

Substance Use Response Ecosystem

We are S.U.R.E.!

An ecosystem can be used as a metaphor for the kind of collaboration needed to address the opioid crisis in Pueblo County. The Substance Use Response Ecosystem is made of interdependent work groups (or “pods”) across Pueblo government, academic, corporate and nonprofit sectors. In addition to enhancing local collective action across work groups and collaboratives, the ecosystem will increase the visibility of local health care work and help create an expanded narrative of change.

Action teams in the ecosystem are grouped naturally by the work they do into a pod. In the pod, teams undertake activities in which they excel with an established facilitator to convene and integrate the work of the teams and to act with other pods in the ecosystem. With few exceptions, pods are comprised of individuals representing organizations (businesses, nonprofits, coalitions, etc.). It is notable that the Provider Pod is comprised of individuals (physicians, dentists, nurses, therapists, and other specialists who provide direct care).

Together, the pods allow the community to tap into the many diverse skills and talents of stakeholders, producing a result superior to what any one work group is capable of doing alone.

Pod facilitators were carefully selected based on position in the community and professional expertise. Pod facilitators augment the work they and their colleagues are *already* doing by adding the impact of others. The work will likely be demanding but the potential rewards are numerous.

The local Regional Health Connector (RHC), part of a new, statewide workforce dedicated to improving the coordination of local services to advance health, will provide backbone support to the ecosystem through March, 2019. Pod facilitators will receive support and coaching, and ongoing support in the collective impact framework.

The success of this ecosystem is highly dependent upon the full participation of the action teams and its individual members. Pods have no management authority nor fiscal responsibilities nor dues. They are comprised of multidisciplinary members, each of whom has an equal voice in a pod. The frequency of meetings, duration of meetings, and operations of meetings will be determined by the pod. Each pod will participate in a shared measurement system, use a common agenda and practice constant communication.

On October 26, 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services was directed by executive order to declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency. This cannot be a “here today, gone tomorrow” project. Our community and its citizens cannot afford failure.

A Systems Approach

. . . requires wide-scale,
integrated solutions. . .

Prevention

Preventing substance misuse and abuse is key to reducing substance use disorders. In mid-2017 the Pueblo City County Health Department (PCCHD) launched a multi-year project focused on prevention of substance abuse. They convene other entities (i.e. Communities that Care (CTC), Pueblo City School District 60, Pueblo Rural District 70, and providers) to strengthen prevention efforts through:

- Reducing the number of new substance abusers through educational interventions;
- Conducting public health surveillance of the opioid overdose epidemic in Pueblo County;
- Provide education activities to increase adherence to opioid prescribing guidelines;
- Develop a variety of prevention trainings and activities targeted at citizens of all ages;
- Develop drug take-back procedures and increase public awareness of the need to do so.

Treatment and Recovery

The main goal of treatment for substance addiction is to help abusers stop using the drug and avoid using it again in the future. At the same time, the disease of addiction is a disease of loneliness and isolation. The facilitator for the treatment and recovery pod will coalesce action teams (i.e. Association for Psychotherapy, Colorado Mental Health Institute Pueblo, Crossroads/Turning Points, Friendly Harbor, Gateway to Success, Health Solutions, Lighthouse, Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Parkview Medical Center Behavioral Health, Personal Impact Foundation, Pueblo County Medical Society, pharmacies and providers, Springbok Health) to fortify treatment and recovery strategies through:

- Detoxification and clinical stabilization;
- Engagement of current users in effective specialized treatment programs;
- Avoiding relapse through on-going support and opportunities to engage with community.

The opioid epidemic is painfully evident in hospital newborn units as babies are born to women addicted to drugs or receiving treatment. The facilitator of this pod will also convene action teams (i.e. ACES, Bluesky, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Department of Social Services, Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC), high risk obstetrics clinics, Illuminate Colorado, hospital neonatal and postnatal and pediatric teams, Pueblo County Health Center, Project LAUNCH, Systems of Care, preschools and day care centers) to focus on:

- Perinatal and neonatal interventions for infants and toddlers, including pharmacologic therapy and treatment programs for substance-addicted mothers;
- Wrap around services for child and family and the foster system.

Harm Reduction

Not all users are committed to quitting. It is generally accepted that harm reduction, with a goal to reduce the social and economic harm associated with drug use, is a legitimate alternative to abstinence-based services to help abusers stay alive, to help them improve their quality of life until they're ready to quit and reduce risk to the community. In January 2016, Pueblo's Human Relations Commission (PHRC) started to explore the social, health, economic, and law enforcement impact of the heroin addiction in Pueblo by bringing many voices together to better understand the problem. They launched what is now the Southern Colorado Harm Reduction Association and, as the volunteer facilitator for this pod will coalesce action teams (CSU-Pueblo Institute of Cannabis Research and SO CO AIDS Project) to focus on:

- Providing addicts with a safe place to discard their used needles and secure replacements.
- Distribution and use of the opioid overdose reversal medication, Naloxone.
- Link consumers to resources and services needed for treatment.

Providers

Providers (physicians, nurses, therapists, and other specialists that provide direct care) have multiple roles to play in changing the trajectory of the substance use crisis, including:

- Limiting the supply of prescription opioids in circulation;
- Raising awareness of the risk of abuse or addiction associated with pharmacological use;
- Identifying and treating substance-dependent individuals, especially through Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT).

Pueblo's SUBSTANCE USE RESPONSE ECOSYSTEM (SURE)

Provider Pod Summary Update

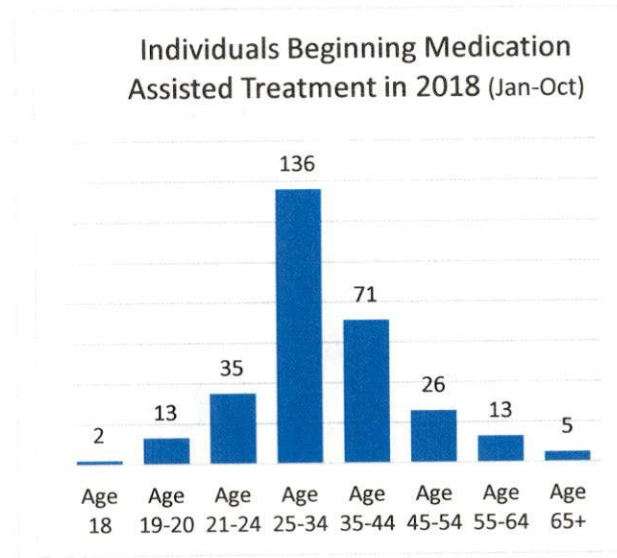
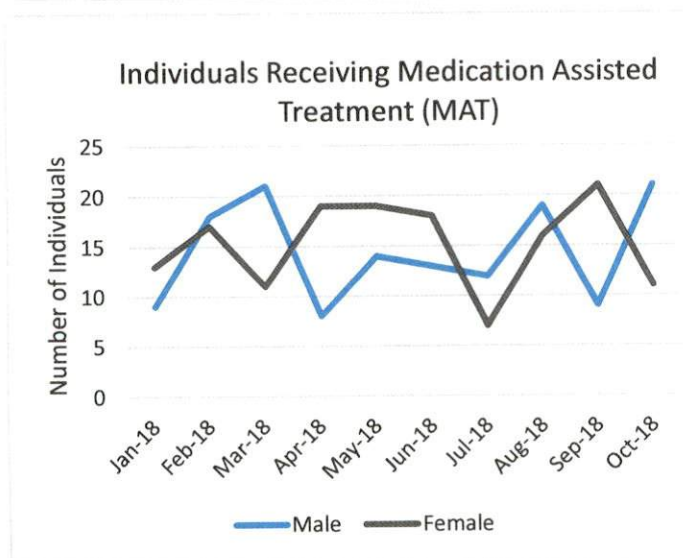
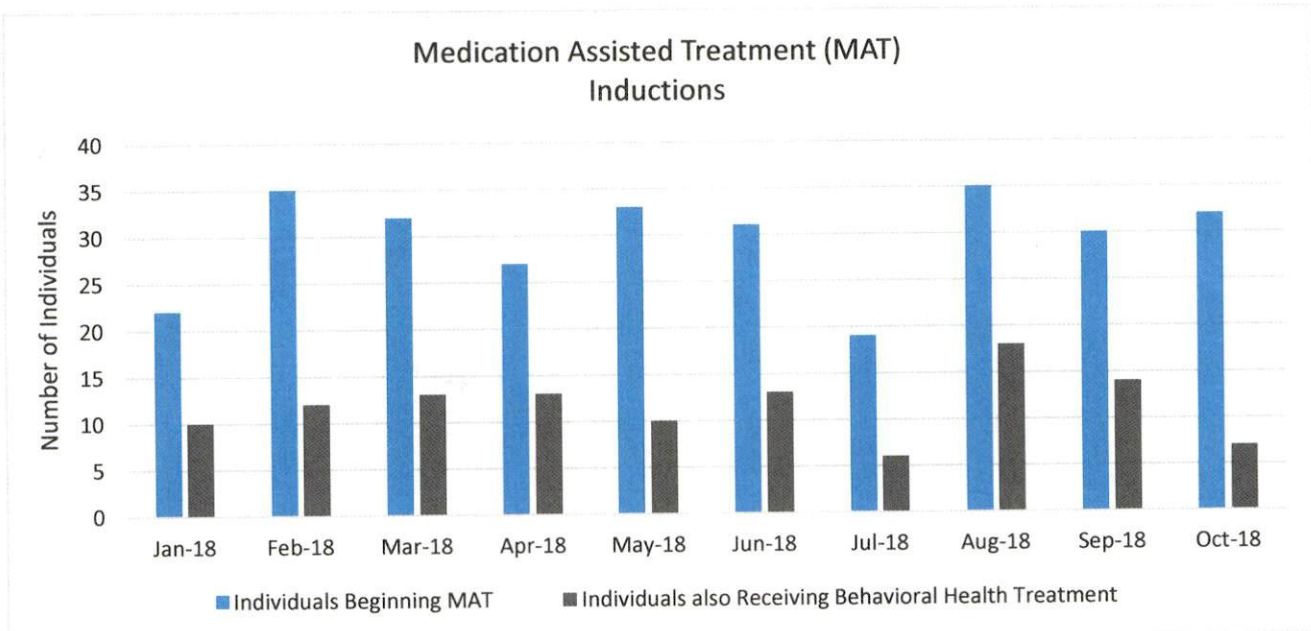
Pod Facilitators:

Shaun Gogarty, MD, Medication Assisted Recovery Center at Health Solutions

Cheryl Law, MNM, MA - Pueblo Medical Society

Provider Pod Objective: To increase the number of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) providers in Pueblo County.

At the beginning of 2018, Pueblo County had 8 MAT providers. Three of the eight had limits of 30 patients each. There has been an **addition of 12 new MAT providers** for a total of 20, 10 of the 20 MAT providers are Nurse Practitioners (NPs), 50%. Additionally, three have increased their limits to 100 patients each.



* Data collected by Pueblo Triple Aim, represents 8 reporting MAT providers from The Medication Assisted Recovery Center (MARC) at Health Solutions and Parkview Medical Center.

... and requires contribution from ALL impacted sectors.

Community

Community leaders from diverse sectors of the community such as youth workers, faith community leaders, school administrators, teachers and counselors, and other committed individuals are joining forces. The facilitator of this pod will convene action teams (i.e. Boys and Girls Club, Catholic Charities and other faith leaders, Center for Health Progress, Child Advocacy Center, Department of Housing, Human Relations Commission, One CommUNITY, Posada, Steel City Supporters, United Way, YWCA) to:

- Host community mobilization events to conduct visioning sessions;
- Conduct educational sessions and informational campaigns throughout Pueblo County;
- Reduce the stigma of addiction so that shame and pressure to keep addictions secret do not prevent people from getting the treatment they need.

Business

Business leaders are positioned to enhance public awareness and engage the community in a dialogue on the issues. By publicly acknowledging issues and frequently publicizing municipal efforts, local leaders can become role models and encourage others to recognize the crisis in their communities. The pod facilitator will connect business leaders (via chambers of commerce, Pueblo Plex, PEDCo, ProPueblo, Rotary and other service clubs) with current, relevant information and ask for:

- Fair hiring practices that are not punitive to recovering addicts;
- EAP and other avenues for employees to engage in treatment and recovery.

Public Policy

The public health crisis has received bipartisan attention, with lawmakers struggling to address what early estimates and local data indicate is a worsening problem. Government leaders (city council, county commissioners, state senators and congresspersons who represent areas in Pueblo County) are participating in the information pipeline with other leaders to:

- Counter the effect of the possible repeal/replace of the Affordable Care Act and the consequent loss of Medicaid programs aimed at addiction treatment and prevention.
- Establish lines of communication with neighboring governments, given that drug trafficking often cuts across local lines.
- Advocate for including addiction treatments in all health insurance plans and removing limits on such treatments.
- Source government funding to adequately finance the response to the opioid crisis.

Public Safety

Emergency and social service professionals know the substance abuse crisis isn't new – it has been a slow-moving disaster for a long time. Local law enforcement leaders recognize and embrace two key facts: addiction is a disease; and it won't get "fixed" with a pair of handcuffs. The facilitator will convene action teams (i.e. AMR, Pueblo Police, Pueblo County Sheriffs, Pueblo Fire, Tenth Judicial District Attorney, other public safety and criminal justice organizations) to:

- Target the supply-side of the drug markets, including prescription fraud;
- Promote a "Good Samaritan Law" to provide amnesty to users who report overdoses;
- Promote diversion based on need and risk assessment so that treatment options are available prior to, during, after, or in lieu of incarceration;
- Promote the use of Naloxone to opioid users by law enforcement agencies/officers;
- Link consumers to resources and services needed for recovery.

Data Stewardship

By all accounts, collection and use of data is central to collective impact efforts. Pueblo Triple Aim will respond to the crisis and:

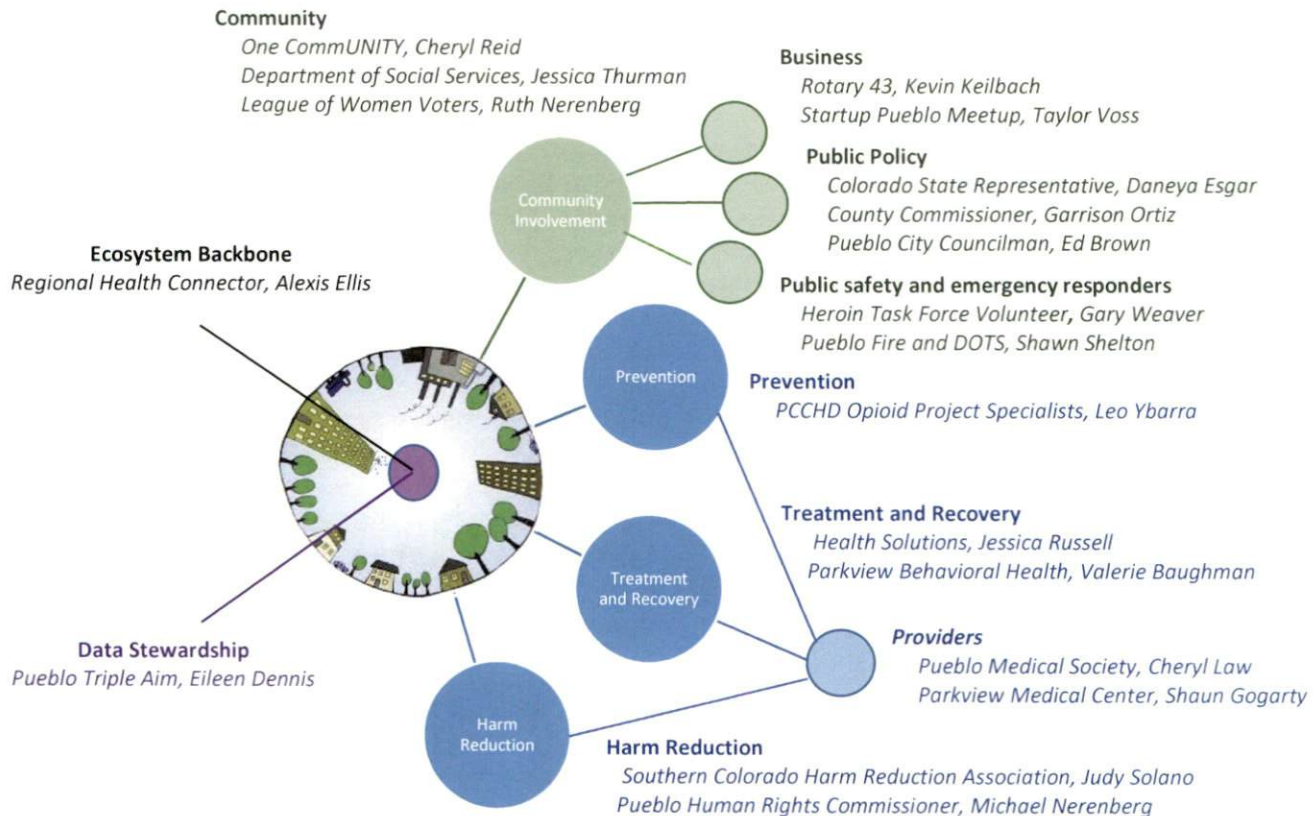
- Disaggregate national, state and regional data to local level figures, when possible.
- Assist pods in identifying metrics that matter and defining data constructs.
- Collect data and develop methods for collecting data where gaps exist.
- Distribute data that will help partners to make data-driven decisions.
- Develop and maintain scorecards to track progress of each pod and aggregate effect.

Pod Facilitators

... help to bring about an outcome by providing unobtrusive assistance and guidance

Action teams are naturally grouped in pods by the work they do; they are planning and executing activities in which they excel. Each pod has one or more established facilitators that convene and integrate the action teams' work and works with other pod leaders in the ecosystem. They are committed to working with a common agenda, shared measures, constant communication, mutually reinforcing program and policy, and alignment of resources.

The Ecosystem's Pod Facilitators



The Ecosystem Backbone

Effective backbone support is a critical condition for collective impact. In fact, it is the number one reason that collective impact initiatives succeed – or fail. As this initiative launches and gets organized, the backbone will prioritize **guiding vision and strategy** and **supporting aligned activities** as two key activities. As the ecosystem matures, the backbone will shift focus to establish **shared measurement practices** on behalf of the collective impact partners. As the ecosystem expands its impact and builds a stronger community presence, the backbone will increase focus on other key external activities such as **building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing funding**.



Joining the Effort

Those wishing to join the coalition or contribute in other ways should contact the Regional Health Connector at the Pueblo City County Health Department (719-583-4512). Volunteers can expect coaching from the backbone, peer support in the ecosystem, and personal reward while helping address a community crisis.