



NEWS RELEASE

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SMART Recovery Receives SOR Grant to Continue Fight Against Opioid Addiction Significant Funds from State Will Help More Ohioans

Mentor, OH, June 17, 2021—Recognizing SMART Recovery’s positive work with Ohioans battling Opioid Use Disorder, the Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) agency has awarded SMART \$592,350 as part of the “Use Of Innovation” program. The program seeks to decrease the impact of the ongoing opioid crisis, which has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. These funds will support technology and innovation advancements in Ohio’s behavioral health care delivery system.

As we’ve seen the number of deaths from opioid overdoses skyrocket, we’ve been looking for additional financial resources that will boost our efforts to do even more for those who are struggling, said Mark Ruth, SMART’s Executive Director. We’ve been able to make a huge impact with previous OhioMHAS grants. Now, through Recovery Ohio’s innovation program, we can move into a deeper level of help.

The state agency announced a total of 21 recipients for innovation funds.

While the pandemic has rightfully been front and center in everyone’s minds, the opioid epidemic hasn’t gone away – it persists as a threat to our citizens and our communities, said OhioMHAS Director Lori Criss. This funding will help our local partners connect even more Ohioans to treatment and recovery services and support their use of new technology and innovation to stem the tide of opioid addiction.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine stressed the need for both mental health and substance use treatment by saying,

This federal funding will expand our ability to work with local community partners and use innovative means of technology to support Ohioans in need and on their recovery journeys, especially as we work through the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and substance use treatment needs.

SMART’s plan for the funds includes an array of services and supports, falling into several main areas:

- Increased resource accessibility through large print and braille materials for visually impaired persons, videos in Spanish, downloadable apps, and a tablet loan program.

- IT solutions that are customer facing, such as an online chat box and a peer-to-peer engagement product will help manage the volume of chat messages, as will adding weekend hours for phone support. Also, more efficient database connections to an estimated 100 organizational partners.
- Additional mutual support group meetings. This includes greater availability for those inside and outside prisons to curtail drug-related recidivism. Regular training of SMRAT facilitators to prevent burnout as well as identifying second facilitators to lead to greater meeting tenure.
- A web-based class for people who struggle with a behavior that may not be an addiction, but may lead to an addiction, i.e., prevention rather than treatment.

According to Executive Director Ruth,

Because we have so many ways we can help Ohioans, we are truly grateful for these Recovery Ohio funds. Together with the State and all the other innovative organizations, we believe that SMART will not only continue our effective work but actually demonstrate an increased impact. It's the least we can do to help those who are struggling or may be headed for trouble with the use of opioids.

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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.