

September is Mental Health Recovery Month in Kansas and Across the Nation. Every September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), sponsors National Recovery Month to increase awareness of behavioral health conditions. Mental and substance use disorders are prevalent in Kansas communities, and the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) believes it's imperative that individuals understand how and where to seek help.

KDADS supports programs in prevention, treatment and recovery. Focus on recovery includes initiatives that provide one-to-one support services from peers who have been successful in the recovery process in Kansas communities. These services can effectively extend the reach of treatment beyond the clinical setting into the everyday environment. "Individuals who experience a mental health, substance use and/or gambling disorder often feel isolated and alone. Too many people are unaware that prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover," said KDADS Secretary Tim Keck.

KDADS is working to incorporate peer support services across all of the state's behavioral health systems:

Consumer Run Organizations (CROs) are dedicated to improving the lives of adults with mental health issues using peer support. CROs provide one-on-one and group peer supports, self-help groups, employment support, life-skills training, health and wellness activities and support for individuals who are transitioning from state institutions to living in the community.

Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs) provide training for law enforcement to help deal with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis they encounter. Many times this training allows individuals to be diverted from jail to treatment settings, helping them to stabilize and remain in the community.

An important focus for KDADS is increasing peer and family supports for children with mental health needs. This is critical in engaging children and families while building the relationships needed to improve children's overall health. Working with state's Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) on existing programs and developing new services to meet the needs of Kansas families KDADS is expanding the services provided in the home, community settings and schools. KDADS is also implementing System of Care grant funding in pilot areas to fill gaps in service for youth with a serious emotional disturbance.

KDADS takes a recovery-oriented approach to substance use disorder treatment

for those with drug and alcohol problems, employing a coordinated network of community-based services and person-centered supports and builds on the strengths and resilience of individuals, families and communities to achieve abstinence and improved health, wellness and quality of life.

Kansas received a grant from SAMHSA earlier this year to fund treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) in the state and to reduce the number of persons with OUD and the number of opioid overdoses-related deaths through prevention, treatment and recovery activities.

Prevention coalitions across the state are diligently working to reduce underage drinking, substance abuse, suicide and other behavioral health issues. These KDADS-funded communities are providing education and awareness to schools, parents, law enforcement and other community members.

KDADS funds problem gambling services including treatment with not out-of-pocket expense for gamblers and their concerned friends and families, and supports community-based task forces that provide education and a helpline for crisis services, ensuring that information on problem gambling prevention and treatment services are available to Kansans.

Suicide prevention efforts statewide are supported through community prevention coalition efforts and the Kansas Suicide Hotline, which is operated at Headquarters Counseling Center in Lawrence. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Kansans ages 15-44. Thousands of Kansans' lives have been transformed through recovery. Since these successes often go unnoticed by the broader population, September is an opportunity to share the successes of recovery and inform communities of available programs and services. Sharing stories of success helps to increase awareness and furthers a greater understanding about mental health, substance use and gambling disorder. "Mental health, substance use and gambling disorders can be treated just as successfully as other health issues such as heart disease and diabetes. Support from families and communities is essential to successful recovery from any health condition," Secretary Keck said. "KDADS believes in recovery from a mental health, substance use and/or gambling disorder. It can be done.