

OSUTS initiatives and grant projects:

Access to Care

The first step for all individuals entering substance use treatment is the ADMH placement assessment utilizing the America Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria. The ASAM criteria is the most widely used and comprehensive set of standards for placement, continued service, and transfer of patients with addiction and co-occurring conditions. ADMH has recognized the increased number of requests for individuals with substance use and co-occurring diagnosis with an additional need for completing the assessment virtually especially in rural counties. Currently, ADMH has contracted with Recovery Resource Center (RRC) to provide statewide ADMH placement assessments. The agency provides assessments by appointment, by walk in or by telehealth. A peer is assigned to everyone who completes an assessment and is referred for treatment. The peer also encourages the person to follow through with treatment recommendation and will also assist with a warm hand off at the time of enrollment. In 2024, RRC made contact with 4,038 clients, completed 2,227 assessments, 355 assessment updates and made 2,599 referrals to treatment.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 5.1 million people misused stimulants annually. While opioids and stimulants are separate classes of substances, trends showed increases in the use of stimulants as many opioid users would attempt to balance the highs and lows between these two different substances. However, these drugs are linked: people who use one may be introduced to the other, one may be substituted for the other, or mask the withdrawal effects of the other. The concurrent use of stimulants and opioids has led to higher rates of dependence and riskier use linking both substances to increased overdose rates. With the help of Opioid Abatement Funds, ADMH has increased access to care through a grant process. The goal for each awarded agency is to provide new services across the state without duplication. These efforts will increase access to care in treatment, prevention, and recovery support.

Adolescent Treatment Services

Comprehensive treatment services are offered statewide to adolescents who are diagnosed with alcohol and substance use disorders. Currently, there are 11 certified and contracted substance use treatment agencies who provide screenings, assessments, individual/group and family therapy, case management, psychoeducation, peer support and other social services to assist adolescents with abstaining from substance misuse. Qualified Substance Abuse Professionals work collaboratively with the court systems, juvenile justice programs, child welfare organizations, health care centers, school systems and other community-based children's service providers to assure that adolescents receive the support needed to achieve and maintain sustained recovery. In 2024, an estimated 1,494 adolescents were served by ADMH treatment providers.

Strategic Opioid Response (SOR) 3

The SOR3 Grant aims to address the opioid overdose crisis by providing resources to Alabama citizens to increase access to FDA-approved medications for the treatment of opioid use

disorder (MOUD). The grant supports a comprehensive continuum of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support services for opioid use disorder (OUD) and other concurrent substance use disorders, including stimulant misuse such as cocaine and methamphetamine. The overarching goal of the SOR3 Grant is to reduce unmet treatment needs and opioid-related overdose deaths across the United States. The SOR Grant is currently serving 4,598 individuals across Alabama, providing crucial support and resources to those affected by opioid use disorder and stimulant misuse. Notably, the State of Alabama is leading the nation in follow-up rates for the SOR Grant, showcasing its commitment to comprehensive and continuous care for its citizens.

Strategic Opioid Response (SOR) 4

With SOR4, the focus will be on the following key areas: 1) Expanding the Use of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) which includes the implementation of MOUD programs within jails in counties most impacted by opioid overdoses. 2) Ensuring widespread availability of Naloxone across the state to combat opioid overdoses effectively. 3) Intensification of efforts to support pregnant and postpartum women who are using opioids, aiming to reduce infant morbidity associated with substance use. 4) Increasing outreach efforts will focus on educating local communities about Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Stimulant Use Disorder, along with disseminating essential information to raise awareness. 5) Continuing implementing of prevention strategies outlined in the State Targeted Response strategic plan.

Post Partum Women-Pilot (PPW-PLT) (Round One and Two):

The *Healthy Moms and Babies Program*, as supported by the PPW-PLT grant funds awarded from Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), has been addressing Alabama's growing use of illicit drugs by pregnant and postpartum women, including opioids. These grant funds support comprehensive, outpatient treatment services for pregnant and postpartum women in multiple locations in Alabama. ADMH is the recipient of the PPW-PLT funds from SAMHSA, and the subrecipient is the Aletheia House, which is the treatment provider. The outpatient treatment programs serve pregnant and postpartum women in Colbert, Montgomery, Etowah, Franklin, and Lawrence County. All of the aforementioned counties are large rural counties with some of the nation's highest rates of opioid use, and babies born with neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome. The PPW-PLT Program began operations in December of 2021, and it will continue until 2027 (two grant cycles). As of now, 123 pregnant and postpartum women have been served through this program, thus surpassing the goals for this grant.

US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Telehealth Grant

ADMH received funding for telehealth technologies which will facilitate a hub-and-spoke service delivery approach for certified treatment provider agencies to create a mechanism for reducing rural health disparities and expanding the use of evidence-based practices for the treatment of substance use disorders (SUD) and opioid use disorders (OUD). The funding was used for telehealth equipment in ten (10) hub/end-user sites located in rural and exceptionally rural counties in Alabama. The treatment provider sites (hub/end-user sites) for telehealth equipment services are in the following rural counties (counties with a population less than

10,000 residents, per US Census Data): Baldwin, Blount, Cleburne, Dale, Henry, Choctaw, Greene, Hale, Sumter, Elmore. Telehealth equipment and services provided within the said ten (10) rural counties will increase treatment access in rural and underserved communities while enhancing coordination of healthcare overall.

The Alabama Telehealth Expansion Project (AL-TEP) received funding to help achieve the following: 1) address and reduce the challenging barriers to accessing treatment services for residents in rural communities; 2) increase and improve access to healthcare education and behavioral healthcare treatment including treatment for Substance Use Disorders (SUD) and Opioid Use Disorders (OUD) for rural residents of Alabama; and, 3) utilize telehealth to bridge the gaps in treatment and healthcare services caused by provider shortages in rural areas of the state. Through placing adequate telehealth equipment in the proposed project end-user sites, ADMH will provide the treatment and services necessary to combat the growing epidemic of Substance Use Disorders (SUD), including Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), and mental health disorders in some of the most rural and poor communities in Alabama.

BirthWell – Peer Doulas

BirthWell Doula Services has continued the ongoing partnership with ADMH in providing birth preparation classes and doula services at the Aletheia House and Olivia’s House, two special women’s treatment programs located in Jefferson County, Alabama. In addition, BirthWell Doula services has recruited and trained Certified Recovery Support Specialists (CRSSs) to also provide doula services to women in Alabama. As of today, 11 CRSSs have received training in doula services.

UAB Comprehensive Addiction Pregnancy Program (CAPP) Expansion to Walker County

ADMH, in conjunction with UAB, expanded the UAB CAPP model of integrated treatment and care to Walker County, Alabama. The Walker County Expansion Program began accepting and serving consumers on February 11, 2022. Since the start date, 142 women have been served through this expansion program. The expansion broadened the eligibility criteria to meet the continuing needs of parenting women with SUD and offer further case management support to address childcare and children’s service (therapeutic and medical care) needs. While the program strives to engage women during pregnancy, all women with dependent children including those attempting to reunify are eligible for services from the CAPP Expansion Program.

Key components of the expansion program include a multi-disciplinary team composed of the following: Peer Recovery Support Specialist, Case Manager, and a primary Substance Use Treatment Counselor. Mothers in the program will be linked to the appropriate level of care as indicated by their substance use placement assessment. Gender-specific outpatient treatment is provided by the Birmingham Fellowship House, an ADMH certified substance use provider. To address trauma issues common in the population of focus, Helping Women Recover, an evidence-based curriculum, has been adopted for utilization. This trauma-informed treatment program addresses key issues often absent in traditional treatment modalities including issues of abuse and trauma. The program is organized into four modules that address triggers that

have been found to promote relapse in women. These modules include - (1) self, (2) relationships, (3) sexuality, and (4) spirituality.

Safe Care

The SAFE Care initiative aims to support counties in Alabama in improving outcomes for infants with prenatal substance exposure and their families by using plans of safe care. The SAFE Care Program in Jefferson County has been an initiative supported through ADMH. The SAFE Care initiative has expanded into three (3) additional counties in Alabama through the partnership and collaboration with ADMH. Those counties are the following: Mobile, Calhoun, and Baldwin County. As of today, SAFE Care has received 320 referrals, and 250 women have been served through this initiative.

SAFE Care helps build and maintain intact families affected by substance use disorders (SUDs), ensures effective safety plans are in place for substance-affected infants, and promotes community resources to be utilized to meet the needs of mothers and families through Plans of Safe Care. In addition, the SAFE Care initiative works to reduce punitive responses to substance use during pregnancy in Alabama by assessing practices of community partners to highlight strengths, gaps, and barriers to treatment and community service provision. The SAFE Care initiative works to educate and to generate collaborative solutions to improve outcomes through engagement with pregnant and parenting women with substance use disorders.

Bureau of Justice grant

The purpose of the grant is to implement diversion programs for people who are at a crossroad of the criminal justice system and need substance use treatment services. The goals of the grant are as follows: 1. Services will include treatment and recovery support to divert and prevent the return of opioid, stimulant and other substance using individuals from the criminal justice system. 2. Extend the state data collection of substance use information to include non-opioid substances and expand current partnerships to enhance data-sharing and accessibility, analysis, and dissemination of real time data. 3. Expand resources to rural areas to bridge the gap of care from urban and suburban areas to rural areas, including developing and implementing innovative and evidence-based models of MAT services for individuals interacting with the criminal justice system. 4. Monitor the impact/outcomes of interventions, spreading successful intervention statewide at the completion of the project period, to reduce the incarceration, recidivism, morbidity, and mortality for adults with a SUD who are cycling through the criminal justice system. The initiative itself was initiated by ADMH, Vital with the University of Alabama, Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles, Recovery Organization of Support Specialists (ROSS), and People Engaged in Recovery (PIER), to serve the eight diverse counties/implementation sites: Montgomery, Etowah, Jefferson, Walker, Madison, Calhoun, Dekalb and Mobile counties.

Rural Drug Court Grant

The purpose of the Drug Court Expansion Grant is to expand substance use disorders (SUD) treatment and recovery support services in existing drug courts to adult men and women ages nineteen and over, who live in rural Alabama Counties. The Aletheia House provides services in

support of treatment instead of incarceration for individuals with SUDs in both Dallas and Montgomery County. The grant provides a continuum of care, including prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services, for individuals with SUD involved with the courts for non-violent offenses. The initiative closes the gap in available outpatient counseling and medication assisted treatment by addressing health care access and quality. During the first two years of the grant, 59 people have participated in the program and benefitted from the services provided.

Recovery Housing Initiative

ADMH was awarded funds to assist recovery residences with lodging for those persons in recovery who are experiencing a crisis and need temporary assistance with paying for their lodging. ADMH has aided over 600 residents by providing the finances for recovery housing during the 2023/2024 fiscal year. In addition to helping with housing, research was conducted and the journey for Alabama becoming the National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) a federal organization, affiliate became a reality. The Alabama Alliance of Recovery Residences supports NARR's mission of supporting persons in recovery from addiction by improving their access to quality recovery residences through standards, support services, placement, education, research, and advocacy. Becoming a NARR affiliate enabled the people of Alabama to pursue better and more accessible recovery housing opportunities by ensuring that they met a higher standard of recovery living. ADMH does not operate any recovery houses; however, we do support the concept of recovery housing and efforts to ensure that the recovery houses in Alabama, certified through AARR, are monitored toward providing an adequate representation of quality recovery housing. The AARR recovery houses foster safe humane environments for those persons who may benefit from recovery housing.