



Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance (QHSUA) Action Plan – Proposed for 2022-2023

www.QHSUA.org

Overall Goals of the Alliance:

In the 15-town QHSUA service area, we will: **1)** Prevent and reduce substance use disorders; **2)** Reduce health problems and stigma associated with substance use including overdose deaths, injuries, chronic illnesses, & discrimination towards persons with substance use disorders and/or who are in recovery; **3)** Increase treatment & recovery rates via expanded community education and access to appropriate and culturally relevant services; **4)** Develop, implement, and evaluate efforts to promote behavioral health equity and to combat existing racial, ethnic, gender and other disparities in health; build skills in cultural humility and restorative justice into our work.

Prevention & Education Goal One

Prevent & Reduce
Substance Use Disorders

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

- 1.1 Reduce over-prescribing of opioids, educate providers on alternative pain management options.
- 1.2 Provide ongoing education about benefits of reduced youth access to addictive substances via safe storage and disposal.
- 1.3 With Drug Free Communities and SAMHSA grants, support schools and community groups to adopt evidence-based prevention curricula; engage school staff in QHSUA meetings & activities; seek resources to support evidence-based prevention; help schools and community partners to collect, share, and act on student health risk data.
- 1.4 Educate parents, grandparents, and community stakeholders to prevent and reduce youth nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use; educate communities about links between youth substance use and mental health needs; partner with communities to address short and long-term community impacts of COVID-19.
- 1.5 Educate local, statewide, and federal officials about effective policies and systems that support substance use prevention; share local data findings and community needs; educate about health and social/emotional risks faced by youth and young adults from substance use.
- 1.6 Collaborate with prevention coalitions throughout western and central Mass to co-sponsor regional trainings, community outreach and communications activities, and educational events.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Financial support for costs of trainings for providers and community partners
- Time for meetings/trainings with medical staff and school personnel
- Time to conduct outreach to medical providers and/or school personnel to encourage participation in trainings, meetings and QHSUA activities
- Meeting/training spaces & online training capacity
- Curriculum materials, training, and other resources for adoption of effective prevention programs
- Local data findings
- Research on effective prevention policies, systems, and programs to share with policy-makers

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & TARGET AUDIENCES: Schools / Prescribers of Medications / Pharmacists / Businesses / Parents / Grandparents
Adults Working with Youth / Youth-Serving Organizations / Local, State, & Federal Policy-Makers / Prevention Coalitions in Western & Central Massachusetts

Awareness & Early Intervention

Goal Two

Reduce health problems and stigma associated with substance use, including deaths from overdoses, injuries, discrimination about substance use and users, and chronic illnesses.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

- 2.1 Plan and implement activities that address awareness and early intervention for all substances including nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, prescription drugs, and opioids.
- 2.2 Co-plan and deliver community trainings in how to obtain & use nasal Narcan for overdose intervention.
- 2.3 Co-plan & conduct events to recognize individual and community-wide grief and losses from the impacts of substance use.
- 2.4 Expand access and knowledge of Narcan in local pharmacies and other business/employer settings.
- 2.5 Support Public Safety and First Responders being trained in the use and distribution of Narcan.
- 2.6 Develop education, outreach, and media activities to reduce stigma/shame, anxiety, and isolation around substance use; educate providers and the wider community about negative impacts of stigma.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Trainers and materials to educate communities about the range of addictive substances and the impacts on physical and mental health
- Nasal Narcan trainers
- Meeting spaces, outreach and program publicity, media support, program speakers for community events and vigils
- Support for local pharmacies and other businesses to have Narcan supplies available on site; training for site staff

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & TARGET AUDIENCES: Family Members of Consumers with Substance use Disorders / Emergency Responders & Public Safety Personnel Clergy / Law Enforcement / Food Pantries, Teen Centers, Housing Sites / Social Service & Treatment Provider Agencies

Treatment & Recovery

Goal Three

Increase treatment and recovery rates via expanded community education and increased access to services

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

- 3.1 Distribute resource information about local treatment and recovery support services to local Police, EMS, schools, libraries, town officials, community agencies; post and share information on websites and social media.
- 3.2 Support increased access to public transportation to facilitate participation in group and individual recovery support services, social events, and local volunteer opportunities.
- 3.3 Expand online/telehealth treatment and follow-up; promote and provide access to virtual recovery meetings and events.
- 3.4 Increase availability of Medication for Opioid Use Disorders (MOUD); increase local access to NA, AA, Al-Anon & Nar-Anon.
- 3.5 Support, co-sponsor activities in, and promote the services of the Ware Regional Recovery Center.
- 3.6 Co-plan, support, & educate about public health benefits of mobile Harm Reduction; collaborate with Tapestry, Mas Dept of Public Health, and local Boards of Health to expand access to mobile harm reduction services in Quaboag Hills communities.
- 3.7 Partner with Hampshire HOPE, business associations, and local businesses/employers to expand implementation of the "Recovery Supportive Workplaces" initiative.
- 3.8 Support expanded access to physical and mental wellness services, complementary therapies, and alternative pain management options for persons in recovery and their allies.

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Local & statewide print and online educational materials
- Collaboration with local transportation resources and services
- Advocacy with providers and MDPH for additional resources in region
- Meeting space and volunteers for NA, AA, Al-Anon and NA meetings
- Outreach and collaboration with complementary therapy providers
- Media materials and communications/marketing plan to reduce stigma
- Joint efforts with partners, state policy makers to expand insurance coverage

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & TARGET AUDIENCES: Health Care Providers / Treatment Providers / Legislators / First Responders & Public safety Personnel Recovery Centers & Recovery Coaches / Peer Recovery Networks, Meetings, & Events / District Attorneys / Health Care Insurers & Health Insurance Regulators Sheriffs' Departments / Transportation Providers