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CONFERENCE SESSION

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN RURAL AMERICA: CREATING JUSTICE SYSTEM PATHWAYS TO CARE

While no corner of the country has been untouched by the opioid epidemic, the overdose crisis has hit rural America particularly hard. Between 1999 and 2015, overdose deaths increased 325 percent in rural counties. Additionally, people with substance use disorder are often routed into the legal system and incarcerated, which may disrupt treatment and increase overdose risks. If you will be attending NACo's conference, please join the Opioid Solutions Leadership Network and the Reaching Rural Initiative to discuss how rural counties are adopting solutions to the persistent challenges in addressing substance use disorders.

Date: July 24, 2023

Time: 3:00 pm EST to 4:15 pm EST

WEBINAR

SUICIDE PREVENTION IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: A SAFESIDE PREVENTION LIVE, INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

Rural suicide is a critical issue that needs urgent attention as it has become a growing concern in recent years. Suicide rates in rural areas are often higher than in urban areas. This comprehensive training for service providers in rural



RURAL JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Rural communities face unique challenges that impact their ability to deliver fair and equitable justice. Despite these challenges, rural communities rely on their many strengths to address the needs of their residents.

The National Center for State Courts, in partnership with Rulo Strategies, launched the [Rural Justice Collaborative \(RJC\)](#) to showcase the strengths of rural communities and highlight the cross-sector collaboration that is a hallmark of rural justice systems.

The work under the RJC is supported by a cross-sector advisory council composed of rural judges along with additional stakeholders in the justice, child welfare, and behavioral health systems. The advisory council guides and identifies innovative programs and practices.

communities includes a special focus on youth, substance use, and Indigenous communities. The interactive workshop features video demonstrations, active discussion groups, and access to the latest research on best practices. Attendees will get free, ongoing support for one year.

Date: July 25, 2023

Time: 11AM - 12:30PM CT

» [Register Here](#)

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

TACKLING RURAL AMERICA'S 'HIDDEN' HOUSING CRISIS

Over the past two years, homelessness and housing insecurity rates have risen faster in rural places than in the country. Still, community-based organizations are in a unique position to offer solutions. Two examples in rural Oregon and Kentucky are explored in this article. First, the [Gary Leif Navigation Center](#), a shelter in Oregon that provides a place to sleep and a variety of wraparound services for the unhoused, and [Kentucky River Community Care](#), a nonprofit community mental health center that provides housing opportunities not only for those with behavioral health issues but anyone in need.

HORSE INDUSTRY JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT AND A SECOND CHANCE

The equine industry needs workers. People recovering from addiction or leaving prison need peer support and jobs. The [Stable Recovery](#) program in Lexington, Kentucky is a non-profit that has relied primarily on donations to support its operations. Alongside attending 12-step meetings and support groups, performing duties around the house, and honing newly found horseman skills, all men go through several phases designed to support their individual recovery journey. As a peer-driven therapeutic community, men learn from each other, take on various roles and responsibilities, and focus on what matters most, achieving lasting recovery.



RESEARCH & REPORTS

THE RURAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS CONTINUUM: CONSIDERATIONS AND EMERGING STATE STRATEGIES

Behavioral health crisis care consists of various interventions for people at risk for acute behavioral health issues, experiencing a crisis, or engaging in recovery. This brief presents considerations and emerging state strategies for bolstering the rural behavioral health crisis care continuum at each level of care as defined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Some examples are drawn from advances in states that participated in [NASHP's Policy Academy](#) on Rural Mental Health Crisis Services.

HARM REDUCTION AND RECOVERY SERVICES SUPPORT (HRRSS) TO MITIGATE THE OPIOID OVERDOSE EPIDEMIC IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

In this study, researchers aimed to identify demographic and other factors associated with support for harm reduction and recovery services in Oconee County, an entirely rural county in northwest South Carolina. Results showed low acceptance levels for harm reduction, potentially impacting both intangible and tangible social capital for mitigating the opioid overdose epidemic. Researchers suggest that increasing community awareness of harm reduction strategies and the effectiveness of medications for OUD could improve community support for harm reduction and recovery service resources critical to individual recovery efforts.

MIXED METHODS STUDY OF A CORESPONDER PROGRAM IN RURAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

This study evaluates the implementation and use of a virtual crisis care (VCC) program from a telehealth hub for law enforcement in rural areas. Findings show the use of a VCC program can avert unnecessary involuntary commitment, and interviews with law enforcement affirmed the positive impact of VCC due to ease of use and the benefits it provides.

COMMUNITY PREVENTION SYSTEMS CAN REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE AMONG YOUTH IN RURAL AREAS

In [this study](#), Washington State University, the University of Washington, and Arizona State University partnered to examine how Communities that Care (CTC), an evidence-based early prevention system, can reduce gun violence among youth in rural areas. The study surveyed more than 4,000 adolescents across 24 rural communities, 12 of which implemented CTC and tailored it to local priorities. Each year from 6th to 12th grade, researchers asked students about various behaviors, including whether they'd carried a handgun in the past year. Findings showed that adolescents in rural communities with prevention systems in place were 24% less likely to report carrying a handgun by the 12th grade than those in communities without such systems.

ARTICLES

OPIOIDS ARE DEVASTATING CHEROKEE FAMILIES AND THE TRIBE HAS A \$100 MILLION PLAN TO HEAL

Much of the public awareness during America's opioid crisis focused on rural white towns, but Native communities suffered even higher rates of opioid addiction, overdose death, and suicide. Over the past decade, thousands of governments around the U.S., including tribal governments, sued the drug industry for its alleged role in fueling the opioid crisis. Ultimately, most companies involved in the opioid trade, including name-brand companies such as Johnson & Johnson and Walmart, agreed to national settlements and [cash payouts worth more than \\$50 billion](#). Principal Chief Hoskin says his tribe's roughly \$100 million share has revolutionized addiction care for the Cherokee.

'HARM REDUCTION SAVES LIVES': MEET THE APPALACHIANS DOING THE WORK

Harm reduction doesn't abet drug use, says Judith Feinberg, a professor of infectious diseases and behavioral medicine at West Virginia University. "It's about reducing the attendant harms of drug use, supporting people in the community, and trying to keep them alive and healthy." "If you're not breathing," Feinberg says, "you're not getting into recovery."

RESOURCE

2023 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH PROMOTIONAL TOOLKIT

This toolkit created by the University of Missouri and the Farm and Ranch Stress Alliance Network (FRSAN) provides credible resources and reliable tools to promote and support the mental health and well-being of rural individuals, farmers, ranchers, and their families in agricultural communities.

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