will study evidence-based techniques for fighting addiction and overdose. They will look into medication-based treatments like methadone. They will also study criminal justice reforms. Deaths linked to drugs such as heroin, Fentanyl, and prescription painkillers rose to a record 48,000 in 2017. Opioid overdoses are the cause of thousands of deaths in the US each year.

This multimillion dollar interagency federal research effort led by the National Institutes of Health or NIH is called the HEAL initiative (Helping to End Addiction Long-Term) Communities Study.

Each research site is partnering with at least 15 communities. This will allow them to measure and properly gauge the impact of evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery interventions. It should make it easier to integrate the various treatment methods across primary care, behavioral health, justice, and other settings.

Misinformation is perhaps one of the biggest obstacles towards addiction treatment? and it played a role in spreading the epidemic by discouraging addicted individuals from seeking help. But now that addiction is being considered a medical condition, patients can now step forward and get the medical assistance they need. Click the link to see Long Beach's top rehab placement programs.

Researchers can shed more light into the nature of addiction and make it even easier to combat the opioid crisis in the future, especially now that they are focusing on science-based strategies. The researchers are aiming to improve treatment strategies for pain and expanding medication-assisted treatment or MAT for opioid use disorders or OUDs.

The \$350 million studies are being carried out in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or SAMHSA and through a cooperative agreement supported by the NIH?s National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, Ph.D., hopes that the project will create ?a blueprint for other communities? so that results can be shared in real time. It will pull together all of the resources that exist in a community in an integrated model, rather than doing things separately.

Collins said that only three states were slated to be funded in the beginning, but they managed to stretch the funds a bit to include another one.

A nonprofit organization based in North Carolina, RTI International, will act as the study?s coordinating center and will be responsible for data analysis, health economics research, and dissemination of research findings.

?We look forward to working with NIDA, SAMHSA and the research sites to achieve the goal of this study and provide them with rigorous research to combat the epidemic in the most affected communities,? said Rick Williams, Ph.D., a principal scientist at RTI. ?We have more than 30 years of experience studying effective drug misuse prevention and treatment. Our team has a deep understanding of the opioid crisis.?

The study will track communities as they reduce the incidence of OUD, increase the number of people

receiving MAT, and expand the distribution of Naloxone, which will reverse an opioid overdose. ?What we need less of is 28-day detox programs that send people out without a plan,? said Collins.

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 work.

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