



Chatham County, NC

Legislation Text

File #: 24-5162, **Version:** 1

Receive a Presentation and Adopt a Resolution to direct the expenditure of \$364,500 in opioid settlement funds to support the following strategies: 1. Collaborative Strategic Planning 2. Evidence-Based Addiction treatment 3. Recovery Support Services 4. Early Intervention 5. Naloxone Distribution

Introduction & Background: In July 2021, North Carolina announced a \$26 billion agreement with pharmaceutical distributors of opioids to bring resources to communities harmed by the opioid epidemic. The agreement resolves litigation over the role of four companies in creating and fueling the opioid epidemic. Beginning in 2022 and ending in 2038, Chatham County will receive a total of \$2.9 million in funding from this settlement. A second settlement provides an additional \$2.33 million in funding to Chatham County through 2035. Both settlements combined average approximately \$293,000 per year from 2022-2038. The Chatham County Board of Commissioners previously voted in March 2023 and November 2023 to adopt resolutions to direct the expenditure of opioid settlement dollars toward strategies recommended by the Sheriff's Prevention Partnership on Controlled Substances. This funding authorization expires March 31, 2024.

In addition to providing a presentation outlining progress on existing opioid overdose abatement strategies, this includes a request to authorize expending up to \$364,500 of these settlement funds to support five strategies through June 2025.

Discussion & Analysis:

Funding for the Collaborative Strategic Planning strategy (\$139,500) will be used to support the Opioid Overdose Prevention Coordinator role at the Chatham County Public Health Department, meeting, and other operational expenses. This role coordinates county-wide overdose prevention efforts and facilitates the Sheriff's Prevention Partnership on Controlled Substances. The partnership is a county-wide collaborative that focuses on strategic planning to "address opioid misuse, addiction, overdose or related issues..." This aligns guidance in Exhibit A of the MOA for this strategy.

Funding for the Evidence-Based Addiction Treatment strategy (\$55,000) will be used to "support evidence-based addiction treatment consistent with the American Society of Addiction Medicine's national practice guidelines for the treatment of opioid use disorder..." per Exhibit A of the MOA. Directly funding treatment will remove barriers to care for uninsured and underinsured patients. According to the Community Opioid Resources Engine for North Carolina (CORE-NC) "The use of FDA-approved medications for OUD have been shown to have multiple benefits including reducing cravings/withdrawal symptoms, overdose deaths, and the transmission of communicable diseases, while improving an individual's quality of life."

Funding for the Recovery Support Services strategy (\$50,000) will be used to support people in treatment or recovery "in accessing addiction treatment, recovery support, harm reduction services, primary healthcare, or other services or supports they need to improve their health or well-being," per Exhibit A of the MOA. This strategy encompasses a wide range of interventions to empower people

who use drugs or are in recovery to improve their health and wellbeing. Specifically, this strategy will support access to transportation for people in recovery which can be used for attending medical appointments, legal appointments, recovery support groups, and more.

Funding for the Early Intervention strategy (\$20,000) will be used to “Fund programs, services, or training to encourage early identification and intervention for children or adolescents who may be struggling with problematic use of drugs or mental health conditions...” per Exhibit A of the MOA. According to CORE-NC, “These interventions empower people to understand and address the underlying issues that accelerate drug use.”

Funding for the Naloxone Distribution strategy (\$100,000) will be used to maintain the Naloxone Education and Distribution Program coordinated by the Chatham County Public Health Department, as recommended by the Sheriff’s Prevention Partnership on Controlled Substances. Per Exhibit A of the memorandum of agreement, the program will “support programs or organizations that distribute naloxone to persons at risk of overdose or their social networks.” According to CORE-NC, “Expanding access to naloxone through various community settings is a key strategy in reducing overdose deaths. Multiple research studies have found that communities with naloxone distribution programs have reduced opioid overdose deaths and opioid use. Naloxone distribution saves lives.”

How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan:

Aligns with Plan Chatham Objective 10: Foster a healthy community. The comprehensive plan proposes the related strategy to “Coordinate funding and partnerships to improve health outcomes, impact current health needs (obesity, healthcare, and mental health which includes *substance abuse* and tobacco prevention and control), and future needs that may be identified.”

Budgetary Impact:

The opioid settlement funds have already been received by the County. This resolution will allow up to \$364,500 of those funds to be allocated toward 1. Collaborative Strategic Planning 2. Evidence-Based Addiction treatment 3. Recovery Support Services 4. Early Intervention 5. Naloxone Distribution from April 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Recommendation/Motion:

Motion to adopt a resolution to direct the expenditure of \$364,500 in opioid settlement funds to support the following strategies: 1. Collaborative Strategic Planning 2. Evidence-Based Addiction treatment 3. Recovery Support Services 4. Early Intervention 5. Naloxone Distribution.