



IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

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On October 12, 2018, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH), Injury and Violence Prevention Branch awarded a \$100,000 grant to the Macon County Public Health (MCPH) and Western NC AIDS Project (WNCAP) to combat the opioid crisis to implement high-impact, community-level and regional strategies to address the opioid crisis in the 7 far western counties of North Carolina: Clay, Cherokee, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain and the Qualla Boundary. This one-time funding, covers two year fiscal years and is based on the NC Opioid Action Plan. In 2017, an estimated 1,683 deaths in North Carolina were attributed to unintentional opioid overdoses according to NC DHHS, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch.

A total of 34 health departments applied for funding which is from a \$4 million cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that was recently awarded to NC DHHS' Division of Public Health. A total of \$1.8 million is being awarded to 22 North Carolina health departments under the NC Local Mitigation to the Opioid Crisis for Local Health Departments and Districts (LMOC Crisis) grant.

MCPH was encouraged to partner with local, community-based harm reduction organizations such as WNCAP to implement strategies such as expanding access to evidence-based syringe exchange services and overdose prevention/reversal programs; connecting criminal justice involved individuals to harm reduction, substance use treatment and recovery services which includes new services at the Macon County Jail; and support of the Macon County EMS Post Overdose Response Team's services.

For more information about the grant or the strategies being implemented, please contact Carmine Rocco, MCPH at 828-349-2423/crocco@maconnc.org or Stephanie Almeida, WNCAP at 617-828-9184/ stephanie@wncap.org.

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