

REDUCING OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS

In her FY 2021 budget proposal, the Governor highlighted the need for bold action to reduce opioid deaths and turn the tide on the continuing crisis in Michigan.

BACKGROUND

An estimated 80,000 people in Michigan have opioid use disorder – and overdoses kill over 2,000 Michiganders every year. More people now die from opioid-related causes than car accidents.

Despite progress, MDHHS is still only able to reach a small fraction Michigan residents with opioid use disorder who could benefit from treatment or other services. And the rise of fentanyl, a hyper-potent synthetic opioid, in the illicit drug market continues to cause many deaths. The opioid crisis is complex and wide-ranging – and requires an equally comprehensive response.

Michigan has taken important steps to address the opioid crisis, but we must continue to build on this foundation and fill gaps that remain in our response. Continuing to expand programs and resources aimed at prevention, treatment and harm reduction is the first step toward meeting the Governor's goal of cutting opioid-related deaths in half in the next five years.

PROPOSED ACTION

The governor proposed a one-time investment in a stronger and better coordinated response, bringing to bear new tools to ultimately reduce opioid deaths in Michigan.

First, the Governor's proposal would fill remaining gaps in the continuum of care for treating opioid use disorder, so that there is no wrong door to treatment and no one falls through the cracks. For example, finding safe and affordable housing remains a key challenge to recovery for individuals after treatment. This proposal would establish a revolving loan fund to expand capacity for recovery housing for both service providers and clients. Funds could also be used to help some individuals afford a security deposit or other basic housing costs and gain a fresh start when they leave residential treatment.

Funding would also expand programs to divert individuals with substance use disorders from the criminal justice system into treatment where appropriate. Additionally, the investment would expand syringe service programs, which reduce the use of contaminated needles, help overcome stigmas, and provide an effective opportunity to share information on substance abuse treatment options, health education, lifesaving screenings and basic preventive health care.

Second, the Governor's proposal will harness data to improve our crisis response – by better identifying individuals at risk, rapidly reaching out to them, and connecting them to needed services. Data investments will also help substance use treatment providers track their clients' outcomes and understand how to improve outcomes after treatment.

TOTAL EXECUTIVE OFFICE RECOMMENDATION

\$12.3 million, including \$10 million in General Fund dollars.

External Affairs and Communications
333 S. Grand Ave., Lansing, MI
CommOffice@michigan.gov

