

National Coalition Awarded Over \$30 Million to Tackle Opioid Epidemic

Opioid Response Network surpasses 3 Million people impacted through free education and training

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – October 21, 2020 – The American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) has been awarded \$16 million each year over two years from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to address opioid use disorders and stimulant use disorders. AAAP, with the leadership team at the Addiction Technology Transfer Center at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Columbia University Division on Substance Use Disorders, will be working collaboratively with an unprecedented coalition of 40 national professional organizations representing over two million constituents.

Recognizing the unique needs of jurisdictions across the country to combat opioid misuse, SAMHSA designed a national training program whose foundation is the use of local teams of experts to deliver tailored training and assistance. The grant supports the ongoing work of the *Opioid Response Network* initiative, which launched in February 2018. To date, this initiative has reached over 3 million people with education and training to mitigate opioid use, provided at no cost.

“Funding to address the opioid epidemic through localized, evidence-based approaches in the prevention, treatment and recovery of opioid use disorders, stimulant use and other substance use disorders is critical to real change,” said Kathryn Cates-Wessel, CEO, AAAP and Principal Investigator for the *Opioid Response Network*. “Opioid use disorder remains a serious public health concern and appears to have been exacerbated during the current COVID-19 crisis, which is believed to have caused increases in substance use, overdose, depression, anxiety and suicide. The timing for continued support targeting the local needs of communities is now. We thank SAMHSA for their continued support.”

Dr. Frances Levin, *Opioid Response Network* Medical Director and Kennedy-Leavy Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University Irving Medical Center says: “The *Opioid Response Network* has been an extremely impactful national initiative that has reached millions of professional colleagues. The alacrity of the network has made it a critically important national resource to help alleviate the persistent public health epidemics of drug overdose, in particular opioid overdose and substance use disorders.”

The two-year grant started September 30, 2020. Recognizing the impact stimulant use is having across the country, SAMHSA has required that the network expand resources to provide more educational services in this area. A sampling of the *Opioid Response Network's* work to date includes:

- Trained 83 percent of physicians in California correctional facilities, across 35 correctional settings, on evidence-based practices for the treatment of opioid use disorder to reach approximately 100,000 inmates in California.
- Convene a bi-weekly forum for clinicians in Texas serving 1.4 million people in preventing and treating opioid use disorders.
- Through use of a needs assessment process, supported the development of a Kansas City recovery high school.

Any individual, organization, state or city can submit a request to the *Opioid Response Network* at opioidresponsenetwork.org for education and training tailored specifically to meet their needs at no cost. Requests are responded to within one business day and supported by a technology transfer specialist dedicated to the region.

About the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry

The American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) is a national professional organization for Addiction Psychiatrists, physicians and allied health professionals dedicated to providing evidence based practices in the education, training, research and policy in the field of substance use disorders and co-occurring mental disorders.

For more information and for media interviews with *Opioid Response Network* spokespeople in your area, contact:

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