
CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cross-Systems Initiative Name: Opioid Response

Lead(s): Ellen Volo

Date: March 10, 2025

CROSS-SYSTEMS INITIATIVE PLAN REPORT

GOALS

Goal 1: Increase Task Force members' awareness of opioid response/behavioral health equity strategies and best practices

Goal 1 Progress:

Throughout 2024, several opioid response/behavioral health equity strategies and best practices were shared with Opioid and Substance Use Task Force members and other stakeholders. Materials shared include resource guides and webinars focusing on opioid response efforts and behavioral health equity, as well as national opioid prevention, treatment, and harm reduction resources available in languages other than English and materials geared toward youth. Notably, in 2024 more national resources became available in languages other than English, which was very helpful in the County's local opioid response effort as it had been difficult to find such materials in prior years. These materials were shared with Task Force members and external stakeholders, and also highlighted in other communication materials, including this [County NewsCenter article](#). Additionally in 2024, an opioid overdose and naloxone education video, created by the Fairfax-Falls Church CSB and Channel 16, was finalized and made available to internal and external stakeholders in English and Spanish on the [County's Opioid Topic web page](#).

Goal 2: Utilize demographic analysis of local opioid overdose public health data to understand local trends and target and improve interventions

Goal 2 Progress:

The primary public health data points used to track local opioid overdose trends in the Fairfax Health District (inclusive of the County of Fairfax and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church) are emergency department visits for non-fatal opioid overdoses (source: Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE) and fatal opioid overdoses (source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), Virginia Department of Health). This data is made available to the public via the Fairfax Opioid Overdose Dashboard. The Dashboard includes demographic analysis of non-fatal and fatal opioid overdoses by age, gender, race, and ethnicity. The Fairfax Health Department Division of Epidemiology and Population Health

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obtains this demographic information from the above-noted sources, conducts the analysis, and then updates the Dashboard; non-fatal opioid overdose data is updated monthly and fatal opioid overdose data is updated quarterly upon release from OCME.

In addition to these periodic Dashboard updates, data is regularly included in presentations for community groups, communications materials, memos, and grant applications. It is also used regularly by a wide range of stakeholders involved in the County's opioid response (including internal and external organizations) to inform the development of new programs/activities, optimize work underway, monitor trends, identify opportunities to enhance staff knowledge/capacity to support individuals with opioid use disorders, and compare what they are observing from their unique vantage point to Fairfax Health District-wide data (for example, data on overdoses by age group and year on slides 2 and 4 of the Dashboard has been particularly helpful in 2024 as internal and external stakeholders work to address opioid overdose among youth ages 0 to 17).

Goal 3: Utilize opioid settlement funds to expand/enhance services for highly impacted/at risk populations

Goal 3 Progress:

A significant focus in CY 2024 has been expanding/improving prevention activities and treatment options/capacity through the implementation of opioid settlement-funded projects. The County currently has eight opioid settlement-funded projects; the regional youth detox/crisis stabilization project awarded funding by the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) in spring 2023 and seven projects that were identified through a County process and approved by the Board of Supervisors in Fall 2023. All of these projects aim to expand/enhance services for youth and individuals involved with the criminal justice system. As this [Project Status Chart](#) demonstrates, substantial progress has been made on implementation. For the two projects that involve hiring staff, the positions have been filled and services started in summer 2024 (Youth Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion (YMAT) and Fairfax Recovery Court 18-25 Year Old Track). The other six projects involve procurement which has been successfully completed in five out of six projects. The outstanding project is the regional youth detox/crisis stabilization services project, led by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) Northern Virginia Regional Projects Office. It has been very challenging to find a vendor to provide this critical service and currently, a third request for proposal process is underway.

These projects are in varying stages of implementation and significant work remains ahead in 2025 to fully launch/optimize the projects. As such, performance measurement data for CY 2024 is not yet available, but is anticipated to be available in 2025. The performance measures will be reviewed to monitor the extent to which services are being utilized and achieving the intended

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goals. This review will be done in the context of local opioid overdose trends and identified gaps/needs.

The opioid settlements continue to be extremely complex with several moving pieces, including multiple outstanding settlements that have not yet reached payment phase. The [current projected](#) funding through FY 2038 will vary significantly year to year and is subject to downward revision (some settlements have been structured to incentivize companies to prepay, thereby reducing their future year payments). As such, it is necessary to reserve available opioid settlement funds to ensure long-term sustainability of the currently funded projects with recurring costs as well as one-time projects that may prove worthwhile to extend/augment. Staff will continue to monitor incoming opioid settlement dollars to determine when it might be appropriate to consider another County process to identify additional projects for funding.