



News Release

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Opioid Prevention, Treatment and Recovery: What's Working in Your Town?

USDA Calls for Best Practices from Rural Communities Addressing the Opioid Crisis

Dover, Del., March 30, 2018 – Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett today unveiled a new interactive feature on the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) rural opioid misuse [webpage](#). Now, webpage visitors can tell USDA what prevention, treatment and recovery actions have been effective in addressing the opioid epidemic in their rural communities. USDA is collecting this information as part of an ongoing effort to identify best practices and effective strategies for addressing rural opioid misuse.

“Rural America has been hard hit by opioid misuse,” Hazlett said. “The challenges for our small towns and rural places in developing responses to this crisis are unique. There are rural leaders effectively addressing this issue, and USDA wants to help replicate these actions in more rural communities.”

The National Center for Health Statistics estimates that more than 63,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2016. More than half of those deaths involved opioids, including prescription drugs and heroin.

USDA is an important partner to rural communities addressing this national problem. The Department is investing in treatment facilities and services, e-Connectivity and telemedicine, and public education efforts. In addition to program investment, USDA is helping communities share information about best practices to address the crisis.

“We are proud of our work in Delaware to help individuals overcome this terrible disease,” said Denise Lovelady, USDA Rural Development State Director for Delaware and Maryland. “The USDA rural opioid misuse [webpage](#), highlights our partnership with Connections Withdrawal Management Center, located in Harrington, Delaware. Patients from Delaware, Maryland and as far away as Oregon have come to the Center for treatment. In addition to the Harrington facility, USDA is supporting another Connections Withdrawal Management Center in Millsboro, Delaware. This new clinic will support a previously unserved population of rural residents as they journey through their recovery. We are continuing to identify organizations and leaders who can partner with us in addressing the rural opioid misuse.”

Information collected from this new webpage feature will be used to create an interactive resource for communities looking to address the opioid crisis on the local level.

(More)

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump, which included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America.

In the area of quality of life, the Task Force included a recommendation to modernize health care access. The report highlighted the importance of telemedicine in enhancing access to primary care and specialty providers. The Task Force also found that improved access to mental and behavioral health care, particularly prevention, treatment and recovery resources, is vital to addressing the opioid crisis and other substance misuse in rural communities.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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