



INTERACT FOR HEALTH

A Catalyst for Health and Wellness

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMART Recovery Gets Support for Telehealth Expansion Funds Will Increase Virtual Meetings in Greater Cincinnati area

Mentor, OH, July 27, 2020—For people struggling with addiction, the Coronavirus pandemic almost certainly adds stress upon their recovery. Since physical distancing has nixed most in-person meetings, recovery meetings have almost entirely migrated to the web—which takes significant resources and extensive work to make happen.

SMART Recovery USA (*Self-Management and Recovery Training*) has managed, so far, to offer almost 550 free weekly meetings online through its website for people in recovery and for family members and friends who support them.

Now, thanks to a grant from the Funders' Response to the Heroin Epidemic (FRHE), a group dedicated to ending the Greater Cincinnati region's opioid and heroin epidemic, additional meetings will be made possible in the Greater Cincinnati region.

The generous financial support will allow SMART Recovery to provide materials (including handbooks), build training capacity, pay for Zoom licenses for volunteer-led meetings—all things needed to move meetings online. The FRHE grant will also support developing a plan to sustain virtual meetings indefinitely.

In the midst of the global pandemic, our epidemic of substance abuse continues, said O'dell M. Owens, M.D., M.P.H., President and CEO of Interact for Health, a member of FRHE. During this time of increased stress and isolation in our communities, the partnership with SMART Recovery is one way to help link people to substance abuse treatment, and it can help reduce overdoses and overdose deaths.

One of the keys to successful online meetings is having volunteers who are well-trained and comfortable facilitating remotely via the web. According to Mark Ruth, SMART Recovery USA Executive Director, increasing the capacity for volunteers is important:

Our volunteer meeting facilitators are doing a tremendous job converting their in-person meetings to online meetings. And one of the best things about it is that people can see familiar faces at those online meetings, which adds to the positive experience and value.

With this grant from Funders' Response to the Heroin Epidemic, we will be able to help more volunteers do more crucial work with those struggling with addictions, which are exacerbated by the global pandemic we are all facing."

Ruth also points out that individuals can find local online meetings in the United States through the locator at www.smartrecoverytest.org/local/ by entering their zip code or city and state. People can maintain their privacy by using screen names and not showing their face at video meetings. Also, these meetings are not recorded.

SMART offers a self-empowering approach to help individuals with all kinds of harmful behaviors, including addiction to substances (alcohol and other drugs) and to activities (gambling, eating disorders, sex, self-harm, excessive internet use, and other problems). SMART also hosts Family & Friends meetings for those caring for loved ones with addiction.

To find out more about becoming a facilitator, contact training@smartrecovery.org.

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Founded in 1994, SMART Recovery (Self-Management and Recovery Training) is a global, nonprofit organization that helps people overcome problematic addictive behavior through free in-person and online meetings.

SMART employs science-based techniques that have proven to be effective in helping individuals overcome addiction to substances and harmful activities.

SMART has been endorsed by the leading government and medical authorities in Australia, the UK, and U.S. Learn more: www.smartrecovery.org.