

# Three Year Strategic Plan: Year Two in Review

February 2022

## Focus Area One: Utilize Prevention and Education Efforts to Reduce Opioid Misuse and its Harmful Effects Throughout the City of Alexandria

### **Goal 1: Create and maintain continuing education opportunities and resources for prescribers and providers across the City**

- Reduce high-risk opioid prescribing through provider education and guidelines
  - **Partially Completed.** Covid Impact: This initiative was started by the Alexandria Health Department and currently suspended due to Covid-19.
- Create and release a statement/policy regarding safe needle disposal; work with providers and prescribers to promote with patients
  - **Completed.** Covid Impact: Currently it is a challenge to access the needle disposal box as Covid precautions restrict access to the hospital.
- Work with the veterinary community to educate patients about the harm of opioids, drug take back opportunities and provide drug disposal kits
  - **Not Completed.**

### **Goal 2: Provide education and support to the community around opioid use and abuse**

- Partner with Homeowners Associations, Civic Associations and others to offer educational programs regarding the signs and dangers of opioid abuse, Narcan and treatment resources
  - **Partially Completed, ongoing.**
- Develop a presence at citywide community events with educational materials, Narcan and treatment information
  - **Completed, ongoing. This year the OWG participated in National Night Out, Overdose Awareness Day and several other community wide events. Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA) will be participating in the upcoming Community Cookouts.**
- Conduct at least one town hall/community conversation per year
  - **Partially Completed, ongoing.** SAPCA conducted Healthy Conversations and several community conversation events over Zoom this past year. This work will continue in 2022.
- Update City's opioid website and communication plan
  - **Completed, ongoing.**
- Partner with the faith-based community to provide education and support

- **Not Completed.**
- Work with local media outlets to promote stories and materials related to opioid misuse
  - **Completed, on-going.** The OWG and the work being accomplished was featured this year in The Zebra, The Alexandria Gazette, The Washington Post, News 9, News 7, NPR, WTOG, and a Department of Justice publication.

### **Goal 3: Implement comprehensive school-based prevention programs aimed at education about the dangers of opioids and OTC medication**

- Attend school-based events (e.g., Back to School nights) to educate students, parents and staff
  - **Completed, on-going.** Covid Impact: This year school events and in person education has been challenged by ongoing Covid changes to school operations. SAPCA and Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) have continued to provide education to students and parents throughout the year, featuring Red Ribbon Week and ongoing weekend educational classes for students and their families.
- Partner with the ACPS FACE Program to bring opioid prevention education to community meetings
  - **Not completed.**
- Work with ACPS, colleges in the city and the private school community to develop and share messages about drug use and risks, including fentanyl
  - **Completed, ongoing.** This year has brought even more partnership with the private school community. Bishop Ireton has collaborated with SAPCA on several educational events, and more programing is being developed with other local private schools.

### **Goal 4: Strengthen data collection, sharing and analysis to better identify opportunities for intervention**

- Develop a streamlined accurate data collection system
  - **Partially Completed, ongoing.** This year OWG developed a great partnership with the Office of Performance Analytics. A new Dashboard is being created that will house opioid related data, develop streamlined monthly reports, and utilize the data we collect to better understand the situational awareness of the opioid crisis in Alexandria.
- Develop a regional data sharing collaborative with neighboring jurisdictions
  - **Completed, ongoing.** This year brought even stronger collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions. The OWG now participates weekly in the Virginia Overdose Prevention Resource Collaborative Meeting. Additionally, Alexandria's OWG has established a regional partnership called Northern Virginia Regional Opioid Strategy (NVROS). This group represents City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Prince William County, and Loudoun County. This group works to share data, initiatives, education, and opioid response support.

### **Goal 5: Expand awareness of substance use disorders as treatable diseases**

- Develop a public education campaign to address misinformation and stigma

- **Complete, ongoing.** This year the OWG partnered with the Addiction Policy Forum around a project aimed at identifying, measuring, and addressing stigma. This project will extend into 2022 and will provide important information needed to determine where and how to address stigma across the City. The OWG continues to facilitate an ongoing social media campaign aimed at providing education about opioids, fentanyl, and substance use.
- Identify strategies to support efforts to decrease the number of substance exposed infants
  - **Not Complete.**
- Develop a program to distribute fentanyl test strips
  - **Complete, ongoing.** This year the OWG began significant distribution efforts to get FTS out across the community to those who are in need. This harm reduction initiative began as a mail out program and now spans programs across the City. FTS are being distributed by mail, through Guest House, at the Adult Detention Center upon release, through ACORP, through the Alexandria Treatment Court, through community distribution programs, through the Chris Atwood Foundation, and through the Alexandria Fire Department. At this time, both FTS and Narcan are also available at the Alexandria Health Department to anyone who walks in requesting these items.

## FOCUS AREA 2: Provide Evidence Based and Effective Treatment Services to Promote Long Term Recovery

### **Goal 1: Increase availability of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in currently under-served locations**

- Ensure collaborative and supportive access to MAT for Guest House residents
  - **Completed, ongoing.**
- Complete a comprehensive analysis of potential models, barriers, and cost of providing MAT in the Adult Detention Center (ADC)
  - **Completed.** This year OWG utilized funds granted by HIDTA to hire a consulting group, Health Management Associates, to complete a full analysis of what it would take to launch an MAT program within ADC. The analysis was very successful and allowed for new steps to be taken towards full implementation of a program.
- Implement MAT Program in ADC
  - **Not Completed due to a lack of funding.**
- Implement MAT Bridge Program in partnership with Inova Alexandria Hospital
  - **Partially Completed.** Covid Impacts: Due to the immense impact of Covid- 19 on Inova Alexandria Hospital, this initiative was put on pause. This will be revisited in 2022.

### **Goal 2: Increase Peer Support work related to opioid treatment and Recovery**

- Expand partnership with the Inova Alexandria Hospital Peer Support Specialist
  - **Completed, ongoing.** The Peer Support Specialist at Inova Alexandria Hospital continues to distribute Recovery Bags as needed, make referrals to treatment, and offer support to Alexandria residents who come to the Emergency Department and express a concern related to opioid use.

- Research various approaches to utilizing Peer Support in the treatment of opioid addiction
  - **Completed.**
- Increase the number of community and treatment-based Peer Recovery coaches
  - **Completed.** This year the OWG partnered with the Chris Atwood Foundation to develop a referral network of Peer Support Specialists. Additionally, a new full time Peer Support Specialist was hired to work exclusively with clients diagnosed with substance use disorder in treatment. This peer provides support as needed, assists clients with recovery work, participated in several community Narcan distribution events, and hosted Recovery Breakfasts throughout Recovery Month in September.
- Meet with Peers from other regional agencies and learn about their roles in opioid response
  - **Completed.**
- Identify ways in which Peer Support Specialists can operate within the city of Alexandria
  - **Completed.**

### FOCUS AREA 3: Reduce Excess and Illegal Opioid Supply Throughout the City of Alexandria

#### **Goal 1: Expand current drug disposal options and events and increase public participation across the city**

- Develop communications strategy to advertise Drug Take Back events, along with a list of appropriate venues
  - **Completed, ongoing.**
- Encourage pharmacies to promote Drug Take Back events and permanent medication drop box locations in the city
  - **Completed, ongoing.**
- Increase the number and availability of permanent drop off boxes throughout the city from three to four
  - **Not Completed.**
- Continue to educate funeral homes about proper drug disposal methods
  - **Not Completed.** Covid Impact: The Alexandria Health Department has been greatly impacted by Covid-19. They are the lead agency on this initiative and currently do not have the staff capacity to work on this program.
- Plan education campaign aimed at families about the importance of cleaning medication cabinets and prompt and safe medication disposal
  - **Completed.**

#### **Goal 2: Continued focused law enforcement work on opioid supply reduction**

- Continue to focus on distribution/investigation (identifying drug trafficking organizations)
  - **Completed, ongoing.**
- Conduct operational activities to disrupt street level use/dealing
  - **Completed, ongoing.**
- Reduce the overall supply of illegal drugs in the City of Alexandria

- **Completed, ongoing.** Alexandria Police Department (APD) completed a large-scale investigation this year, culminating in the execution of eight arrest warrants. During this investigation they removed from the streets U.S. currency totaling \$157,997, 27 pounds of marijuana, 11 firearms (including three semi-automatic rifles), ammunition, drug-packaging materials, prescription pills, cellphones, computers, two money counters, and 16 grams of suspected cocaine.
- Track and map overdoses in real time to gain information on trends and overdose spike alerts as needed
  - **Completed, ongoing.**

## FOCUS AREA 4: Provide Opportunities for Diversion from the Criminal Justice System into the Treatment System

### **Goal 1: Maintain the Alexandria Treatment Court**

- Continue to support the development of the Alexandria Treatment Court (ATC), to include refining the Court's processes and procedures, data collection and analysis, etc.
  - **Completed, ongoing.** Over this past year, the ATC was able to hire a full-time treatment court coordinator. This has allowed for incredible streamlining and growth of the program's processes and procedures. The ATC has begun distributing Recovery Bags to participants and their families.

### **Goal 2: Expand the Alexandria Treatment Court**

- Research outside funding Streams (grants, etc.) to expand the Alexandria Treatment Court's capacity
  - **Completed, ongoing.** The ATC applied for and received a large federal grant through Department of Justice. This grant will allow for the expansion of the program by twenty participants over the next two years. The ATC continues to seek additional federal and state funding sources.

## FOCUS AREA 5: Implement Immediate, Effective and Collaborative Responses to all Opioid Overdoses

### **Goal 1: Expand the Recovery Bag Program**

- Develop a warm handoff protocol from Inova Alexandria Hospital to the Department of Community and Human Services and other treatment services
  - **Partially completed.** Utilizing Peer services through Alexandria Hospital has been the first step in reaching this initiative. Covid Impacts: Due to the immense impact of Covid-19 on Inova Alexandria Hospital, this initiative was paused. This will be revisited in 2022.

- Increase the number of people who engage in recovery support and treatment following a nonfatal overdose
  - **Not Completed.** Due to several state legislative changes related to police roles on the scene of an overdose, the outreach and treatment engagement system has been impacted. Real time outreach continues to be conducted however, the engagement rate has declined from what the program realized in years past.
- Incorporate EMS overdose outreach and provide linkage to treatment
  - **Partially Completed.** EMS has expanded its role in overdose outreach. EMS began distributing Recovery Bags at the scene of overdoses. These bags contain Narcan, fentanyl test strips, and treatment information.

## Goal 2: Develop and promote a robust REVIVE! Training schedule

- Implement targeted REVIVE! trainings for all City employees
  - **Not Completed.** Covid Impact: Due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on all staff across the City, no new training programs have been established. This goal will be revisited in 2022.
- Hold twice monthly REVIVE! trainings for community members
  - **Completed, ongoing.** Covid Impact: Covid-19 has impacted the ability to hold any in person trainings in 2021. There have been several changes to the laws around Narcan distribution, and full Revive Trainings are no longer required. However, these trainings provide a significant educational service to the community and will be revisited in 2022.

## Goal 3: Expand Narcan distribution

- Reach into identified areas of need (high rise complexes, business community, barber shops, etc.) to distribute Narcan
  - **Partially Completed.** The OWG participated in several community events this year in high need areas, distributing both educational materials and Narcan. Currently, an officer with APD is providing assistance in getting Narcan into high need areas across the City including barber shops, housing complexes, and community gathering places. The OWG is looking to launch a large scale Narcan distribution program in partnership with local restaurants, bars, and small businesses in 2022.
- Ensure all City of Alexandria buildings have Narcan on hand
  - **Partially Completed.** All city residential programs are now equipped with Narcan.

## Goal 4: Develop a role for EMS participation in overdose response

- Identify and expand opportunities for EMS engagement following an overdose
  - **Completed, ongoing.** In 2021, EMS significantly expanded their role in overdose response. EMS now distributes Recovery Bags at the scene of every overdose to the victim and anyone who is involved that is interested in a bag. EMS has also adjusted their data reporting system and acquired new computer software that allows for better opioid incident reports. EMS now provides daily Narcan administration reports to the Opioid Response Coordinator.