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DHHR Announces Funding for Harm Reduction Programs

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) today announced \$600,000 in grant funding has been awarded to 11 health care entities across West Virginia to support harm reduction program efforts. The award is part of a \$5.88 million State Target Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant provided to West Virginia through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Harm reduction programs can reduce the transmission of blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV, while also reducing needle sharing. Harm reduction programs often have mechanisms in place to link and refer individuals to substance abuse prevention and treatment, behavioral health programs, and other support services.

“We are pleased to provide necessary and critical funding for harm reduction programs in West Virginia,” said DHHR Cabinet Secretary Bill J. Crouch. “These efforts complement the larger approach that we are using to combat substance abuse across the state.”

The 11 applicants receiving funding include the Berkeley County Health Department, Cabell-Huntington Health Department, Fayette County Health Department, Greenbrier County Health Department, Hampshire County Health Department, Harrison-Clarksburg Health Department, Jefferson County Health Department, Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, Milan Puskar Health Right, Ohio Valley Harm Reduction Coalition (Brooke and Hancock County Health Departments), and Wyoming County Health Department.

“Harm reduction is a comprehensive set of public health strategies and interventions that aim to reduce morbidity and mortality among substance abusers, namely, persons who inject drugs,” said Dr. Rahul Gupta, State Health Officer and Commissioner of DHHR’s Bureau for Public Health.

Eight of the 11 applicants funded are expanding services, while three applicants, Wyoming, Greenbrier and Hampshire counties, are implementing new harm reduction programs.

To learn more about harm reduction programs in West Virginia, please visit www.harmreductionwv.org.

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