



## Camden County Opioid Strategic Action Plan 2024

### **Opioid Advisory Council**

Camden County's Opioid Advisory Council was formed in March of 2022. The Advisory Council was established to provide input, advice, and recommendations on the disbursement of settlement funds, to address the epidemic of opioids and its effects on the residents of the County. Advisory Council members meet regularly and represent diverse, strategic interests focused on increasing awareness, decreasing stigma, increasing access to care, and improving recovery support in Camden County.

The Camden County Addiction Awareness Task Force, Office of Mental Health & Addiction, Camden County Prosecutor's Office and County Administration are key stakeholders who ensure that the vision, mission, and goals of the Advisory Council are successfully implemented.

### **Vision:**

To facilitate appropriate prevention, educational and individualized substance misuse and recovery support services to Camden County residents struggling with substance use, misuse, and co-occurring morbidities for a better quality of life.

### **Mission:**

To provide Camden County residents with seamless processes that link them to available services, while reducing stigma and any other barriers that impede access to recovery.

### **Funded Services:**

Service lines will be focused, targeted, evidence-based, and aimed at reducing gaps in treatment and increasing recovery support services, to ensure access to resources specific to the needs of the individual struggling with opioid use disorder.

The County will focus on 5 key areas:

1. Prevention / Education
2. Early Intervention
3. Treatment
4. Recovery Supports
5. Data Analysis

These 5 key areas will be a critical part of the County's collective efforts that will ultimately:

1. Reduce first use of opioids through prevention / education efforts, particularly targeted towards youth.
2. Intervene earlier in the cycle of addiction (e.g., earlier in the substance misuse related arrest sequence).
3. Reduce any barriers to treatment (e.g., issues of identification, co-occurring issues).
4. Improve and enhance recovery supports that add to the quality of life of individuals at all stages of recovery (early through long-term).



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### Goals:

1. Prevention / Education
  - a. The NOPE (Narcotics Overdose Prevention & Education) program will primarily be focused on youth and targeted education in schools.
  - b. The County's Fentanyl Awareness Campaign will be expanded.
  - c. The County will increase outreach efforts directed to the senior citizen community -- an often-underserved demographic -- with a senior substance abuse education / prevention program.
  - d. The County will offer a Strengthening Families program that targets families with substance use disorders.
2. Early Intervention
  - a. The Project SAVE program will be expanded to offer early intervention to persons with co-occurring mental health and substance misuse disorders.
  - b. The County will expand the school behavioral health clearance program to further reduce the number of youth visiting emergency rooms who might be better served in outpatient settings.
  - c. The County will expand the Certified Peers Recovery Specialists to include all of our shelters, as data shows that unhoused individuals are at significantly greater risk for overdose and overdose fatalities than those who are housed. The CPRS will focus on harm reduction, linking individuals to care, and offering peer-to-peer support.
3. Treatment
  - a. The County will ensure that anyone visiting our Mental Health Crisis Center (the busiest in the State) will have case management follow-up post evaluation and discharge.
  - b. The County will assist individuals who are not significantly ID'd and ensure that this barrier to care is eliminated.
4. Recovery Supports
  - a. The County will expand our REAL Sports Program offerings.
  - b. The County will host the Recovery Rocks Concert event for persons in recovery, to foster community support, engagement, and encouragement to individuals who are entering or in long-term recovery.
  - c. The County will hold its annual memorial event centered around International Overdose Awareness Day that combines an observance of the losses our residents suffered and hope that the future will be less painful and brighter for all those affected by substance abuse.
  - d. The County will hold an annual softball tournament in September during Recovery Month that acknowledges the struggle of overcoming addiction and highlights the success of recovery.
5. Evidence-Based Data Collection
  - a. The County will hire a data analyst who will assist the Office of Mental Health & Addiction in securing data from funded programs and provide analysis of the successes as well as identify where more attention may be needed.



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### **Marketing Plan:**

Camden County’s Fentanyl Awareness Campaign was created to lower the rates of overdoses and deaths caused by the fentanyl epidemic in our communities through education and awareness. The campaign is built to educate youth, current and potential recreational users on the dangers of fentanyl-laced street drugs and prescription pharmaceuticals. Advertisements are placed in a variety of media outlets including outdoor billboards, digital and social media, print publications, and more. Campaign materials are sent out to local municipalities, schools, and other organizations, and a 30-second PSA aired on network television and social platforms to broaden the reach and expand the impact of the campaign’s message. The County will continue its comprehensive public education and media campaigns, such as “Fentanyl Is Fatal” and others aimed at discouraging opioid abuse, preventing overdose, and reducing stigma associated with Opioid Use Disorder. To reach the greatest number of residents, marketing strategies will continue to utilize existing social media at the county level, along with the Camden County website, newsletters at partnering community-based agencies and municipalities, as well as presence and disbursement of materials at numerous community events across Camden County throughout the year.

Camden County is planning to launch a new anti-stigma campaign this year – “Addiction Doesn't Discriminate Why Should You?” – aimed in destigmatizing the disease of addiction including changing our vocabulary to help heal those still struggling or in recovery. We also held our inaugural “Recovery Rocks!” concert which celebrates community members in recovery with a sober tailgate party, food, and refreshments and a fellowship meeting as part of the summer concert series at Cooper River Park.

Every year, Camden County sponsors the “Remembrance and Hope Memorial Vigil” to raise awareness of the crisis we are facing within our community on a personal level. At this event, families and friends are invited to remember the loved ones we have lost and spread the message of hope to those still fighting the disease of addiction.

As the 2024 New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) Annual Meeting, Camden County sponsored the workshop, “Camden County’s Innovative Long Term Recovery Initiative Through R.E.A.L. Sports.” The panelists discussed how Camden County Board of Commissioners has created a social, athletic, and recreational stigma-free environment for those in long-term recovery through its R.E.A.L. Sports initiative. The workshop highlighted the key features and successes of this program, including real-world examples of the positive effects that R.E.A.L. Sports has had on members in the recovery community in Camden County.