



Montana Receives \$3.9 Million Toward Opioid Addiction Treatment

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In the midst of an opioid epidemic that is now being considered the worst drug crisis in US history, Montana received almost \$4 million in federal funds for addiction recovery and treatment. Currently, the United States is seeing a rise in opioid addiction numbers.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse or NIDA, opioid-related overdoses across 45 states increase by 30 percent in the span of one year. This data refers to the increase in opioid-related overdoses from 2016 to 2017.

Aaron Wernham, CEO of Montana Healthcare Foundation, said that the numbers also indicate that overdose rates are lower in Montana compared to most other states. However, he also said that it does not paint a complete picture.

"We hear from practices around the state that they're seeing lots of patients who are struggling with addiction, not just to opioids, but also to alcohol, and methamphetamine appears to be on the rise again," Wernham said.

It is important to note that not all of the federal funds in this care are geared toward the opioid epidemic. The Health Resources and Services Administration granted the state about \$1 million for rural programs. The same agency also granted Montana approximately \$900,000 for the training of professionals who are working on the treatment side.

Also included in the grant fund is roughly \$2 million that is directed toward Montana's substance abuse disorder and mental health services. This will include treatment for opioid addiction, but it is not limited to that. This means the \$2 million will tackle a more general problem that actually contributes to the likelihood of developing an addiction.

Opioid abuse is not just a matter of genetics and peer pressure—it can be caused by childhood trauma, abuse, stress, curiosity, or other environmental factors. The grant will help deal with mental health problems as well.

Wernham said that the Healthcare Foundation is most excited about the funds going to integrated behavioral health. The organization wants primary care and mental health professionals to work together to meet a person's mental, physical, and situational needs from underlying mental health conditions.

"All of those kinds of social factors that can make it harder to heal, all in one place," the CEO said. "So, this emphasis on integrated team-based care in these grants I think is very important and new."

Wernham said that in 2015, Montana Healthcare Foundation found around 90 percent of people who needed addiction treatment were not receiving it. He added that over the last few years the state has nearly doubled the number of addiction treatment providers and also nearly quadrupled the number of clinicians approved to prescribe medication-assisted treatment for opioids.

He explained that this was largely due to federal and state focus and funding. Wernham explained that Medicaid expansion is responsible for well over half of the funding for treatment in the state. [Click the link to see Salem's top rehab placement programs.](#)

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid or alcohol 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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