



**COP - R C O R P**

Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program

## ***Core Activity #4: Workforce Development Plan***

**Sandusky County, OH**

**Sandusky Health Partners**

**Sandusky County Public Health**

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) and Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OHIO), through a shared services and braided funding approach, work directly with project directors from the five CoP-RCORP backbone organizations to provide leadership, training, capacity building, technical assistance and evaluation services, and management oversight for project activities. The project directors then bring back the shared learnings and experiences from the community of practice to their respective community-specific consortium, which is responsible for leading project activities within the five Ohio communities. This workforce development plan represents the shared work of the Sandusky Health Partners (local consortium), Sandusky County Public Health (backbone organization), and the COP-RCORP Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation Team (PIRE and OHIO).

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# Workforce Development Plan

## Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (COP-RCORP)

### Sandusky County Health Partners

#### Sandusky County Public Health

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# Introduction

## RCORP-Planning

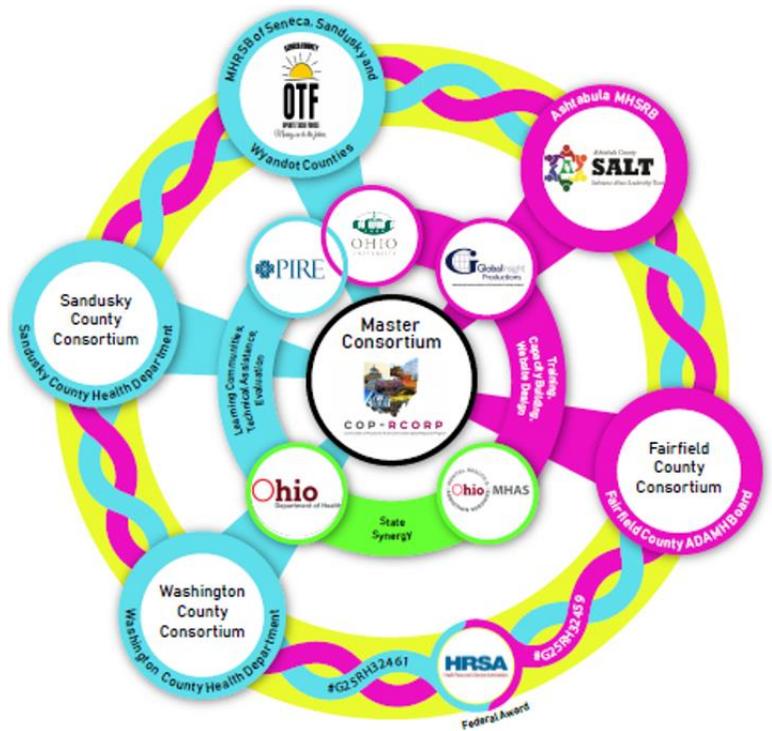
The Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) is a multi-year initiative supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to address barriers to access in rural communities related to substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD). RCORP funds multi-sector consortia to enhance their ability to implement and sustain SUD/OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services in underserved rural areas. To support funded RCORP consortia, HRSA also funded a national technical assistance provider, JBS International.

The overall goal of the planning phase of the RCORP initiative is to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk rural communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortiums to address prevention, treatment, and recovery. Under the one-year planning initiative, grantees are required to complete five core activities. The fifth core activity is to complete a sustainability plan for the consortium. This report contains the local consortia's workforce development plan from the planning phase.

## CoP-RCORP Consortium

The Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (CoP-RCORP) Consortium was created in 2018 when the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) and Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OHIO) and braided together funding from two separate awards (G25RH32461-01-05 & G25RH32459-01-02). PIRE and OHIO then offered equitable access to five backbone organizations in the rural communities of: Ashtabula, Fairfield, Sandusky, Seneca, and Washington Counties. An organizational chart of the braided CoP is included here for quick reference. More information about the organizational structure, co-developmental process, and shared economy may be found on the project website:

<https://www.communitiesofpractice-rcorp.com/>



## Workforce Development Plan Overview

Although Workforce Development is critically important to successfully addressing SUD/OUD, it has not received much attention at the state level in Ohio and there have been few resources devoted at the state and local levels to assessing workforce needs and gaps and to addressing development and retention needs of the SUD/OUD workforce. RCORP-Planning Core Activity 4 provided the Sandusky Health Partners with an opportunity to better understand its current workforce along with needs of the workforce. Because this is a new area, work by the Sandusky County local consortium on its SUD/OUD workforce will be ongoing throughout the RCORP-Implementation project.

The Workforce Development Plan that follows below assesses SUD/ODU workforce needs and gaps, articulates goals and activities designed to facilitate progress toward improving recruitment, training, and retention of the Sandusky County SUD/ODU workforce. The plan also identifies opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels that will contribute to further development of the Sandusky County SUD/ODU workforce. This Workforce Development Plan will result in the formation of three workgroups (subcommittees of the local consortium) that will work on each priority area.

### **Current SUD/ODU Workforce in Sandusky County**

During the process of writing the RCORP-Planning and RCORP-Implementation grant submissions to HRSA, COP-RCORP local consortia gathered data about their community’s existing SUD and OUD workforce. Local consortia drew from these data, as well as data collected as part of their Needs and Gaps Assessment to respond to guiding questions provided by PIRE and OHIO regarding the current needs and gaps of the SUD and OUD workforce. These guiding questions operationalized the workforce plan guidance provided by HRSA and JBS, the national RCORP-Planning technical assistance provider.

Sandusky County has several key health-related and social service initiatives in place to address OUD and has a very high degree of ongoing interagency collaboration to address OUD and addiction more broadly in the county. Chief among these collaborations is the Sandusky Health Partners, a group of hospital CEOs and agency directors who collect data every three years to assess the health needs of the community and set priorities for services and intervention activities. In addition, the Sandusky County Combined Coalition is a local collaboration among 3 existing coalitions (Prevention Partnership, Mental Health and Re-entry) and has significant reach in Sandusky County. These collaborations and networks have enabled consortium leaders to identify key gaps in the community’s opioid response.

Sandusky County currently provides school-based programming, including the PAX program. The county is engaging in ongoing use education on proper prescribing practices and use of OARRS and also provides naloxone to first responders, supported with funds from OhioMHAS. The lead agency for treatment in Sandusky County is Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services, which provides screening and outpatient mental health and substance use treatment services. The county also has several other providers who offer screening, inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance use treatment, detox, and case management. Patients in Sandusky County can access recovery supports through Recovery Engagement Navigators (REN), Bellevue Recovery and Support Services (BRASS), and OhioCAN.

Table 1 lists treatment providers operating in Sandusky County. All but two are located in Fremont. The remainder are in Bellevue. Firelands contracts with Community Health Services to provide integrated health care services. The arrangement is specific to allow for MAT for persons with opiate addictions. CHS also provides dentistry services, expanding these services would also benefit the population served and provide more points of entry to SUD/ODU treatment services.

**Table 1. SUD/ODU Treatment Providers in Sandusky County**

<b>Name of Provider</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Description of Services</b>
Firelands	Fremont, OH	MAT, mental health services, counseling, peer support, assistance housing
No Bars/Oriana House	Fremont, OH	MAT, referral to mental health services, counseling, peer support
ProMedica Memorial Hospital	Fremont, OH	MAT, mental health services, counseling
Sandusky County Public Health	Fremont, Oh	Narcan education and distribution, prevention

Name of Provider	Address	Description of Services
BRASS	Bellevue, OH	Peer support
Lutheran Social Services	Fremont, OH	Mental health services, counseling
Corporate Anointing Ministries	Fremont, OH	Housing, peer support
Surest Path	Fremont, OH	Peer support, detox, housing
The Bellevue Hospital	Bellevue, OH	MAT

Table 2 shows the number and location of SUD/ODU professionals practicing in Sandusky County. Sandusky County has a very small number of psychiatric providers in the county who are accepting new patients and most do not accept insurance. Furthermore, most psychiatrists working in Sandusky County split their time between Sandusky County and other counties, meaning that many are only available in county one or two days per week. This has created significant access issues. Although Sandusky County does have outpatient drug treatment facilities, these facilities have struggled to attract and retain qualified providers. Efforts to integrate behavioral health services and primary care are ongoing, but this remains a key need in Sandusky County.

**Table 2. SUD/ODU Workforce**

Type of Provider	Number of Providers in the Service Area	Location
Prevention Professionals (OCPSA, OCPS, OCPC)	4	Fremont, OH
Psychiatrists	3	Fremont, OH
APRNs	4	Fremont, OH
Psychologists	1	Fremont, OH
Licensed Clinical Social Workers	9	Fremont, OH
Professional Counselors (LPC, LPCC)	14	Fremont, OH
Peer Support Specialists	6	Fremont, OH

Table 3 shows the number of prescribers currently providing MAT. Community Health Services recently began offering Vivitrol services at their clinic in Fremont, and in December 2018, Oriana House began providing services to incarcerated individuals in Sandusky county. The Bellevue Hospital has also expanded services including a suboxone clinic as well as vivitrol administration have increased. There has also been an increase in public health staff working towards prevention credentialing.

**Table 3. Number of Prescribers Currently Providing MAT**

Health Care Providers with a Waiver to Provide MAT	Number of Providers in the Service Area
Physicians	2
Nurse Practitioners	1
Physician Assistants	0
Other Mid-Level Prescribers (CNM, CRNA, etc.)	0

## **Sandusky County SUD/ODU Workforce Needs and Gaps**

### **Recruitment**

There is limited knowledge on the part of the consortium on financial incentives for potential OUD professionals and paraprofessionals, including data on salary, education reimbursements and signing incentives. Other areas that needs further exploration includes benefit comparisons and community level factors that could be attractive to professionals/paraprofessionals moving into the Sandusky County area.

Being a rural community located between Toledo and Cleveland, Sandusky County's major competitors are those agencies located in larger more metropolitan areas. It is also unknown at this time what local colleges and universities have behavioral health courses of study/degrees and have intern/practicum and job placement services. This is an area that needs to be explored.

### **Retention**

The county is a HIPSA high need/shortage area for mental health providers, has a very limited number of physicians who offer MAT, and those who do offer MAT are not accepting new patients. ProMedica Memorial Hospital has begun offering incentives to providers to become MAT providers, but these incentives are not able to match the incentives offered by the Cleveland Clinic, meaning that retention of MAT providers is a critical issue for the Sandusky County community.

### **Training and Retraining**

Securing independently licensed staff to work in rural community behavioral health agencies is a challenge in Sandusky County. Sandusky Health Partners and local providers have identified a need for more training and support in the development of certified peer coaches and more training and professional development opportunities for other OUD professionals.

## **SUD/ODU Workforce Resources and Opportunities in Sandusky County**

### **Partnerships**

One opportunity that may exist is for local partners to create a more united approach in workforce recruitment efforts. This includes working more actively with local colleges and universities; and engaging the local Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development in the process.

### **Federal, State, and Local Programs**

Firelands Counseling and Recovery Services (Fremont and Bellevue) and Community Health Services (Main and West Side Offices) are both National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Approved sites. This includes both mental health and dental services. There are opportunities for additional NHSC sites in Sandusky County.

Sandusky County Public Health and the Prevention Partnership Coalition have been proactive to increase the number of prevention specialists in the area, and to expand evidence-based prevention services. Recently awarded SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework – Partnerships for Success grant, they hope to expand prevention resources, trainings, programs, and services across the region.

## **SUD/ODU Workforce Goals for Sandusky County**

Preliminary goals for Sandusky County to improve recruitment, training, and retention of its SUD/ODU workforce follow below. As noted above, workforce development is a new area for Sandusky County and its stakeholders and additional planning work is needed. The goals below will be addressed during the three-year RCORP-Implementation project by creating three workgroups that will focus on workforce strategic planning

related to provider recruitment, training, and retention. A key outcome of the RCORP-Planning grant has been a shared commitment by Sandusky County consortium to monitor and address SUD/ODU workforce issues through developing, operationalizing, and sustaining workgroups focused on these three areas of workforce development.

## **Recruitment**

Sandusky Health Partners will continue to assess workforce development in the areas of recruitment and integration of SUD providers. The consortium will explore community-level factors that could attract professionals and paraprofessionals moving into the Sandusky County area.

Sandusky County is located within 50 miles several large colleges and universities and several community colleges. The consortium will engage in fact-finding activities to identify existing degree or certification programs at local colleges and universities, as well as internships, practicums, and job placement services that could potentially supply the OUD workforce in Sandusky County.

One of the local goals of the HRSA RCORP-Implementation project will be to increase the number of Certified Peer Supports in the Sandusky County community. This will provide the much-needed peer to peer support that is needed as individuals are on the path to long-term recovery.

## **Retention**

The consortium will design and implement two surveys to better understand existing incentives for professionals and paraprofessionals to continue working in the SUD/ODU field. One survey will focus on training and professional development needs, and the other will consider salary and benefits. The consortium also will explore how to increase the number of NHSC sites in Sandusky County and it is anticipated that this will support improved provider retention.

## **Training and Retraining**

Growth and advancement opportunities exist via individual employers through agency specific trainings, mentoring, on-the-job-training and through webinars. There has been an emphasis over the past several years to bring prevention, treatment and recovery care trainings to the county; this helps in securing the required CEUs for professionals that may sometimes be difficult obtain.

The consortium will continue to explore areas of need related to training new and existing substance use disorder providers. Sandusky County Health Partners will implement a survey at the employee level on desired training topics and opportunities and then will use those data to improve the training and retraining of the area SUD/ODU workforce.

## **Federal, State, and Local Program Participation**

Although Sandusky County currently has a number of NHSC-certified sites, Sandusky County Health Partners will research National Health Service Corps programs, educate local partners on the benefits of the NHSC, and explore obtaining eligibility for additional sites within Sandusky County to place NHSC clinicians. This information will be shared with area SUD/ODU providers that would potentially meet the requirements. The consortium will offer assistance with the application process.

## **Partnership Development**

The consortium will outreach to area colleges and universities to partner on recruitment efforts. The consortium will also partner with the Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce to partner on recruitment efforts. Work will be ongoing to strengthen existing partnerships and to develop new partnerships to better support Sandusky County's SUD/ODU workforce.

## **Ongoing Monitoring of Labor Market Trends and Data**

This effort was the first time in Sandusky County that an environmental scan of the community's SUD/ODU workforce had been completed. Monitoring will be ongoing and future work also will identify and utilize labor-market data as well as utilize ongoing epidemiological data about drug use and other related public health threats. This approach will help the Sandusky County COP-RCORP consortium understand employment trends along the County's healthcare and SUD workforces and will help ensure that the reach and competencies of its SUD/ODU workforce can address emerging public health concerns related to SUD/ODU in the future.

## **Conclusions and Next Steps**

Project leads from the consortium and backbone organization reviewed the available data, identified partners and stakeholders to engage to form workgroups, and developed a set of overarching goals to explore and further refine. The consortium has identified seven potential organizational partners within their community who may contribute to operationalizing the workforce development plan. (Appendix A lists these organizational partners and describes their roles in the community's OUD workforce.)

Having identified key stakeholders and community needs, the Sandusky Health Partners Force and local partners will utilize this report to develop concrete objectives and metrics to advance Sandusky County's SUD/ODU workforce. This will be an iterative process informed by conversations with community members, organizational partners, service providers, and other impacted populations. Key next steps include forming a workforce development team and three workgroups (corresponding to each of the identified workforce goals of recruitment, retention, and training) that will develop action plans for each goal and objective that include measurable and time-bound indicators of progress. A template for this action plan is included in Appendix B. COP-RCORP and local consortium efforts on workforce development will continue during the RCORP-Implementation project.

## APPENDIX A: Environmental Scan of Sandusky County's SUD/OD Workforce

Organization	Sector	Name of Contact	Area: Prevention, Treatment, and/or Recovery	What does this organization contribute to your community's workforce plan? Why is this individual key to your community's workforce plan?
Sandusky County Area Health Education Centers	Area Health Education Centers	Bethany Brown	Treatment	Bethany Brown sits on the Corporate Board of Sandusky Area Health Education Centers (SAHEC), which includes the following communities, Ottawa, Wood Sandusky, Erie, Seneca and Huron. Their goal is to connect students to careers, professionals to communities and communities to better health. SAHEC provides education opportunities in underserved areas and facilitates teaching, fosters networking and collaboration in communities and between academic health centers and communities.
Terra State Community College	State universities, community colleges, and vocational schools	Deb Agee	Prevention	Deb Agee works with the local college to provide nursing students clinical experiences in public health which includes education and skill development in areas related to prevention and harm reduction.
ProMedica Memorial Hospital	Providers and provider associations	Jeff Vogel	Treatment	ProMedica Memorial is the largest area hospital; and through the ProMedica Hospital System, they have academic affiliation with The University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences.
Firelands Regional Medical System	Providers and provider associations	Tim Wise	Treatment and Recovery	Firelands Regional Medical Center has 11 outpatient behavioral health locations throughout Erie, Huron, Ottawa, Sandusky, Lorain, Seneca and Wyandot counties. This regional presence can help to attract and build the local rural workforce.
Economic Development Corporation	Area employers, local Chambers of Commerce, and small business associations	Beth Hannam	none	This agency focuses on businesses that are looking to locate/relocate or to expand, offering companies access to a large pool of talented workforce; and excellent education options. They could be a informative partner as we implement workforce development strategies.

Organization	Sector	Name of Contact	Area: Prevention, Treatment, and/or Recovery	What does this organization contribute to your community's workforce plan? Why is this individual key to your community's workforce plan?
Chamber of Commerce	Area employers, local Chambers of Commerce, and small business associations	Director	none	The Chamber is a leader of business advocacy and serve as an informational resource for agriculture, industry, retail and service. They help to foster community partnerships in promoting our area as a better place to work, live and raise our families
MHR SB/SSW	Government Agency	Mircea Handru	Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery	Plans, evaluates, monitors and funds AOD services in the community.

## APPENDIX B: Workforce Strategic Planning Template

### Activity Table

<b>Goal:</b>						
<b>Objective:</b>						
<b>Strategy</b>						
Activities	Timeline		Responsible Party	External Partners	Cost and Possible Funding	Metrics/ Indicators of Progress
	Start Date	End Date				