



Needham Public Health Division

Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Memorandum

To: Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager
From: Tiffany Benoit, Assistant Director of Public Health
CC: Timothy McDonald, Director of Health & Human Services
Kathleen King, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Operations
David Davison, Deputy Town Manager/Director of Finance
Date: September 17th, 2024
Re: Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund Plan

The Needham Public Health Division seeks Town Meeting's approval to use \$82,000 of the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Funds to work on increasing the opioid initiatives throughout the town of Needham. The areas of the Statewide Commitment for Abatement that this funding will work through include connections to care, prevention, treatment and recovery, and harm reduction. The funding request, if approved, will support the following approximate costs through the end of FY2025:

- 1) Approximately \$69,000 to increase the hours of an existing part-time staff member to function in a new role as a Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialist. This staff member will develop and implement an action plan for use of the opioid litigation funds based upon with the finalized strategic plan; that staff member will also continue work as a Peer Recovery Coach, the pilot program of which has just passed the nine-month mark.
- 2) Approximately \$3,000 to address certain priority items for opioid fund use including the co-location of opioid overdose reversal kits with AEDs throughout the town of Needham, including private businesses (if requested) and high visibility community location, including MBTA stations.
- 3) Approximately \$10,000 for education programs aimed at youth, those experiencing substance use, and loved ones of those experiencing substance use

With the allocation of funding¹ from the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund approved by October 2023 Town Meeting, the Needham Public Health Division hired two contractors from November 2023 through September 2024 to conduct community engagement process, develop a strategic planning process, and finalize a strategic plan that will provide the Town of Needham a road map into using the opioid funding.

Throughout community engagement process of the strategic planning, feedback was given about needs that the Needham community should try to accomplish or work on. This feedback was provided by many who have been touch by substance use disorder.

¹ October 2023 Town Meeting appropriated \$145,000. \$75,558.92 was expended in FY2024. Over the first two months of FY2025, \$21,027.60 was expended. With anticipated spending through the end of November 2024 of an additional \$39,000. That will leave approximately \$10,000 remaining from the initial allocation. The \$82,000 allocation from October 2024 Town Meeting, if approved, will carry the program through the end of FY2025. Going forward, future spending requests will occur at Annual Town Meeting for the following fiscal year, establishing a routine schedule similar to other Town funds.

While not all of this feedback can be accomplished in the next 12 months, the Needham Public Health Division believes that increasing the hours of the Peer Recovery Coach (and making that role a Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialist) to work on continued community engagement and program development will help provide a strong foundation for use of the opioid funding. The Behavioral Health Peer Support Specialist will help in providing access and developing programs that are available exclusively for young adults and teens, resources for parents and loved ones of those with opioid use disorder, and training and education for those who respond or treat people with opioid use disorder.

Another area of concern that continued to pop-up included stigma around substance misuse and how to decrease it throughout the community. Some of the participants expressed concerns such as, “SAMBOX initiative should be more robustly advertised within Needham”, “Needham should follow the model of cities like Cambridge in placing Narcan kits in as many public places as possible”, and “More robust organization and structured method of Narcan and test strip distribution.” Much discussion was had about how stigma stops those who need Narcan from going out of their way to access it, thus increased access allows for decreased stigma and better distribution and use of Narcan. Decreasing stigma and providing access will save lives.

The beginning of the action planning steps includes wellness development for everyone including, those who are experiencing substance use, families and loved ones who have been affected, and the Needham community as a whole. Prevention, harm reduction, connections to care, and treatment and recovery will help provide wellness to the residents and community members of Needham through peer recovery coaching, program development, and education to reach all residents in need and decrease opioid use and deaths in Needham.

Thank you for your time in considering the funding needs and use for the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Funding. Please see Exhibit A for a timeline of the strategic planning process and goals of Wellness Programming.

Sincerely,



Tiffany Benoit
Assistant Director of Public Health

EXHIBIT A

Opioid Strategic Plan Timeline



COMMUNITY

Community Engagement began. Stakeholder meetings, roundtable discussions held.

2023-24
Nov-Mar



EDUCATION

Community forum held. Opioid education and discussion about findings provided.

2024
April



STEERING

Town steering committee meetings prioritized strategies.

2024
May-Jun



EVALUATION

Evaluation planning completed and implemented into the strategic plan.

2024
Aug



ACTION PLAN

Final Strategic Plan completed. Action planning and community engagement continues.

2024
Sep



STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE

Timeline and Goal Planning

The Goal of All Program Development is to bring WELLNESS to all community members within in Needham

Program Development Examples:

- Harm reduction
 - Sam Box Program
 - Support/Expand Peer Recovery supports and Programming
- Treatment and Recovery
 - Peer Recover Coaching
 - Current treatment options and modalities
- Connections to Care
 - Transportation
 - Early Identification Intervention Training
 - Crisis Management Education
- Prevention Efforts
 - Youth Involvement
 - Policy Advocacy



Timeline and Goal Planning