



ANNUAL REPORT

2020

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The Consortium would like to extend our thanks to all the co-chairs who have helped us since we started in 2013. This year marks a time of transition, and we would like to acknowledge and thank the following co-chairs who are stepping aside after years of hard work.

- Chris Stock, PharmD: Harm Reduction Work Group, 2017-2020
- Jess Fear, SummitStone HealthPartners: Harm Reduction Work Group, 2019-2020
- Karen Hill, JP Opioid Interaction Awareness Alliance: Affected Families and Friends Work Group, 2016-2020
- Suzi Stolte, JP Opioid Interaction Awareness Alliance: Affected Families and Friends Work Group, 2016-2020
- Greg Fabisiak, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: Safe Disposal, 2013-2020
- Barbara Gabella, MSPH, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: Data and Research: 2013-2020
- Alia Al-Tayyib, PHD, MSPH, Denver Public Health: Data and Research: 2017-2020
- Tom Gorman, Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area: Heroin Response, 2016-2020
- Lindsey Myers, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: Heroin Response, 2016-2020
- Jennifer Loth Hill, Denver Department of Public Health and Environment: Recovery, 2019-2020
- Michael Miller, Jefferson County Public health: Recovery, 2019-2020

The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges in 2020, including the cancellation of in-person events. That did not stop Coloradans from finding ingenious solutions to overcome those challenges. One example is the number of International Overdose Awareness Day held around the state. Organizers came up with alternate programming like socially distanced or masked events at drive ins, movie theaters, and parks or online to remember family and friends who lost their lives to overdose. Pictures from those events are included in this report.

Reflecting Back

As we close the year 2020, I'd like to begin our Annual Report by reflecting back with gratitude on the hard work and accomplishments of the many people who have made the Consortium what it is today: a truly collaborative statewide effort to address the problem of opioid misuse and use disorder in Colorado.

Beginning in 1986, with the formation of the Colorado Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force by Jody Gingery, a nurse-educator with a vision and passion for this work, and running to today, with nearly a thousand people engaged together to find and implement ways to improve how we provide care for people with pain, use disorders, and other conditions, I believe it comes down to one principle: it's about the people. It is always (as it should be) about the people.

I do not have enough space to list everyone by name who has contributed their time, energy, expertise, and passion to the work we all share, or this report would be a hundred pages longer. But I'd like to personally thank the Consortium staff, a team of dedicated people who take on any role and any challenge to help keep our work moving forward in a coordinated way; our External Relations Strategists, who live and work in the four quadrants of our state, interacting with community members on a daily basis; our work group members and co-chairs, who give countless uncompensated hours of their time to come together and find solutions and put them into action; our professional association and state agency partners, who so willingly and effectively collaborate for the greater good; our state legislators and elected leaders, who genuinely care, listen, and work with stakeholders to create policies for the betterment of our citizens; and the many local coalition members, providers, and citizens in all 64 counties of our state, who see and experience the issues "in the trenches" and whose voices and concerns we represent and work to serve with our efforts.



As Harry S. Truman once said: "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." My parents spoke those words to me many times as they did their work, quietly and for the benefit of others in the community. I am fortunate to see those words brought to life by each of you, and even in the toughest year we have experienced in our lifetimes, we have accomplished a great deal together. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we preserved funding for improvements in pain management and substance use disorder treatment; we supported the passage of legislation to enhance prevention, intervention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support services; and we have maintained and strengthened the role and reputation of the Consortium as a collaborative, nonpartisan group that works to bring people together to address and solve problems. For these accomplishments, and the ones we will achieve in the coming years (and we still have a lot of work to do, to achieve more in the coming years!), I thank you again for your many contributions. We are all the Consortium.

With gratitude,

Robert Valuck PhD, RPh

Professor, University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Executive Director, University of Colorado Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

FROM THE CONSORTIUM'S 4 DIRECTOR

Dear Consortium Members and Friends,

The work of the Consortium managed to make a successful transition in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic response thanks to the efforts of Consortium staff, work group co-chairs and members, and our partners.

Although the response to COVID-19 rightfully necessitated and demanded the highest attention, this response also contributed to the already concerning opioid crisis, which continued to take the lives of individuals at a high rate and to impact the lives of people with an opioid use disorder.

We are fortunate in Colorado to have a well-organized and coordinated statewide response to the opioid crisis across multiple disciplines, spanning from communities to regions to professional associations to state agencies and to the legislature. There is still much work to be accomplished.

As this most unusual year of 2020 comes to an end, we look ahead to the critical work in stemming the tide of the opioid crisis, which has entered a new stage with the increase of overdose deaths due to fentanyl and continues to adversely impact rural and frontier regions of our state.

On the horizon is the anticipated arrival of funds from various settlements with opioid manufacturers, distributors, and retail pharmacies that will be distributed to local and state governments. Efforts are underway to determine the plan for distribution of those funds, which are expected to be dispersed over a period of multiple years. Local stakeholders are encouraged to make use of the survey from the [Colorado Opioid Response Blueprint](#) to help identify local priorities for use of settlement funds and to share those priorities with local elected officials.

In addition to the work of the existing Consortium work groups, efforts will continue in 2021 to partner with the University of Colorado College of Nursing in supporting healthcare organizations that are implementing the Medication-Assisted Treatment Expansion Program, to partner with groups attending to the unmet behavioral health and substance use issues impacting rural and frontier communities, to conduct outreach to faith community leaders in support of their efforts to help people access treatment as well as providing recovery support, and to provide technical assistance and other supports to local community efforts that are addressing the opioid crisis.

When the Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorder Interim Study Committee of the Colorado General Assembly convenes in the summer of 2021, the Consortium looks forward to providing subject matter expertise for informing decisions about policies and helping to bring the perspective of local community stakeholders on ideas about needed state legislative policies.

To each of the Consortium staff, work group members, and partners, I extend a heartfelt and most sincere thank you for your commitment to helping mitigate and reverse the opioid crisis in Colorado and I look forward to working with you in the coming year.

If you are not already receiving the monthly newsletter of the Consortium, you can stay informed about Consortium activities and other developments by contacting info@corxconsortium.org and you will be added to the list of recipients.



José Esquibel

Director, Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention
Associate Director, Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention



2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Despite unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the members and staff of the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention worked with partners around Colorado to advance numerous efforts to help implement effective strategies in addressing the opioid crisis and reduce prescription drug misuse.

2020 has been a year unlike any other. The pandemic has taken an enormous toll on the quality of life of many Coloradans. Sadly, many people in recovery have struggled, and many others have faced challenges more likely to put them at risk for substance use disorder. This includes people coping with opioid use disorder and can be seen by the unfortunate increase in overdose rates.

The pandemic has required innovative responses despite the challenges presented by social distancing. The Consortium has worked with its partners to find solutions and maintain support for important programs. Meanwhile, the Consortium continued to build on work from the previous years and expanded outreach efforts to include direct interactions with community stakeholders and local elected officials.

Even despite these challenges, progress is being made through a variety of the projects and partnerships that work at the local, state, and federal level. This work uses a comprehensive, collaborative approach across disciplines. These are some of the highlights from a busy, unprecedented year.

For more information about community support, public awareness efforts, the Consortium work groups and plans for 2021, see the other sections of this report.

Supporting Colorado's Elected Leaders

Colorado's leaders in state and local government rely on the Consortium to provide expertise and unbiased analysis to help understand the opioid crisis and develop effective policies, strategies, and practices to mitigate and reverse its impact. During the 2020 legislative session, the staff and members of the Consortium provided subject-matter expertise on six important bills; five were signed into law. The legislation focused on substance use disorders treatment and recovery, the criminal justice system, harm reduction, and emergency funding for behavioral health due to COVID-19.

The Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Interim Study Committee proposed four bills (HB20-1065, HB20-1017, SB20-007, SB20-028) passed by the state legislature and signed by Gov. Jared Polis. HB20-1085 on Prevention was vetoed by Gov. Jared Polis.



Highlights of these bills include:

- Requiring insurers to cover treatment across the continuum of care of substance use treatment, including for prescription drugs,
- Prohibiting denial of services for people on medication-assisted treatment for people with opioid use disorder,
- Removal of barriers to syringe access for people who inject drugs,
- Increasing access to health services for offenders with a history substance use disorder, and
- Modernization of the child abuse definition for women who test positive for an illicit substance at childbirth.

The Consortium also worked with the Office of Behavioral Health regarding federal funds for recovery community organizations, peer coach training, rental assistance for recovery housing, and medication-assisted treatment in jails.

Coping With Funding Cuts

The COVID-19 pandemic created a major budget shortfall, which forced the state to make cuts to many programs. Fortunately, legislators were able to continue funding, often at reduced levels, many behavioral health programs, such as Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) services, overdose public awareness campaigns, provider education programs, and the Office of Health Disparities. The medication-assisted treatment program in rural Colorado created by SB19-001 also was preserved.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Funding

The federal government passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in March, which helped states continue funding programs facing cuts because of the pandemic. The Consortium worked closely with legislators to ensure allocation of \$15.2 million to behavioral health supporting a range of services, including substance use treatment and recovery programs, naloxone purchases, crisis services and provider education.

Continuing the Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Study Committee

The legislature approved continuation of the committee, which will now meet every two years. It also required the Consortium to collect feedback about the 85 policy items that were part of the 14 bills the committee passed over the past three years. Sixty-one responses were received from public stakeholders and four state agencies. These results are included in the Attorney General's Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force report.

Assisting Colorado Communities Find Grants

Nonprofits and government agencies need funds to support important programs, but finding financial support and grants can be challenging. Since 2019, the Consortium has managed a program created by the General Assembly to help organizations with limited capacity, especially in rural and frontier areas, find professional grant writers and apply for grants.

These organizations include recovery organizations, local public health departments, harm reduction agencies, and drug abuse prevention organizations.

From August 2019 through October 2020,



78 organizations
received assistance at a cost of
\$213,114

and



23 organizations
were successful in winning
30 grant awards
amounting to a total of
\$5,526,325

representing a



24:1 return on investment
of money expended on the assistance

Building New Partnerships In Agricultural Communities

Over the past year, the Consortium has begun collaborating with the Southeast Health Group, Colorado State University's Agrability, the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, and the Colorado Farm Bureau to address behavioral health issues facing farmers and ranchers in agricultural communities. These problems include rising rates of mental health disorders, substance misuse, and suicide. Activities include working with community members to reduce stigma, build social support systems, and provide assistance finding therapy.

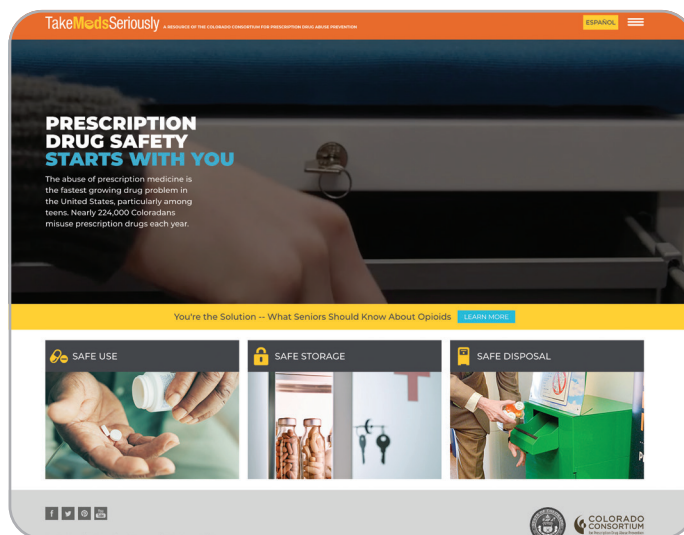
Supporting Medication-Assisted Treatment programs

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is one of the most effective treatments for opioid use disorder. Decades of research shows MAT helps people in recovery manage symptoms and return to health.

The Consortium has worked with partners from the University of Colorado's College of Nursing to address Colorado's critical lack of medical providers trained to provide MAT, especially in rural and frontier areas.

In 2019, the General Assembly gave the Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention the responsibility to collaborate with the College of Nursing to expand MAT in the San Luis Valley and in two other counties of need. Starting in January 2020, eight organizations serving 16 counties received financial support and technical assistance as part of a \$5 million grant program.

When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the health care system, clinics made the adjustment for the provision of service via telehealth and implementation of protocols for protecting the health and safety of providers and their clients.



Expanding Public Awareness Efforts

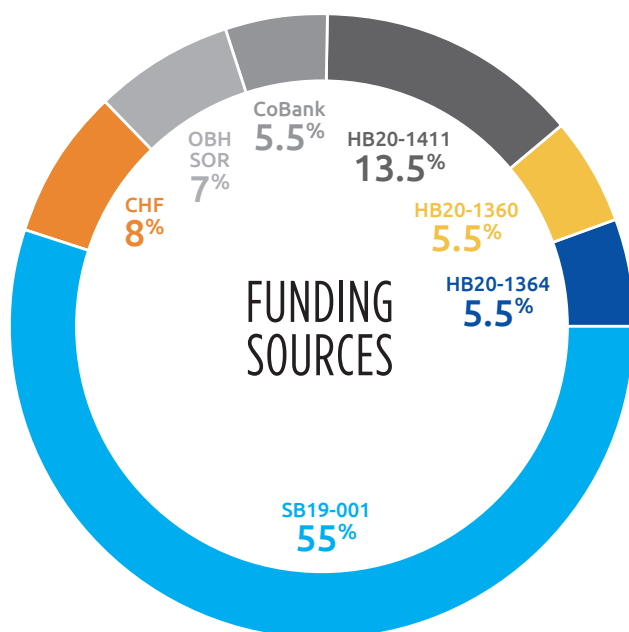
The Consortium has developed and supported many public awareness campaigns since its start in 2013. This year, it began a new partnership with Volunteers of America's Meals on Wheels program. This program, an extension of the You're the Solution campaign focused on active adults and senior citizens, reaches its audience in their homes, with Meals on Wheels delivering information during its visits and through its newsletters.

The Consortium also worked with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health to develop new ads for Colorado Crisis Services (CSS). These ads, which included television ads, focused on the support available to people with opioid use disorder through CCS.

Meanwhile, the Consortium's Bring Naloxone Home and Take Meds Seriously campaigns continued. Bring Naloxone Home's digital ads had 5.67 million impressions. Take Meds Seriously's online campaign had 3.2 million impressions and the campaign received a new website. The Consortium also began a major research project to evaluate its campaigns, working with Research Triangle Institute to conduct focus groups and a statewide survey.

8 CONSORTIUM FUNDING

The Consortium is able to accomplish its mission with funds from a variety of sources. Below is a summary of our funders and activities for 2020. The time period for funding allocations vary.



Funder	Funding Period*	Amount
Legislature – SB19-001	7/1/20 – 6/30/21	\$2,500,000
Colorado Health Foundation	12/15/19 – 6/30/21	\$367,805
Office of Behavioral Health – State Opioid Response	9/30/20 – 9/29/21	\$319,055
CoBank	4/1/19 – no end date	\$250,000
CARES Act-HB20-1411	7/1/20 – 12/30/20	\$600,000
Legislature-HB20-1360	7/1/20 – 6/30/21	\$250,000
Legislature-HB20-1364	7/1/20 – 6/30/21	\$250,000
Total		\$4,536,860

*The allocations are listed according to the funders' annual grant end date

- The Colorado legislature allocated \$2.5 million in Senate Bill 19-001 to expand the provision of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in rural and frontier counties. The MAT Expansion Program is a collaboration between the Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and the University of Colorado College of Nursing. Despite proposed budget cuts in early 2020, funds were designated to continue this program through June 2021, with the majority of funds going to MAT clinics and providers in 16 counties.
- The Colorado Health Foundation's (CHF) grant supported several recovery-oriented pilot programs, as well as ongoing community coalition and infrastructure development, and allowed the Consortium to continue to serve as backbone support to its work groups and coordinating committee using the Collective Impact Model.
- The Office of Behavioral Health State Opioid Response (OBH SOR) funding helped the Consortium synchronize the efforts of existing statewide work with the goal of avoiding duplication of activities. This funding also supported our External Relations team to provide technical assistance to community partners addressing prescription drug abuse.
- CoBank's grant funds focused on developing provider education curricula about a variety of topics, such as pain management, safe opioid prescribing, and motivational interviewing. The funds also supported the provider education trainings in rural and frontier regions of Colorado and the production of video modules for continuing medical education.
- The legislature allocated \$600,000 in HB20-1411 from the federal emergency CARES Act/Coronavirus Relief Fund for Behavioral Health Services to be used for: (1) education for health care professionals, specifically the Provider Education Symposium held in October; (2) the grant writing assistance program; and (3) personal protective equipment and telehealth supplies for the MAT Expansion Program agencies.



- The legislature allocated \$250,000 in HB20-1360 for continuing education designed to help prescribers of pain medication safely and effectively manage patients with pain.
- The legislature allocated \$1.1 million in Senate Bill 19-228 for several projects through June 2020. (This funding was reduced to \$250,000 in HB20-1364.):
 1. A grant writing assistance program for communities in rural and frontier counties;
 2. A project to gather and analyze data about pregnant women with opioid use disorders and their substance-exposed newborns; and
 3. The development of public awareness campaigns about the safe use, storage, and disposal of opioids and the availability of naloxone.
- The Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) provided funding from federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Substance Abuse Block Grant (OBH BG) to develop and distribute the "Community Reference," a resource guide for communities to use in support of new and established initiatives that fight prescription drug misuse. This funding ended in June 2020.
- Colorado State University's (CSU) Prevention Research Center, in collaboration with the Consortium, CSU Extension, and Rise Above Colorado, implemented prevention programs to reduce risk for and use of opioids in rural communities through the Strengthening Families Program. This funding ended in September 2020.

Provider Education

The Consortium remains active in making sure Colorado's health care providers have access to the latest information and training about safe opioid prescribing, pain management, and substance use disorder treatment.

Fortunately, the Consortium's Provider Education Work Group was able to adapt and continue these programs during the pandemic, despite the cancellation of in-person provider education trainings.

EXPANDING OUR FOCUS:

- Thanks to a generous grant from CoBank, the Consortium was able to create 10 online Continuing Medical Education modules that focused on chronic pain and alternative treatment.
- The Consortium plans to create an additional 10 modules next year to better meet the needs of health care providers in rural and frontier communities.

ENSURING EQUITY:

- The Consortium's annual provider education symposium focused on health equity this year. Approximately 150 people attended the full day online symposium.



BY THE NUMBERS:

19 number of online Continuing Medical Education lunch and learns

27 average number of participants per lunch and learn

252 providers trained to administer MAT

11 provider trainings

Naloxone and MAT

Since 2017, the Consortium has assisted the Office of Behavioral Health implement key parts of the federal State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant and the State Opioid Response Grant. Highlights of the program in 2020 include:

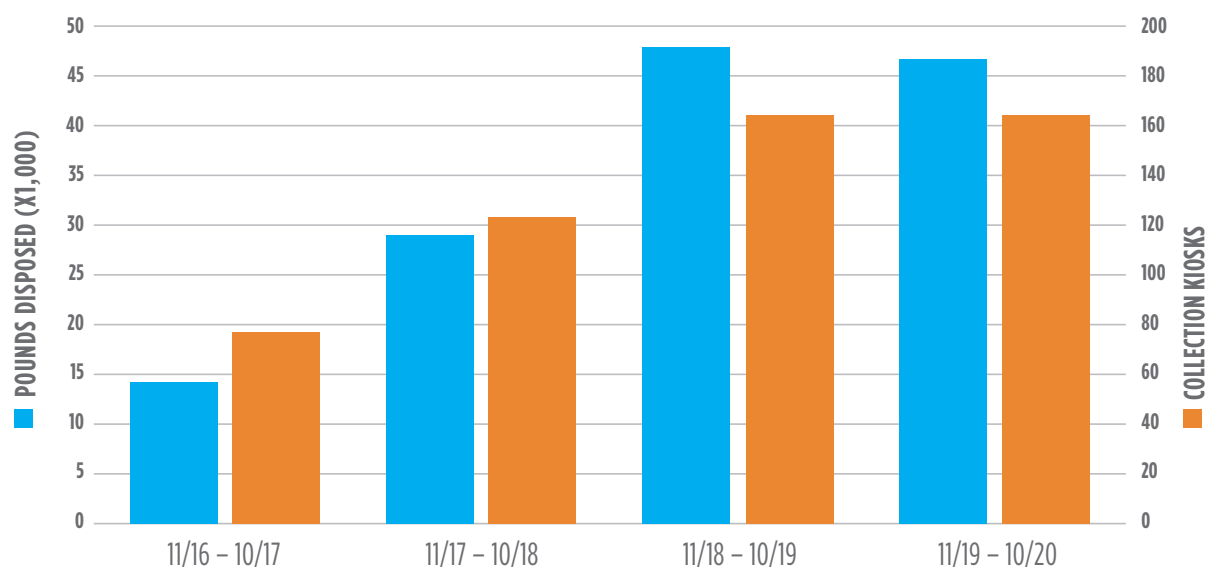
19,359 naloxone kits distributed to first responders, treatment and harm reduction organizations, and at community events

920 overdose reversals

1,240 individuals have received MAT

166 physicians trained to prescribe MAT

190 nurse practitioners and physician assistants trained to provide MAT



Four-Year Total:
137,535 lbs.

Safe Disposal

Medication disposal programs are effective ways to reduce the amount of prescribed opioids and other potentially harmful medication available to the public. By reducing the supply, safe disposal programs make it harder for drugs that could be addictive to be diverted or misused.

Colorado has one of the nation's most robust disposal programs, which is overseen by the Safe Disposal Work Group. The Colorado Household Medication Take Back Program is managed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and funded by a \$300,000 annual appropriation from the Colorado legislature.

2020 saw another successful year for the program, with more than 47,000 pounds of medication collected. This is despite a number of organizations temporarily suspending their take back programs during the early months of the pandemic.

162 safe disposal boxes in CDPHE program, with at least 31 additional boxes in privately-run programs

62 out of 64 counties have at least one safe disposal location

173,535 pounds of household medications collected from program's start in November 2016 through October 2020

70% of Colorado's cities with more than 1,000 people have at least one disposal box

The opioid crisis continues despite the advances we have made, which means Colorado will continue to need the hard work and concentrated effort of hundreds of organizations, state and local government, community members, law enforcement, the business community, and many other stakeholders. Together, we can build on prior efforts and continue to make an impact. Listed below are some of the Consortium's 2021 priorities:

Help Understand the Pandemic's Long-Term Impact

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic could last many years and lead to many unforeseen consequences. Already, there are indicators that it has strained the health care system. In 2021 and beyond, the Consortium will work with its partners in communities and government to identify ways we can mitigate and roll back the damage the pandemic has caused to our work fighting the opioid crisis.

Creating a Blueprint for Settlement Funds

As 2021 begins, many of the lawsuits against companies that manufactured or distributed opioids are drawing to a close. Colorado could receive millions of dollars as part of the legal settlements.

To help state and local elected officials, policy makers, and community leaders as they consider how to allocate the funds from the settlement, the Consortium and Colorado Health Institute produced the "Colorado Opioid Crisis Response Blueprint: A Guide for Opioid Settlement Investments." Experts from 20 professional organizations found broad agreement that treatment, recovery, prevention, criminal justice, and harm reduction programs must be priorities.

In 2021, the Consortium will continue to engage stakeholders and provide them with information as they consider options.

Expanding Focus to Include Benzodiazepines

Opioids are not the only medications that can be misused, habit forming, and lead to long-term negative consequences. If not used correctly, benzodiazepines, which are types of sedatives and anti-anxiety medications, can cause problems for patients and can also lead to overdose.

Late in 2020, the Consortium announced the formation of the Benzodiazepine Action Work Group. The group will focus on raising awareness among patients, providers, and the public about how benzodiazepines should be used. The work group also will disseminate evidence-based information and safe tapering protocols to providers prescribing or deprescribing medication.

Work Groups in Transition

The Consortium has always believed that it needs to be flexible in order to keep up with the changing nature of the prescription drug abuse crisis. In line with that belief, two work groups are undergoing transitions.

In 2021, the Heroin Response Work Group will change to focus on more issues related to the criminal justice system. Preliminary planning work for this change started taking place in late 2020 and will continue into next year.

Additionally, the Data Work Group is now part of the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW), where it will now be known as the Prescription Drug Data Workgroup. Its goals include collecting data, identifying and addressing gaps, and continuing to inform prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts.

Building Connections with Faith Communities

The Consortium is working with Colorado faith leaders and the Office of the Attorney General to help Coloradans struggling with a substance use disorder and ensure that our faith communities have access to the knowledge and resources needed to support their local communities. The Consortium is working to help them understand issues related to addiction and ways to assist individuals with a substance use disorder, whether it be in accessing treatment or in recovery support. Material on these topics is offered online. The Consortium also is seeking faith leaders who are interested in serving as content experts.

Developing Needle and Sharps Disposal Program

In 2020, the Safe Disposal Work Group began developing a program to enable Coloradans to dispose of syringes and sharps in a safe manner. This program is funded by the Legislature and is modeled on the highly successful medication take back program.



Next year will see the start of the pilot program, during which 20 collection kiosks will be placed in locations that best reach under-served communities with a need in the Denver area. The program also will provide individual 1.4-quart collection containers to 2,203 home-bound or mobility impaired individuals in-need.

Improve Public Awareness Campaigns

The Consortium is in the midst of a project researching public attitudes about the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse. Findings from a statewide survey and focus groups will be used to evaluate the Consortium's public awareness programs over the past five years and guide the Consortium's long-term communication strategy.

Promote Recovery and Healing

The Consortium and the Recovery Work Group will help implement new policies called for by the strategic plan to improve community resources for people in recovery and to incorporate recovery into the system of care. The Affected Families and Friends Work Group will continue its projects to help humanize the crisis, with new written stories about love, loss, and hope.

Supporting State's Harm Reduction Bill

After years of work on the part of harm reduction advocates and health care providers, the Colorado General Assembly passed a landmark bill that implements several harm reduction strategies. House Bill 20-1065 allows pharmacies to sell non-prescription syringes; expands the state's Good Samaritan law to include the use of expired naloxone in an emergency; and makes it easier for nonprofits to establish and operate syringe access programs. Members of the work group were influential in collaborating with stakeholders and legislators to write the bill and in informing organizations about the changes.

Assisting Strategic Planning and Tracking

Over the last year, strides have been made with the Consortium's continued use of the Strategy Management System (SMS). Partnerships are moving forward to implement use of the SMS in other areas of the state. Most recently, the Colorado National Collaborative for Suicide Prevention began using the SMS for the six counties working on suicide prevention, which includes work around prescription drug misuse as well. Looking ahead, we are planning on increasing use with partners across the state, as well as implementing new and improved strategies and strategy maps for the Consortium in general and all the work groups that continue to help guide the work being done.

Providing communities with the support and resources they need is one of the Consortium's most important missions.

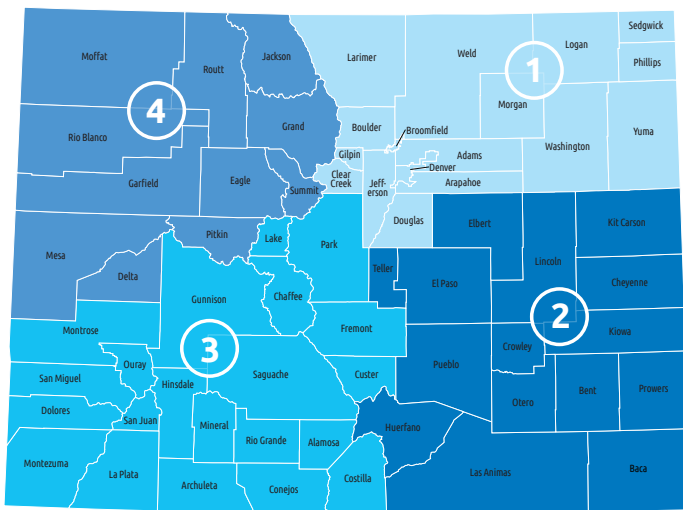
Our external relations staff is a vital link to grassroots efforts and provide a wealth of knowledge and technical assistance to communities working on prescription drug abuse prevention.

The External Relations team is now fully staffed with four individuals supporting community members and organizations in each quadrant of the state (See Figure 1). The Consortium's objective is to share best practices and resources with local partners and to elevate the voice of local communities to state policymakers and funders.

In 2020, the Consortium's External Relations Team:

- Participated in a total of 450 events that reached 9,664 individuals across the state over the fiscal year.
- Provided technical assistance to 23 coalitions statewide (see Figure 2), including seven regional consortiums formed from HRSA Rural Community Opioid Response Program (RCORP) grants.

Figure 1



1

Jamie Feld

3

Jessica Eaddy

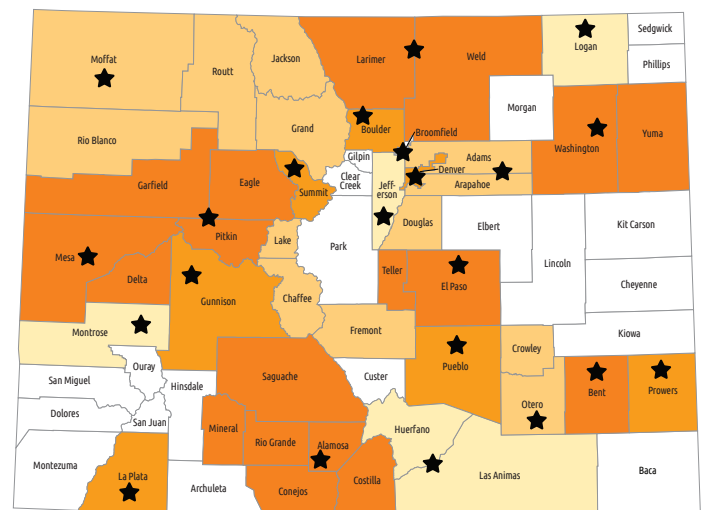
2

Judy Solano

4

Lindsey Simbeye

Figure 2



County Coalition Hub



Coalition County Region



No Formal Coalition

(local work still supported by External Relations staff)



- Aided communities in the transition to virtual community engagement due to COVID-19, maintaining contact with more than 79 stakeholders statewide.
- Collaborated with Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Agrability, and Southeast Health Group to address the unique behavioral health needs of agricultural workers.
- Provided timely dissemination of materials and information about funding opportunities, grant writing services, and COVID-related behavioral health practice changes from agencies such as:
 - Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health
 - Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
 - Division of Regulatory Affairs
 - Healthcare Policy and Financing
 - Department of Local Affairs
 - And various federal agencies
- Provided technical assistance to community stakeholders and coalitions, including, but not limited to:
 - Recovery coach peer trainings and resources on how to start a recovery community organization
 - Resources to create syringe access programs and harm reduction agencies
 - Spanish-language editing of communication materials
 - Access to the Strategy Management System via the Consortium for data tracking, strategy mapping, and centralized data sharing for local coalitions
 - Evidence-based criminal justice diversion practices and program models
- Provided ongoing support to communities through presentations, naloxone education, communications consultation, facilitating access to local data, and legislative updates.

The External Relations Team continues to work to address implicit bias, institutional racism, and barriers to behavioral health equity.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

In 2013, the Colorado Office of the Attorney General provided \$750,000 to support a public awareness campaign regarding prescription drug abuse. Since then, the Consortium's Public Awareness Work Group has led several public awareness campaigns, including the Take Meds Seriously campaign and the Bring Naloxone Home campaign.

In 2019, the Colorado General Assembly designated funding through June 2024 to support the continuation of public awareness about the safe use, safe storage and safe disposal of prescription opioids. The Public Awareness Work Group and the Consortium's communications staff will guide this statewide effort and coordinate with members of other work groups and community stakeholders.

Highlights of the Consortium's public awareness efforts in 2020 include:

Bring Naloxone Home Campaign

- Second phase of public awareness campaign that included digital and social media advertising along with media coverage and participation in public outreach events.
- 5.7 million digital media impressions.

Take Meds Seriously Campaign

- 3.2 million impressions for digital advertising campaign.
- New partnerships with community organizations such as Volunteers of America's Meals on Wheels program.
- Development of a new website and a campaign focused on educating seniors.
- Included in Center for Disease Control's new Opioid Resource Exchange.



Developed New Campaigns

- Partnered with Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health to create new campaign for Colorado Crisis Services that focuses on substance and opioid use.
- Developed campaign for OpiRescue, a smartphone app that helps users identify and reverse an opioid overdose.

Evaluating and Improving Our Work

- Started new project that will evaluate effectiveness of Consortium's public awareness campaigns.
- Conducted exploratory focus groups to assess impact of current messages and find new areas that need to be addressed.
- Developed statewide public opinion survey to be conducted in early 2021.

Improved Online Presence

- Redesigned Consortium's website to highlight resources for the community and Consortium's activities.
- Started newsletter to inform public and partners about upcoming events and the latest news, such as bills in the legislature.

Social Media Promotion

- Began promoting statewide events such as Take Back Day and International Overdose Awareness Day, greatly expanding our social media reach.



The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention is guided by the members of 11 work groups, which are made up of experts in a variety of professional fields of practice, policymakers, and concerned citizens. The Consortium is organized on the collective impact model, with the work groups providing direction and oversight for Consortium staff.

Affected Families and Friends Work Group

The Affected Families and Friends Work Group focuses on raising public awareness among Coloradans regarding the crisis of prescription drug misuse and promoting the safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription medications.

Co-Chairs: *Karen Hill, JP Opioid Interaction Awareness Alliance; Suzi Stolte, JP Opioid Interaction Awareness Alliance*

Benzodiazepine Action Work Group

The Benzodiazepine Action Work Group is focused on benefiting patients, providers, and the public by raising awareness and providing information about the safe use and prescribing and deprescribing of benzodiazepines.

Co-Chairs: *Alexis Ritvo, MD, MPH, University of Colorado School of Medicine; Steven Wright, MD*

Data Work Group

The Data Work Group focuses on issues relating to the identification, collection, and communication of data and research regarding prescription drug misuse and abuse in Colorado. It is now part of the State Epidemiological Outcomes Work Group.

Co-Chairs: *Alia Al-Tayyib, PhD, MSPH, Denver Public Health; Barbara Gabella, MSPH, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment*

Harm Reduction Work Group

The Harm Reduction Work Group (originally the Naloxone Work Group) advocates for the health, wellbeing, rights, and dignity of people who use substances by supporting organizational, clinical and public policy approaches/strategies that have the potential to save lives and reduce potential harms of substance use. The work group focuses on supporting harm reduction services throughout Colorado, including overdose awareness and broad access to naloxone, safe injection supplies and facilities, HIV and hepatitis C testing and linkage to care, and harm reduction-based criminal justice reforms.

Co-Chairs: *Michael Nerenberg, MD, Southern Colorado Harm Reduction Association; Christopher Grano, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment*

Heroin Response Work Group

The Heroin Response Work Group's purpose is to establish a coordinated statewide response to Colorado's emerging heroin problem. Work group members represent diverse backgrounds and include representatives from federal, state, and local law enforcement, as well as prevention, treatment, and recovery organizations. In 2020, the work group began transitioning to include broader criminal justice efforts. This evolution will continue into 2021.

Co-Chairs: *Lindsey Myers, MPH, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment; Vacant*



Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Work Group

The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) Work Group focuses on issues relating to the use and improvement of the state's prescription drug monitoring program.

Co-Chairs: *Jason Hoppe, DO, University of Colorado School of Medicine and UC Health; Dmitry Kunin, PharmD, MBA, Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies*

Provider Education Work Group

The Provider Education Work Group focuses on issues relating to improving the education and training of health care professionals who prescribe, dispense, or otherwise provide care for those receiving prescription medications with the potential for misuse, abuse, or diversion.

Co-Chairs: *Josh Blum, MD, Denver Health; Lesley Brooks, MD, SummitStone Health Partners*

Public Awareness Work Group

The Public Awareness Work Group focuses on raising public awareness among Coloradans regarding the problem of prescription drug abuse, and promoting the safe use, storage, and disposal of prescription medications.

Co-Chairs: *Elizabeth Owens, MA Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health; Kent MacLennan, MEd, Rise Above Colorado*

Recovery Work Group

The Recovery Work Group aims to involve the recovery community in the conversation about prescription drug misuse and abuse, increase Coloradans' understanding of recovery, and promote and support the development and expansion of recovery support efforts throughout the state.

Co-Chair: *Carly Larson, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners; Vacant*

Safe Disposal Work Group

The Safe Disposal Work Group focuses on issues relating to the safe storage and disposal of prescription medications with the potential for misuse, abuse, or diversion.

Co-Chairs: *Lynette Myers, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment; Sunny Linnebur, PharmD, University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences*

Treatment Work Group

The Treatment Work Group focuses on identifying and addressing gaps in the treatment and continuum of care (i.e. prevention, treatment, recovery maintenance) for opioid and other substance use disorders by forming strategic partnerships with state agencies and organizations to bring about clinical, organizational, and public policy improvements to systems of care.

Co-Chairs: *Angela Bonaguidi, MSW, University of Colorado School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry, Addiction Research and Treatment Services; Steven Young, MD, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Colorado Treatment Services*



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Center for Prescription Drug
Abuse Prevention

SKAGGS SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention helps coordinate Colorado's statewide response to the prescription drug abuse epidemic, focusing on the opioid crisis. The Consortium is part of the Colorado Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention in the University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus.