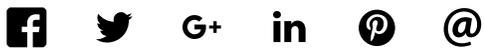


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TOPICAL

Study seeks input to help battle opioid epidemic

By Brad Stacy, The Morehead News Dec 18, 2017



MOREHEAD - Officials conducting research addressing the opioid epidemic in eastern Kentucky counties are asking community members to come forward for interviews to talk about addiction's local impact.

The project, Kentucky Communities and Researchers Engaging to Halt the Opioid Epidemic (CARE2HOPE), is a grant project aimed at helping Kentucky communities build public health interventions that will reduce opioid misuse, hepatitis C, overdoses and HIV.

“Rural Kentucky is experiencing significant harms from opioid misuse, including drug dependence, overdoses, and hepatitis C,” CARE2HOPE says. “The purpose of this study is to improve the health of rural Kentuckians by developing comprehensive approaches to prevent and treat consequences of opioid injection.”

CARE2HOPE is a grant awarded to the University of Kentucky and Emory University to study the epidemic and its communicable diseases.

The goal is to assist counties in its various districts to determine what the community needs based on their issues, as well as gather data on current opioid trends and behaviors.

The \$1.16 million partnership is with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Dr. April Young, researcher with the UK College of Public Health and Center on Drug and Alcohol Research, along with a co-principal investigator at Emory University.

The project focuses on the 12 counties that make up the Gateway Health Department District and the Kentucky River Health Department District. Those include Rowan, Bath, Elliott, Knox, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Menifee, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, and Wolfe counties.

Out of the multitude of communities across the United States that applied, eastern Kentucky was one of only eight that were selected for the grant.

The project has two phases, with phase one building community coalitions in the various counties.

The groups of about eight community members will decide what the local resources are needed for addressing misuse, overdoses, and the spread of disease. They lead the decision making process of determining what evidence based response their community would like to implement.

The grant may receive additional funding to assist in the implementation of each coalition’s desired response, contingent on the project meeting phase one milestones.

In phase two, these coalitions will help build interventions to meet the community’s needs that build on local strengths, and will work to make sure that the interventions are as effective as possible.

Currently in phase one, the grant leaders hope to meet with the coalitions in February 2018.

Those with the grant are seeking a vast variety of community members to include, but aren't limited to law enforcement, local government leaders, substance abuse providers, social service providers, faith based leaders who provide community outreach services, and community influencers.

The interview will take about 90 minutes and will be conducted at a convenient location.

If interested in being interviewed for this study or to recommend someone for an interview, call (606) 254-2040 or email care2hope@gmail.com.

"We aren't just seeking out data and running away from the issue," said Young. "We want to bring real intervention to the community. We also want to help communities help themselves. The coalitions and community will decide on the solutions as long as they are evidence based."

You can also stay updated on the grants progress by viewing their Facebook page at "CARE2HOPE".

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