

SOUTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF
RURAL HEALTH
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Carolina Office of Rural Health Receives Funding to Address Opioid Use Disorder throughout Rural South Carolina

Rural communities in South Carolina are not immune to the opioid epidemic which is currently plaguing our nation. The number of individuals abusing opioids and rates of overdose deaths continue to rise each year at alarming rates. In 2017, 748 people across the state of South Carolina died from an opioid related overdose.

The Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, a division within the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recently awarded 95 new planning grants through its Rural Communities Opioid Response Program. The South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH), the Federally designated state point of contact for rural health issues across the Palmetto State, received one of these awards to support our rural areas in their fight against this epidemic.

“Opioid use disorder doesn’t discriminate based on age, race, location, or socioeconomic status, and neither will our state’s response to it. I’m grateful for the South Carolina Office of Rural Health’s commitment to healthy outcomes for South Carolinians and look forward to continuing this important work with them and the countless partners that work so hard for the people of our state,” said Governor Henry McMaster.

Over the next year, SCORH will work to build upon existing statewide efforts and bring together local partners interested in increasing the number and capacity of behavioral health homes in rural areas. Some of these local partners include CareSouth Carolina (headquartered in Hartsville), Shoreline Behavioral Health Services (Conway), Tidelands Health (Georgetown), Tri-County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (Orangeburg), and Trinity Behavioral Care (Marion). A host of other local and statewide partners are also committed to the success of this effort, including the SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS).

“While the major metropolitan areas in our state have seen considerable increases in opioid-involved deaths over the past two years, our less populated areas have not been unaffected,” said Sara Goldsby, Director of DAODAS. “But local efforts around response and prevention, such as unified task forces and coalitions, are already having an impact, and SCORH’s new grant will help ensure the availability of a full spectrum of resources for the residents of our rural counties.”

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SCORH CEO Dr. Graham Adams shared that he and his staff are very excited about the opportunity to work with DAODAS and community partners to coordinate opioid use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery activities throughout our rural communities. He stated, “This funding represents the opportunity to better coordinate the resources available in rural South Carolina to address this epidemic and to identify areas for improvement. Together with its partners, SCORH is eager to contribute to decreasing the burden of this epidemic for the rural residents of our state.”

To learn more about this effort or SCORH, please contact us at 803-454-3850.

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The SC Office of Rural Health (SCORH) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the health status of rural and underserved people through advocacy, education, and assistance to providers, communities, and policy makers. Since 1991, SCORH has worked to improve access to quality health care for our state’s rural residents.