

# Appendix 1: What Is MOAPC?

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## Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (MOAPC)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services (BSAS), has awarded 18 communities, covering more than 90 municipalities, a total of \$1.8 million in grant funding annually to address opioid misuse, abuse, and overdose across the Commonwealth. This is a three-year grant, with options to renew, making it possible for grantees to be funded until 2020. Funds were disseminated through a statewide competitive bid process (see Appendix 7 for the complete list of funded grantees). This initiative is called the Massachusetts Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative (MOAPC).

The purpose of the MOAPC funding is to implement local policy, practice, systems, and environmental change to achieve the following objectives:

- Prevent the misuse and abuse of opioids (including first use)
- Prevent or reduce unintentional deaths and nonfatal hospital events associated with opioid poisonings
- Increase both the number and the capacity of municipalities across the Commonwealth who are addressing these issues

This initiative is part of a comprehensive approach to substance abuse prevention, which includes a three-year grant (the Strategic Prevention Framework–Partnership For Success II grant) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to prevent prescription drug misuse and abuse among persons ages 12–25 in high-need Massachusetts communities. BSAS also continues to fund municipalities across the state to implement strategies to reduce underage drinking.

The misuse and abuse of opioids (a category of drugs that includes both prescription pain relievers and heroin) is a major preventable cause of overdose and death in Massachusetts. Cities and towns throughout the state are suffering the consequences of what former Governor Deval Patrick declared a public health crisis. From 2000 to 2012, fatal opioid overdoses increased 90 percent in Massachusetts, according to the Department of Public Health.<sup>5</sup> The toll of opioid abuse is hard to quantify; families and entire communities suffer when loved ones, coworkers, and neighbors struggle with addiction. The consequences on the health care and criminal justice systems are tremendous, while school and workplace disruptions are placing more burdens on staff and employers. This pervasive and destructive problem requires a multi-fold approach in order to reduce the toll.

Prevention of opioid misuse and abuse is critical to the health and well-being of the Commonwealth. One key component of prevention is to increase understanding among youth, parents, and prescribers of the potential for the misuse and abuse of pain medication, while raising awareness of the frequent progression from prescription drug abuse to heroin use. The stigma of addiction also needs to be addressed, because shame and secrecy discourage users from seeking care and treatment. Preventing drug overdoses must also be a priority so that individuals struggling with addiction are able to receive treatment. All MOAPC grantees work with community leaders to make policy and practice changes that can sustain these vital efforts. While the scope of the opioid problem is immense, MOAPC coalitions aim to make a significant impact by reducing deaths through preventing overdoses, addressing stigma, and

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<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Department of Public Health. (April 2014). *Fatal Opioid-related Overdoses among MA Residents, 2000–2013*. Injury Surveillance Program, Bureau of Health Information, Statistics, Research, and Evaluation. Boston, MA: Author.

implementing effective education and environmental prevention strategies in the communities most affected by opioid use.

BSAS began funding the grantees in July 2013. Grants were awarded to a mix of large municipalities (e.g., Boston), clusters of cities or towns, and existing Public Health Districts/Alliances. The MOAPC-funded communities are required to use a federally approved public health approach, SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), which consists of five steps (Assessment, Capacity Building, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation), toward achieving their goals. This process ensures that grantees appropriately understand and define the problem in their community and address it in collaboration with a strong coalition made up of civic and community leaders and concerned residents. The SPF steps are guided by the principles of cultural competence and are designed to help communities build the infrastructure necessary for effective and sustainable prevention. When selecting strategies, grantees work closely with BSAS to ensure that their approach is based on evidence, is appropriate for their community, and contributes to some form of practice or policy change in order to ensure that the impact is long-lasting and sustainable regardless of future grant funding.

Some strategies currently being implemented include the following:

- Social marketing campaigns to address misconceptions around prescription drug misuse
- Providing education on the proper storage and disposal of prescription drugs
- Encouraging Prescription Monitoring Program enrollment by health care providers
- Parent outreach and education
- Intervening with people being released from prison and detox to prevent overdose after a period of abstinence
- Focus on overdose reversals through the distribution of Naloxone, also known as Narcan
- Increasing use of emergency services (calling 911) during an overdose
- Working with and training physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, and pharmacists on safe prescribing habits
- Implementation of substance use/abuse Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) in hospitals, schools, community health centers, and other locations

Presently, 18 grants have been awarded to more than 100 cities and towns across the state. See Appendix 7 for a complete list of municipalities awarded funding.

All MOAPC grantees' programs are being carefully evaluated and have shown significant progress in their first year of funding. As MOAPC expands to more communities, the evidence and lessons learned will be shared among sites to ensure success in addressing this serious public health epidemic.

For more information about the MOAPC grant, visit <http://masstapp.edc.org/massachusetts-opioid-abuse-prevention-collaborative>

For more information about SAMHSA's SPF model, visit <http://masstapp.edc.org/prevention-tools>